

Councillor Business Expense

Date Approved by Council : August 25, 2020

Resolution No.: 384/20

Mayor: "Original signed – Alanna Hnatiw"

County Commissioner: "Original signed – Reegan McCullough"

1. Purpose

This policy provides clear direction on reimbursable expenses for Sturgeon County's elected officials, which enhances public confidence in the oversight of expenses and enhances accountability and transparency through routine reporting of Council business expenses.

2. Revision History

Approval Date	Revision Number	Modification
2020/08/25	1.0	New Document

3. Persons/Areas Affected

County Council
County Administration

4. Definitions

The following definitions and interpretations apply to this policy:

Administration means the County Commissioner or his delegates.

Business Expense means an expense incurred by a Sturgeon County Councillor in the performance of their duties. Examples of Business Expenses in this policy are intended to be exemplary and not exhaustive.

Council means the Council of Sturgeon County.

Councillor means an elected official of Sturgeon County, including the Mayor.

County means the Municipality of Sturgeon County.

County Commissioner means the Chief Administrative Officer of Sturgeon County.

5. Policy Statement

Business Expense Budgets

- 5.1. Each Councillor will have an individual operating budget approved through the budget process, which will allocate funds for conferences and training registration, accommodation, travel, and subsistence.
- 5.2. Councillors have full discretion over the expenditure of their individual Business Expense accounts so long as expenses incurred align with this Policy.
- 5.3. Business Expenses must remain within the individual operating budget of each Councillor. Any expenses which will exceed a Councillor's total annual budget must be authorized by Council prior to the expenditure being made.

Business Expense Eligibility

- 5.4. Taxpayer dollars are to be used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency. Expenses for conferences, training, travel, meals, accommodation, and hospitality must support the County's business objectives.
- 5.5. The County will not reimburse expenses which are covered by another agency, board, commission or authority.
- 5.6. Councillors are encouraged to use the most direct, practical, and cost-effective mode of travel and the most practical and cost-effective accommodations available.
- 5.7. Councillors will not incur expenses for a spouse, partner, child, or guest from their Councillor budget, unless the spouse, partner, child or guest is invited to accompany the Councillor in their official capacity to a banquet or reception, in which case the spouse, partner, child or guest's ticket may be charged to the Councillor's expense budget.
- 5.8. The County will not reimburse expenses for a Councillor's attendance at a political fundraising event or for a donation to a political party, candidate for office, or political party leadership contestant.
- 5.9. Recognizing that Councillors may need to proactively seek legal advice in their capacity as an elected official in exceptional circumstances, the County will reimburse Councillors' legal expenses (i.e. advice regarding pecuniary interest). Advance notice of such must be given to the Manager, Legislative Services to ensure that a reliable firm is selected, and that the advice can be provided in a cost-effective manner.

- 5.10. Alcohol will be reimbursed only when the event involves participants from outside the County.

Reporting of Expenses

- 5.11. In order to be reimbursed for Business Expenses, Councillors shall report their expenses in a form prescribed by the County Commissioner.
- 5.12. Expense reports must, at a minimum, include:
- The name of the Councillor who incurred the expense;
 - The date of transactions(s);
 - Transaction amount(s);
 - Expense category (travel, accommodation, meals, hospitality); and
 - Expense description/purpose (i.e. Attended meeting with EIA), receipts, invoices, or other proof of expense.
- 5.13. For the purposes of transparency, Councillors' expense reports will be posted on the County's website as soon as they are available.
- 5.14. Information exempted from disclosure in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* shall be redacted and will not be publicly disclosed.
- 5.15. Expenses not claimed within six (6) months will not be paid, unless approved by a resolution of Council.

6. Responsibilities

Councillors shall:

- Ensure cost-effective Business Expenses are incurred;
- Ensure they do not exceed individual budget allocations, except with Council's prior approval; and
- Submit expense claims in a timely fashion.

Administration shall:

- Provide support to Councillors in booking travel or accommodations as requested;
- Provide support to Councillors in completing Business Expense reporting as requested; and
- Publish expense reports to the County website as they become available.

Council Policy

Policy Number: ply_EXC_councillor_business_expense

7. Rescinds

7.1. This policy rescinds:

- Policy ADM-EXP-3 – Council Business Expense Protocol
- Procedure ADM-EXP-3 – Council Business Expense Protocol
- Policy ADM-LEG-1 – Council and Employee Legal Costs
- Procedure ADM-LEG-1 – Council and Employee Legal Costs