



Policy: Attendance at Conferences/Conventions, Seminars and Workshops

Policy Number: C-B-2.1

Effective Date: May 9, 2016

Revised Date: XXXXX

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to define the type and amount of expenses associated with Council Members' attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops, that will be reimbursed by the Municipality. Expenses associated with attendance at such events must be reasonable and necessarily incurred by those attending.

POLICY:

1. Attendance at Conference/Conventions

- a) Members of Council may attend conferences/conventions as delegates of the Municipality, subject to the allowances outlined in Section 3 of this policy.
- b) Conferences/Conventions eligible for payment under this Policy, without prior approval of Council, are limited to:
 - Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
 - Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
 - Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA)
 - Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM)
 - Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA)
- c) Other Conferences/Conventions require the **prior** approval of Council, in the form of a resolution.
- d) Councillors holding positions on Executive Committees of Associations, approved by Council, may attend any meetings or conferences of those associations in addition to the above provisions.
- e) Notwithstanding section b), attendance at any conference outside of the province requires **prior** approval of Council.

2. Seminars or Workshops

- a) Members of Council may attend seminars or workshops requiring no overnight accommodation subject to allowances outlined in Section 3 of this policy, without prior approval of Council, if they relate to municipal business or governance.
- b) The Municipality may also provide required training to all members of Council, that shall not be taken from individual Council member allocations under Section 3 of this policy.

3. Allowances

- a) Council will establish a budget for Members of Council to attend conferences/conventions, seminars and workshops relating to municipal business each year.
- b) Registrations at conferences/conventions, seminars and workshops will be paid by the Municipality. Registration for spouses will not be compensated for by the Municipality.
- c) Reimbursement of expenses associated with the event will be paid only upon submission of detailed receipts.
- d) The following reimbursements are allowed:
 - i. Registration fees
 - ii. Accommodations
 - iii. Travel expenses
 - iv. Parking
 - v. Meals (taxes and gratuities that are included in the meal rates)
 - vi. Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of an expense. No reimbursement of meals will be provided for events where meals are provided.
- e) Should an individual member of Council not utilize all of his/her allowances for attending conferences/conventions, seminars and workshops, then the remaining allowance, with approval from Council, shall be eligible to be utilized by other members of Council.

4. Travel Costs

- a) The Municipality will be responsible for travel taken by Members of Council on municipal business to and from destinations.
- b) For travel under 300 kilometers, the municipal mileage rate will apply.
- c) The Municipality will pay for an economy airfare or its equivalent to Members of Council for attending a conference/convention outside of a 300 kilometer radius of the municipality.
- d) Should the Council approve the attendance of a Member of Council at an out of province conference/convention, the Municipality will pay two-thirds of the economy airfare or its equivalent.

- e) Hotel rooms will only be paid for attendees the evening before a conference/convention if it is located 100 kms or more away.
- f) Mileage will be paid by the Municipality while on municipal business if a person's private vehicle is being used, at the approved municipal mileage rate. The use of a second private vehicle is discouraged as all persons are encouraged to travel together in one vehicle unless unavoidable circumstances prevent it.
- g) The Municipality will reimburse taxi expenses with receipts, but only when personal or municipal vehicles are not available, and when taxi connections are necessary to reach the destination. However, the Municipality will not cover taxi expenses for purposes other than the specific municipal business trip, such as social events.

5. Per Diems

- a) A per diem rate of \$182.00 per half day is set for those Members of Council attending conferences/conventions, seminars or workshops.
- b) For travel 300 kilometers or over, the Municipality will pay for one per diem to conferences/conventions, seminars and workshops; and one per diem from conferences/conventions, seminars and workshops.
- c) The per diem rate shall be indexed in accordance with the September year over year Consumer Price Index (CPI). The per diem rate shall be included in the maximum allowance under Section 3 of this policy.

PROCESS:

6. General

- a) Legislative Services will be responsible for booking registrations for conferences/conventions and registrations for seminars/workshops, and accommodations, if required, for members of Council.
- b) Should a member of Council be unable to attend a conference/convention or seminar/workshop for which they are registered, the member shall notify the Legislative Services Department as soon as possible, in order for the necessary cancellations arrangements to be made.
- c) The municipality will not pay for any additional costs for social events associated with the conference such as golf tournaments.
- d) All expenses must relate directly to an elected official's duties in an official capacity and are intended to be in support of the Municipality of Thames Centre goals, objectives and strategic initiatives.
- e) Expenses must be claimed in the year they were incurred and all receipts shall be submitted within 1 month of year end.
- f) A credit card or debit card slip is not a valid receipt. A credit card slip will only be accepted to accompany an original itemized receipt.
- g) Unused allowances cannot be carried over into future years.

- h) Accommodation is based on single or double occupancy for the dates of the conference.
- i) Only the expenses of Council members will be subject to reimbursement. Expenses of companions will not be reimbursed.

7. Responsibilities

- a) The Finance Department is responsible for maintaining and tracking Council expenses related to this policy.
- b) Members of Council are responsible for submitting expenses in a timely manner.
- c) Legislative Services is responsible for interpreting this policy, making reservations and submitting eligible expenses to Finance.

8. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed within the first year of each new term of Council.