

Preliminary Parameters and Guidelines – Councillor Communications

1. General Guidelines

- Funding must be used within the fiscal year.
- Councillors must adhere to the requirements of the Code of Conduct dealing with "Actions During Civic Election Periods".
- No councillor may use funds allocated to engage the services of a member of their family, as defined in Section 114 (c) of *The Cities Act*.
- Nothing in the guidelines and parameters should be used for the purposes of fundraising for a Councillor or for raising election funds.
- Assistance will be provided by the City's Communication Branch by preparing and distributing the Agenda in Brief and the Decisions in Brief, prior to and following City Council meetings, and providing background information on civic programs and services to be used for responding to enquiries or for preparing speeches as a Member of Council or as Deputy Mayor.

2. Allowable Expenses

This section summarizes alphabetically the categories and examples of the types of allowable expenses that could be charged to the communications allowance for Councillors.

Advertising & Promotion

- Paid advertising that is related to the business of the City in all types of media.
- Advertising that supplements City departments' advertisements that are placed to promote specific programs or specific events.
- Messages in Community Association Newsletters, Newspapers, publications such as Planet S Magazine (e.g. introductory messages, congratulatory messages, event announcements).

Books & Magazines

- Books, magazines, and periodicals that are related to the business of the City. Name of the book or magazines must be included on the invoice.

General Entertainment

- Up to two tickets to:
 - functions or business/community events (banquets, theatres, shows) when the Councillor has been invited to attend in their official capacity or when the Councillor is performing their duties as Councillor;
 - charitable events or fund-raising events such as golf tournaments, walkathons, organized by non-profit organizations.

Conditions

- Event tickets for family members not attending as the Councillor's spouse or guest are ineligible.
- Tickets can be used by the Councillor and their spouse or guest.
- Council member must provide a copy of the event notice or flyer as well as any accompanying request for attendance.
- Raffle tickets, silent auctions, table prize tickets at events, alcohol, unless included in the price of the ticket are ineligible.

General Office Supplies

- General office supplies not provided by the City Clerk's Office
- Personalized stationery, greeting cards, holiday cards, including envelopes and stamps and Canada Post regular mail services
- Photocopy charges
- Photographic supplies and services
- Courier delivery costs

Gifts and Promotions

- Promotional items such as fridge magnets, t-shirts, pens.
- Gift baskets/flowers for constituents for special occasions
- Table prizes for local community groups

Conditions

- Ineligible expenses include gifts for staff or other employees of the City, boards and committees.
- Council member must provide an original invoice or receipt detailing gift items, quantity, cost and purpose of the items.
- Reimbursement for flowers and gifts to specific constituents must include an explanation.

Hospitality Expenses

- Facility rental for hosting an event
- Council members' expenses for food and non-alcoholic beverages related to community events, meals or receptions when hosting constituents, business contacts, representatives of other levels of government

Conditions

- Council member must provide the date, purpose and details of the expense, and where applicable or feasible, original itemized receipt showing items consumed and names of participants attending.

Meeting Expenses

- Facility rental
- Catering order for meetings including non-alcoholic beverages, snacks and light foods
- Venue set-up fees, including audio-visual equipment, flip charts, cleaning charges.

Conditions

- Council member must provide date and purpose for meeting, original itemized receipt, names of participants or group name with number of participants attending.

Newsletters and Flyers

- Design, writing, copy-editing, printing costs
- Distribution costs through Canada Post, Admail, by private distribution firms or by other means
- Clip art or stock photo fees
- Electronic newsletter distribution costs
- Translation fees

Conditions

- Councillors are permitted to use the City Crest and care must be taken in the appropriate use of the Crest.

Professional and Contract Services

- Firms or individuals whom councillors retain for specific business purposes with clear deliverables, fee structures and timelines.
- The engagement of a business or person(s) as a contractor and/or the cost of supplies, rental of facilities and equipment relative to production, presentation and/or distribution of information to residents relevant to City Council business.
- The engagement of a professional or consulting service for the purposes of preparing speeches, conducting research, etc.

Websites, Social Media Tools, Software & Accessories

- Costs associated with the creation of twitter accounts, Facebook accounts, web pages, or other social media tools for communicating as a member of Council.
- Additional communications management tools such as database management tools and software accessories.

Conditions

- Tools or software accessories not supported or not integrated with the City systems or connected to the corporate network are not supported by the City's Corporate Information Services Branch.
- Councillors are responsible for the protection of any personal information collected or used for City Council business in accordance with LAFOIPP.
- Councillors must adhere to the requirements of the Code of Conduct dealing with "Actions During Civic Election Periods", including conversion of any city-funded websites and social media tools to an election campaign site.

3. Purchasing Procedures

Purchases of goods, services and work from outside parties are to be made in accordance with Policy C02-030 – Purchase of Goods, Services and Work. Information and advice on purchasing procedures, vendor lists, obtaining quotations and preparation of purchasing documents can be obtained from Manager of the Materials Management Branch.

Regardless of the value, it is recommended that competitive prices be obtained.

- Purchases up to \$250 attained locally allows for payment by Automatic Payment Voucher (administered by City Clerk's Office)
- Purchases up to \$5000 (including taxes and freight) may be made through a Departmental Purchase Order (administered by City Clerk's Office). It is

recommended that competitive prices are attained; however, this is to be balanced off with the value of the purchase, the time required to get competitive prices, and the potential (or lack of) savings that can be achieved.

- Consulting Services must follow standard procedures (consult with the City Clerk's Office).

4. Reimbursements

Councillors must provide the City Clerk's Office with proper documentation, including detailed original receipts for claims. Credit card receipts or statements alone are not sufficient and will not be accepted. In the case of any on-line purchases, a copy of the confirmation must be attached to the claim.

Invoices/receipts must include a description of the goods purchased or services rendered, the cost, and any applicable taxes.

Expenses must be charged to the year in which they occurred. Expenses cannot be carried forward to future years. Charges for goods against the current year must be received by Councillors and/or services from the vendor before December 31st of that year.

5. Responsibility of City Clerk's Office

The responsibility of the City Clerk's Office in administering communications support to Councillors includes, but is not limited to:

- Reviewing usage requirements and parameters with a view to bringing forward recommendations to Executive Committee for amendments;
- Providing support to Councillors by processing payments for expenditures;
- Ensuring that supporting documentation for expenditures is in place, and to bring forward to Executive Committee any expenditures where supporting documentation is not place, and expenditures which may not fit within the parameters and guidelines of the support for Councillor Communications document;
- Advising Councillors on the status of their communications allowance and expenditures;
- Annually posting all expenses, individually and in detail, on the City's website and providing Executive Committee with monthly usage updates.

- Redacting all personal and other exempted information governed by *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* from the detailed Councillor expenses prior to the disclosure of Councillor expenses on the City's website.