

# Administration Response - Saskatoon Municipal Review Commission – 2022 Remuneration Report

## ISSUE

The Saskatoon Municipal Review Commission (“SMRC”) has provided a report, along with recommendations, regarding the City of Saskatoon’s Council remuneration policies, support for members of Council, and benefit plan provisions. Administration has reviewed the report and is providing analysis of the recommendations for review by Committee.

## BACKGROUND

### 2.1 History

A report from the SMRC was tabled with the Governance and Priorities Committee (“GPC”) at its meeting held on September 19, 2022. GPC resolved as follows:

1. That the report of the Saskatoon Municipal Review Commission dated September 8, 2022 entitled Remuneration Report (Third Report), be tabled and considered at the November 14, 2022 meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee; and
2. That the report be forwarded to the Administration for review and comment at the November 14, 2022, meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee.

### 2.2 Current Status

City Council has a number of policies that are applicable to this report, including *Policy C01-006 - Remuneration - Members of City Council*, *Policy C01-023 - City Councillors' Travel and Training*, and *Policy C01-027 - Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance*

### 2.3 Public Engagement

No public engagement has been conducted regarding this matter. A copy of this report has been shared with the SMRC.

## OPTIONS

This report is the Administration’s response to the 2022 Council Remuneration Report from the SMRC, which is attached to this report as Appendix 2. The SMRC has made 11 recommendations. The Administration has responded to each recommendation and put forward administrative recommendations in response, where required. Options have been provided for some of the recommendations of the SMRC for the consideration of City Council.

### Recommendation 1

**That the City employ an independent professional human resources consulting firm or similar to review the work required of Council members and their council assistants, to determine what additional support may be required. It is important to note that Council work, as elected officials is not equivalently comparable to a traditional employee role. The recommended task of evaluating hours is to ensure they have the resources necessary to conduct the base requirements of the elected role.**

Excepting the Mayor, members of Saskatoon City Council are “part-time”, with there being three main resources currently allocated to Councillors to assist in their duties:

- 1) Councillors’ Assistants – Currently there are two full time staff that are allocated to provide administrative support to the ten members of Council. Notably, this resource is administrative only, and is not designed to be used for services considered to be political or constituent related.
- 2) Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance (Policy C01-027) – The CCRA policy provides an annual allowance to each member of Council to provide support in communications with constituents as members of City Council. The current funding level of the CCRA is \$10,000 per Councillor per year.
- 3) Council Support – This City department assists with Councillors obtaining and communicating information back to residents as questions arise.

### Option 1 (Recommended)

Employ an independent consulting firm or similar as per the recommendation of the SMRC.

Pros:

Independent look at current demands, especially as it relates to part-time vs full-time designation and corresponding support levels.

Cons:

Potential high cost versus utilizing same funds to increase existing resources.

### Option 2

Evaluate and increase resources available to members of Council to assist in their duties, particularly those through provisions of the CCRA policy.

Pros:

Allocates resources to services rather than consulting

Cons:

Lacks the independence of an external review and could lead to criticism related to Council providing extra resources to themselves.

### **Recommendation 2**

**That the City reviews the multiple existing policies related to Councillor travel expenses and consolidates them into one clear and consistent policy document.**

Administration agrees with this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the City amend Policy C01-023 - City Councillors' Travel and Training to include a section that specifies funding for attendance at SUMA and FCM events. It is recommended that language used in the City of Edmonton Council Policy Councillors Budget and Expenses, policy C618A, section 5 (d) Common Travel and Conferences is reviewed and considered a strong example of a potential verbiage.**

While section 2.2 b) of the City Councillors' Travel and Training Policy provides for individual funding to be utilized for attendance at the annual SUMA and FCM conferences, there may be other educational opportunities taken advantage of that use funds in advance of these events. Administration supports policy wording that complies with this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the City amend Policy C01-023 - City Councillors' Travel and Training, Section 4.3, and replace the words "Executive Committee" with "Governance and Priorities Committee".**

This is a housekeeping amendment that can be made as part of consideration of other recommended amendments to the noted policy.

### **Recommendation 5**

**That the City expands the City webpage - Council Member Expenses – so that it describes all Mayor and Councillor benefits and entitlements, and links to the described policies and expense reports.**

Administration agrees with this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 6**

**That the City review Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01-027, and revise references to the election period in generalized terms rather than specific dates, ensuring an appropriate prorated reduction to the CCRA spending is enforced – two months.**

Administration agrees with this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 7**

**That the City amend Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01-027, Section 3.4 Reimbursements, and Section 3.2 (f) - Constituency Relations – Conditions, to note that a paid receipt is always required.**

Administration agrees with this recommendation.

### **Recommendation 8**

**That the City amend the Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance, Policy C01027, Section 4.3, to require that an independent and professional third party, with the capacity to apply the Treasury Board of Canada’s methodology for program reviews, conduct a robust review of this policy, to identify outcomes related to spending that include:**

- **usage of funds – by whom, where, and the types of expense claims submitted;**
- **a summary of impacts – to measure community engagement through the fund;**
- **an authentication of expenditure appropriateness based on policy; and**
- **the confirmation that the current policy reflects and meets the needs of Council members and their constituents**

In consulting with the SMRC, this review is mostly intended to analyze the effectiveness of funds spent through the CCRA in achieving improved communications and constituency relations, rather than auditing compliance with the current program. From that review recommendations could be made to Council on potential amendments to the program guidelines to better serve Councillor and community needs.

### Option 1

Employ a consultant as per the SMRC recommendation.

Pros:

Independent review of the program from this lens may provide good insight and eventual more effective use of funds.

Cons:

Cost of undertaking review may exceed short to mid term costs of increasing resource needs.

### Option 2 (Recommended)

That Council complete a self evaluation of the program effectiveness, combined with potential program resource enhancements as per recommendation 1.

Pros:

Resources are allocated to service level increases rather than consultant fees.

Cons:

Less certainty that resources are benefiting communications and constituency relations as per the intent of the policy.

### **Recommendation 9**

**That the City amends the Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01027, Section 3.2 (f) - Constituency Relations – Conditions by adding a condition that states that gift and sponsorship expenditures require heightened transparency, and that Councillors must provide clarification of these expenditures by describing the nature of the donation, as well as the benefit to the Councillor’s Ward and the City.**

See recommendation 10.

### **Recommendation 10**

**That the City amends the Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01027, Section 3.2 (f) - Constituency Relations: Conditions to clarify**

**that passive event sponsorships are not within the scope of the policy. A passive sponsorship is not an activity resulting in increased communications with constituents – as intended by the allowance.**

For recommendations 9 and 10 it is understood that this recommendation is intended to address sponsorships through the CCRA policy, where there is a question from the SMRC as to value to Councillors received from things such as event sponsorships or partnerships with organizations to provide goods and/or services to community organizations. As part of a recommended Council self evaluation of this policy this aspect of the CCRA can also be reviewed, with Council to provide feedback at that time. The recommended independent review of Council resources as per SMRC recommendation 1 may also provide some insight into the effectiveness of this policy.

### **Recommendation 11**

**That the City revise the Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01-027, Section 3.2 - j) Websites, Social Media Tools, Software & Accessories to address City property ownership of online and electronic information resources, as they relate to the election period. That the City develop a policy resembling that of the City of Toronto Use of City Resources During an Election Period Policy, to help address the complex issues of Council members' online and electronic information resources, as described in the Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01-027, Section 3.2 - j) Websites, Social Media Tools, Software & Accessories.**

***\*Note that the SMRC understands that similar work related to this recommendation is being conducted by the City in relation to recommendations made by the SMRC's Code of Conduct report. If this work is completed under that workstream this recommendation can be considered resolved.\****

Administration shares the understanding of the SMRC that this work will be conducted in conjunction with work being undertaken out of the SMRC Code of Conduct report, and therefore no recommendation is being proposed.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend to City Council that:
  - a. the City employ an independent professional human resources consulting firm or similar to review the work required of Council members and their council assistants, to determine what additional support may be required;
  - b. the City reviews the multiple existing policies related to Councillor travel expenses and consolidates them into one clear and consistent policy document, including a section that specifies funding for attendance at SUMA and FCM events and updated language to reflect current committee structures;
  - c. the City expands the City webpage - Council Member Expenses – so that it describes all Mayor and Councillor benefits and entitlements, and links to the described policies and expense reports;

- d. the City review Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01-027, and revise references to the election period in generalized terms rather than specific dates, ensuring an appropriate prorated reduction to the CCRA spending is enforced – two months;
- e. the City amend Policy Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance C01-027, Section 3.4 Reimbursements, and Section 3.2 (f) - Constituency Relations – Conditions, to note that a paid receipt is always required; and
- f. Council completes a self evaluation of the CCRA program effectiveness, combined with potential program resource enhancements as per recommendation 1.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Hiring of a human resources professional to review the work required of members of Council will require a financial expenditure. Should Council wish to proceed with this work there would be funds available in 2023 as there are no planned reports of the SMRC in this time period.

## **ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS**

As instructed by City Council, Administration will undertake necessary policy and bylaw revisions for further review by Council. Any direction requiring procurement will be undertaken as per applicable purchasing guidelines, and within budget as provided.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 - Saskatoon Municipal Review Commission Remuneration Report
- Appendix 2 - Policy C01-027 – Communications and Constituency Relations Allowance
- Appendix 3 - Policy C01-006 – Remuneration – Members of City Council
- Appendix 4 - Policy C01-023 – City Councillors’ Travel and Training

### **Report Approval**

Written and Approved by:

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Reviewed by:

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