

Council Travel and Professional Development Policy



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City Council	November 19, 2024	148-2024	1	9
Subsection	Repeals By-Law Number		Policy Number	
Travel and Per Diems	153-2023		CC-7-1	

1.0 Purpose

This policy addresses the methods and procedures by which Council will be governed when attending to business related to their work as a member of Council, including but not limited to conferences, conventions, seminars, as well as business and business entertainment expenses either within the City limits or beyond; and provides for the associated compensation entitlements.

2.0 Policy Statement

The City is committed to encouraging and supporting professional development for members of Council, recognizing that the quality, responsiveness, and professionalism of its Council is inextricably linked to the achievement of its vision, mission, mandate, values, strategic direction, and good governance.

The Corporation of the City of Kenora will be responsible for the reimbursement of authorized expenses to the Head and Members of Council incurred in connection with attendance at various seminars, conferences, workshops, professional development, and social functions directly associated with their duties as an elected official for the City.

Any question involving the meaning or application of this policy is to be submitted to the City Clerk or the City Treasurer, or designate, for clarification.

3.0 General

3.1 Travel, business and local mileage expenditures are to be based on sound judgment and proper regard for economy.

3.2 When more than one traveller is attending the same event, all attendees must where practical/possible:

- i. Coordinate travel arrangements
- ii. Take advantage of group rates
- iii. Individually submit a separate expense report for reimbursement

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3.3 When personal and business travel are combined, only documented expenses directly related to the business portion are reimbursable. Travel and related expenses will not be reimbursed for spouse and/or other guests.

3.4 Where travel is delayed or cancelled due to circumstances beyond the traveler's control, the individual should attempt to ensure the next available mode of transportation is accessed and reasonable accommodations found. Any additional expense resulting from the delay or cancellation may require justification and be subject to review.

3.5 Expense reports must be submitted within ten business days (10) from the travel return date.

3.6 The City will not reimburse any personal items lost.

4.0 Approval to Attend - Council Business

4.1 Prior to any member of Council attending a conference, Council approval shall be given by way of resolution setting out authorization for those eligible expenses and per diems that may be incurred.

4.2 Attending other events such as a training seminar, workshop, or social function that directly relates to the role of Council, is at the discretion of the member, as long as any costs remains within the members approved travel/training budget.

4.3 Serving on Other Boards/Associations/Organizations, etc.

4.3.1 Members shall only serve on Boards/Associations/Organizations, that are directly related to the role of a member of Council, with approval/support of Council by Council resolution.

4.3.2 Where Members are elected or appointed to serve on District Boards, Associations and/or related Organizations, the Member shall utilize the travel policy of that Board, Association or Organization, should such policy exist.

4.3.3 Expenses for these Boards/Associations or Organizations will only be paid in accordance with this policy provided such Board, Association or Organization does not also pay it (no duplication). Should expenses not be paid by the Board, Association or Organization, the costs of attending these meetings/events will directly impact the member of Council's travel/training budget.

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4.4 Professional Development

Professional development expenditures should always be in the interest of the City and involve the development of knowledge, skills, and leadership qualities necessary for the effective execution of Council duties.

This may include activities specific to legislative and governance roles and functions, strategic policy development, fiduciary accountabilities, community leadership, public and media relations and the evaluation of executive leadership. It may also target learning related to other emerging community concerns or environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Costs associated with any professional development for members must be included in the members' annual travel and training budget and booked through the City Clerk for payment through the City.

5.0 Approved Expenses

5.1 Conferences, Conventions, Seminars, etc.

The City will reimburse Council for reasonable travel expenses incurred on authorized municipal business. All travel expenses must be properly documented in the required format for approval and reimbursement.

5.2 Registration Fees

Full registration costs will be paid on behalf of the member attending any approved conference by resolution of Council. The number of Council delegates for any one conference/convention is a maximum of four (4) unless deemed otherwise by City Council.

5.3 Meals Allowances

A meal allowance represents the maximum that will be paid without receipts. The meal allowance covers the cost of meals and gratuities.

Where some meals are provided by the event registration, these will be deducted from the applicable meal allowances in accordance with the Travel Expense Statement Schedule. Council traveling under this policy may be reimbursed for meals upon submission of receipts even if the meal is supplied by the conference. In this circumstance, there must be a valid reason for the person not being able to attend the meal as supplied by the conference.

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Breakfast may only be claimed if departure is before 8:00 am and dinner may not be claimed on the day of return unless return is after 5:00 pm.

Itemized receipts, not debit or visa receipts, should show the name of the other persons for whom a meal was purchased.

Reimbursement of expenses incurred in excess of maximum limits shall be made if accompanied by receipts and deemed to be in the best interests of the City.

Reimbursement of expenses incurred in excess of the maximum limit shall be made if accompanied by receipts and deemed to be in the best interests of the City. Meal allowance shall be payable in accordance with the current HR Policy for staff to the Mayor and Council while on out-of-city business.

All fees paid prior to the conference, referred to as prepaid expenses, must be reflected on the Travel Expense Form that is submitted for reimbursement. All costs related to the travel must be included on the form so the approver is aware of the final costs for attendance.

5.4 Per Diems

Attendance at conferences and seminars will be paid on the following basis:

- Full Day = based on per day rate as set out in Council's Remuneration By-law, and includes travel days;
- Four (4) hours or less in duration = 50% of approved per rate as set out in Council's Remuneration By-law.

5.5 Travel

Economy class airfare is to be used; however, business class may be used if:

- less expensive seats are not available, or
- the departure time is not acceptable, or
- the individual is travelling on a continuous flight in excess of five hours

5.5.1 City vehicles

Use of a City vehicle where available is encouraged. Fuel will be reimbursed with supporting receipts.

5.5.2 Rental vehicles

Rental vehicles may be used where it is demonstrated that this method of transportation is more economical and practical than the use of taxis, limousines, etc. The most economical size of vehicle must be used, depending on the requirements of the occasion and the number of passengers.

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The rental contract must be registered under the name "Corporation of the City of Kenora- Applicant Name."

Officials/Staff who rent vehicles in their own name become contractually responsible for meeting the terms of the contract, including any loss or damage of the vehicle.

When vehicles are rented for business purposes they must be rented in employer's name in order that the blanket auto insurance policy provides coverage. This is because the renter's own insurance policy responds first to claims by injured claimants. Members who rent vehicles in their own name become contractually responsible for meeting the terms of the contract, including any loss or damage of the vehicle. For example, when an accident arises out of the use or operation of a leased or rented vehicle the priority of those responsible for costs is:

- a) The renter's own automobile insurance policy,
- b) Next is the policy of the driver of the vehicle, (for example, if you rented a vehicle but let a friend drive it), and
- c) The policy of the vehicle owner (the rental company).

Physical Damage to Rented Vehicles - The Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) on short-term vehicle rental contracts should be declined as the City has adequate insurance for the risk. Rental car agencies normally charge between \$10.00 and \$20.00 per day in addition to the daily rental charge. In the case of the City and insured Boards, it is not necessary to purchase insurance for physical damage to the vehicles rented when the vehicles rented are valued at less than \$100,000.00.

Restrictions On Use - Rental agreements all contain restrictions on certain uses and drivers that, if violated, may affect insurance coverage and make the renter fully responsible for the loss. Renters should pay particular attention to the following typical rental agency restrictions:

- no driver under age 21
- no driver under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- no use inconsistent with normal business travel (see detailed list in rental agreement)

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5.5.3 Taxis/Limos

Officials may be reimbursed for the actual costs of taxicabs, Uber or rideshares, airport limousines, buses or equivalents for transportation between the transportation terminal and the hotel or other destination point.

5.5.4 Out of Town Mileage

Mileage Allowance shall be paid to the Mayor and Council at the same rate under the current HR Policy #HR-2-7-2, Business Travel, Seminars & Conferences Policy on an as required basis for out-of-city business only with the use of a personal vehicle. All Corporate transportation will be conducted in the most economical manner possible.

When more than one Officials/Staff is travelling in the same motor vehicle, only the owner of the said vehicle is entitled to reimbursement for mileage expenses as provided by this policy.

5.6 Accommodation

5.6.1 An overnight stay in association with a one-day meeting or business event out-of-town is justified depending on the scheduled start and end times of the meeting and that the distance required to be travelled exceeds 150 kilometres.

5.6.2 The name of "The City of Kenora" must appear on all hotel (room) registrations and in each case available government or corporate rates should be requested. Individuals may be reimbursed for either single or double room base rates (including applicable taxes) depending on individual circumstances.

5.6.3 If an Official chooses to stay overnight with friends or relatives while on business related to the governing body instead of at a hotel, accommodation expenses will not be reimbursed, however the per diem allowance will still apply as required.

5.6.4 In the event of travel cancellation by the Member the Member may be held responsible and not be reimbursed for 'no show' charges resulting from failure to cancel a hotel reservation, and/or advising staff of the cancellation by the Member.

6.0 Spousal Expenses

Officials shall be responsible for all additional expenses incurred as a result of a spouse or companion travelling with them, save and except the cost of accommodation as referred to above.

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7.0 Parking Expenses

7.1.1 Officials will be reimbursed for the cost of parking their motor vehicle at a transportation terminal while they are out-of-town on business, subject to the submission of appropriate receipts. Loss or damage to the vehicle, while parked, shall not be the responsibility of the City.

7.1.2 Officials will be reimbursed for the cost of parking their motor vehicle overnight while they are out-of-town on business, subject to the submission of appropriate receipts. Loss or damage to the vehicle, while parked, shall not be the responsibility of the governing body.

8.0 Travel Advance

Requests for an accountable advance for travel shall be made in writing to the City Clerk at least one (1) week in advance of departure. Any such advance must be subsequently reflected in the final travel claim.

9.0 Social Functions

Reimbursement of related costs associated with a Council member's attendance at a special function on behalf of the City in an official capacity.

10.0 Travel Expense Reports

10.1 Officials are responsible for filing their respective travel expense reports within 10 days of their return from an out-of-town event or from the date of the business expense incurred as covered by this policy.

10.2 Original individual detailed receipts must be filed with the expense report for all travel expenses not covered by the per diem allowance and for all hotel (room) accommodations. To avoid duplicate payments, copies, credit card slips, statements and/or Interac payment slips are not acceptable as receipts, however may be required to provide proof of payment.

10.3 Any funds owed to the City as a result of cash advances or claims for expenses of a personal nature not reimbursed by this policy, etc. shall be submitted to the City. A receipt should be attached to the travel expense report. Any funds owing to the City beyond a sixty day period from the date of return from an out-of-town event may be deducted from the individual's next pay cheque.

10.4 All claims shall be reimbursed in Canadian Funds.

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10.5 The exchange rate used in calculation of the reimbursement will be the Bank of Canada rate during the travel period except in the following circumstances:

- If the Officials/Staff provide evidence of the rate obtained at the time of travel, such as bank/currency exchange office or ATM receipts; or,
- In cases where a credit card has been used, the rate used on the credit card purchase(s) will be used for those purchases only. A copy of the credit card statement must be submitted.

11.0 Meals In-town (Only Officials/Staff in Attendance)

11.1 It may be necessary for Officials to conduct City business over a meal and may incur meal expenses in conjunction with attending a function on City business. Wherever possible, Council support for attendance at this event should be approved in advance of attendance. Receipts must be detailed and include a description of the purpose of the meal and a list of all persons in attendance. Alcohol will not be reimbursed.

11.2 When two or more Officials are present for a meal in-town, the highest-ranking person present must pay for the expenditure and prepare the respective expense report.

12.0 Business Expenditures (Non-City Staff in Attendance)

Expenses associated with events such as committee meetings, award banquets, a political speech/address or other business-related events where the purchase of a ticket or meal is required; will be reimbursed when such expense is considered to have a direct relationship to municipal concerns or interests. Additional reasonable expenses related to these types of events may be reimbursed. Official receipts must be provided.

13.0 Responsibilities

CAO – shall ensure sufficient funds are included in the annual budget allocations for Council approved convention, seminar, conference and social functions as directed by Council through annual budget discussions.

Council – shall approve a list of conferences, seminars, conventions, and social functions deemed to be in the best interests of the City for the Mayor and Councillors to attend and authorize the Mayor and Council attendance through the municipal budget process; shall also consider requests for attendance by Council members to attend conferences, seminars, conventions, and social functions not previously approved.

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Council members attending conferences, seminars, and conventions shall submit a written report and distribute material obtained in attendance at these functions within two weeks of returning or as otherwise determined by Council. Members should also publicly report the benefits of attendance during the report on Committee work during the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Clerk – The Clerk is responsible for travel arrangements for all members of Council. Members shall ensure that they communicate with the Clerk about all changes to travel arrangements and provide any receipts provided to the Member during the travel that may be associated with the pre-paid travel expenses on corporate credit cards.

Where previous travel claims are outstanding, no further advances or reimbursements for travel shall be authorized or issued.

Once the Travel Expense Claim form is complete, the Member of Council shall attach all supporting documentation and receipts, and provide to the following for approval:

Council Member Claims
Head of Council Claims
Disputed Claims

-authorized by the Mayor
-authorized by the Deputy Mayor
-reviewed by Council as a whole
through a request to the Clerk

Effective Date

This policy shall come into force and be effective upon adoption of Council resolution.