



## **CONFERENCE/SEMINAR/TRAINING ATTENDANCE & EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

1. This policy safeguards the appropriate use of municipal funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting reimbursement of expenses incurred by Council members, the Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”), and **Municipality of the County of Pictou** (“Municipality”) employees in relation to Municipality business.

### **Signing Authorities**

2. The following are the Signing Authorities for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering this policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

3.

<b>Position</b>	<b>Signing Authority</b>
Member of Council	CAO or designate AND Warden or Deputy Warden
CAO	Warden and Deputy Warden
Management Employees	CAO or designate AND Warden or Deputy Warden
Employees	Immediate Supervisor or designate AND CAO or designate

4. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
5. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing expenses incurred on their own behalf.

### **Individual Responsibilities**

6. Everyone who incurs an expense in relation to **Municipality** business is responsible for:

- (1) familiarizing themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy;
- (2) completing and submitting expense claims with necessary supporting documentation;
- (3) exercising reasonable diligence and care in incurring expenses prudently and responsibly; and
- (4) with respect to travel, cancelling reservations as required, safeguarding travel advances and funds provided, and considering alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing.

### **Permitted Expenses**

7. Subject to and in accordance with this policy, the following expenses incurred by a member of Council, the CAO or an employee are eligible for reimbursement:
  - (1) Authorized travel within Nova Scotia, including transportation, accommodation and meal costs;
  - (2) Pre-approved out-of-province travel, including transportation, accommodation and meal costs;
  - (3) Pre-approved training or continuing education costs.
8. Members of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union shall be reimbursed in accordance with the terms of Collective Agreement between the Union and the Municipality of the County of Pictou.

### **Authorized Travel**

9. Council members shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred in attending:
  - (1) The annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities;
    - (a) All members of Council shall be permitted to attend the annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.
  - (2) meetings or conferences at which the Council member's attendance is authorized or requested by Council;
    - (a) The Warden shall be permitted to use his or her discretion with respect to the number of seminars or conferences attended on behalf of the Municipality.
    - (b) Elected officials shall be permitted to attend a maximum of (4) seminars and conferences of his or her choice.

- (3) Council and Committee of Council meetings;
- (4) a meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the Council member has been appointed by Council, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Municipality if the Council member is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization;
- (5) in the case of the **Warden and Deputy-Warden**, attendance at functions, meetings or conferences involving less than **[\$100]** in reimbursable expenses in respect of which one or more municipal representatives has been invited or requested or would otherwise reasonably be expected to attend, unless Council has specifically directed the Warden or Deputy-Warden not to attend;
- (6) in the case of a Councillor, attendance on behalf of the Municipality at a function identified in the previous subsection of this policy, involving less than **[\$100]** in reimbursable expenses.
- (7) a training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training and education.
- (8) The Warden or their designate shall be entitled to attend the Annual Conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities each year
- (9) Notwithstanding clause 8(8), the Maximum number of elected delegates permitted to attend the conference in any given year shall be set at 4.
  - (a) Applications for attendance shall be submitted to the Financial Services Committee in December for the purpose of determining delegates.
  - (b) If required a random draw shall be made to select the delegates should the number wishing to attend the conference exceed four (4).
  - (c) Any Council member not attending a conference previously during the current Council term shall be given precedence over a member who has already attended.
  - (d) When the Annual Conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is held in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island, all councilors shall be eligible to attend.
- (10) Where an elected official fails to attend a conference and or seminar for which the Municipality has paid registration fees and or hotel deposits or guarantees for reasons other than those listed in Section 5 of the Council Remuneration Policy and penalties are incurred for all or a portion of those

costs, the elected officials will be financially responsible for those penalties and/or costs.

10. The CAO, including an employee of the municipality delegated any of the responsibilities or powers of the CAO pursuant to subsection 29(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*, shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred in attending:
  - (1) the annual meeting of the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia;
  - (2) The annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities;
  - (3) The Annual Conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
  - (4) meetings or conferences at which the CAO's attendance is authorized or is requested by Council;
  - (5) attendance at a meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the CAO has been appointed by Council, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Municipality if the CAO is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization;
  - (6) attendance at functions, meetings or conferences involving less than **[\$100]** in reimbursable expenses in respect of which one or more municipal representatives has been invited or requested or would otherwise reasonably be expected to attend, unless Council has specifically directed the CAO not to attend; and
  - (7) a training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training and education.
11. An employee of the Municipality shall be reimbursed for the reasonable expenses incurred in attending:
  - (1) the annual meeting of the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia;
  - (2) meetings or conferences at which the employee's attendance is authorized or is requested by the CAO;
  - (3) attendance at a meeting of any Board, Commission, Committee or other organization to which the employee has been appointed, except that no reimbursement shall be provided by the Municipality if the employee is entitled to reimbursement of expenses directly from the applicable organization;

- (4) attendance at functions, meetings or conferences involving less than **[\$100]** in reimbursable expenses in respect of which one or more municipal representatives has been invited or requested or would otherwise reasonably be expected to attend, unless the CAO has specifically directed the employee not to attend; and
- (5) at a training or continuing education event in accordance with the provisions of this policy concerning training and education.

### **Out-of-Province Travel Authorization**

12. All requests for out-of-province travel shall be made in writing and shall contain the following information:
  - (a) the purpose and duration of the trip;
  - (b) the location(s) to be visited;
  - (c) the dates and times of arrival and departure;
  - (d) any pre-paid transportation, meals, or accommodation; and
  - (e) any other anticipated expenses.
13. All requests for out-of-province travel by Council members shall be reviewed by the CAO and Warden, who shall consider the necessity for travel based on the information provided.
14. When two or more out-of-province travel requests are made by Council members for the same purpose, the CAO in discussion with the Warden shall determine the appropriate number of persons necessary to represent Municipality.
15. All requests for out-of-province travel by the CAO shall be reviewed by the Warden, who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.
16. All requests for out-of-province travel by a Municipality employee shall be reviewed by the CAO, who shall follow the same guidelines established for Council members.
17. If a request for out-of-province travel is approved, and the Claimant not Municipality pays all or some of the expenses for the travel, the Claimant will be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses after submitting an expense claim in accordance with this policy.

### **Training and Continuing Education**

18. If the Municipality has established a training and education budget expense item, a member of Council, the CAO, or a Municipality employee may apply to the

applicable Signing Authorities in advance for approval to incur expenses out of this budget for training or education, provided that:

- (1) the request is made in writing, and includes an estimate of all costs that will be incurred, including the course or enrollment fee and all required transportation, accommodation and meal costs;
  - (2) the training or education course, meeting or conference, is related to municipal government;
  - (3) in the case of a Council member, the course, meeting or conference is completed prior to the next municipal election date;
  - (4) the budget for training and education for the year has not been exhausted and would not be exceeded by authorizing the request;
  - (5) the Claimant shall reimburse the Municipality for the cost of all or, alternatively the pro-rated cost of a portion, of any enrollment fees in the event of failure to attend all, or alternatively some, of the event without reasonable justification; and
  - (6) a brief written summary is provided by the Claimant describing the nature and benefits of the training and education at the time of submitting an expense claim for reimbursement.
19. If both applicable Signing Authorities approve an application to incur expenses in relation to training or education, and the Claimant (not the Municipality) pays all or some of the pre-approved expenses, the Claimant will be eligible for reimbursement of those expenses after submitting an expense claim in accordance with this policy.

### **Limits on Reimbursement of Expenses**

20. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy, the following limits shall apply to the reimbursement of expenses:
- (1) A Claimant shall only be reimbursed for costs that they have incurred;
  - (2) The expenses of a Council member for political activity associated with election or re-election is not reimbursable by the Municipality;
  - (3) Airplane travel should be booked by Municipal staff or shall only be reimbursed at the lowest rate which would have been available Municipal staff had booked the airfare;
    - (a) Should the claimant decide to use their own automobile to travel to a conference/seminar rather than flying; the Municipality shall reimburse the claimant for their actual mileage up to the average cost

of airfare the other members of Council attending the conference plus equivalent mileage that would have been paid for the trip to the airport.

- (4) Hotel accommodations shall not exceed the cost of a standard room, double occupancy, except when hotel accommodation has been booked by Municipal staff for out of province hotels. Hotel upgrades shall be at the personal expense of the Claimant unless there are ergonomic necessities attributable to physical requirements including, but not limited to, wheel chair accessibility;
- (5) Reimbursement of only one personal long-distance phone call shall be permitted for each night of overnight travel;
  - (a) Maximum length of the call shall be 30 minutes;
- (6) Reimbursement for meals shall not exceed the per diem meal amounts set out in this policy;
- (7) The cost of any alcoholic beverages shall not be reimbursed;
- (8) Fees, deposits, interest and surcharges incurred on a personal credit card shall not be reimbursed;
- (9) When personal and Municipality travel is combined, only documented expenses directly related to the Municipality portion are reimbursable. Extended travel time and related expenses are at the traveler's own expense;
- (10) Reimbursement shall not be provided for loss of personal effects; for medical and hospital treatment; for purchase of luggage, clothing and other personal equipment; or for personal services such as shoe shines, valet services, dry-cleaning, laundry, haircuts and other personal services;
- (11) There shall be no reimbursement of travel and related expenses for individuals other than a Council member, the CAO, or an employee of the Municipality;
- (12) There shall be no reimbursement for travel by a Council member within their own district of the Municipality because such travel is deemed to be included in the part of the Council member's salary or remuneration.

### **Travel Advances**

21. Advances are intended to cover out of pocket expenses incurred during travel. The following limits shall apply to the use of advances:
  - (1) all advances must be approved by the CAO;

- (2) advances will only be issued where an overnight stay is required;
- (3) advances will not be made for less than \$200;
- (4) the CAO must not approve an advance unless the CAO is satisfied that there is a reasonable need for the advance;
- (5) upon completion of the travel for which an advance has been made, the recipient must complete an expense claim in relation to the travel costs that reconciles the amount of the advance with the actual reimbursable expenses incurred. The recipient must repay any part of the advance owing to Municipality within 10 days of completing the travel.

### **Use of Municipality Credit Cards**

22. The following limits shall apply to the use of Municipality credit cards:
- (1) the use of travel advances is prohibited if the Claimant has a Municipality credit card;
  - (2) Municipality credit cards shall only be used for expenses that are permitted under this policy, and without limited the generality of the foregoing, shall not be used for cash advances or personal expenses;
  - (3) reimbursement for interest incurred on a Municipality credit card is prohibited.

### **Per Diem Meal Allowances**

23. For each day or part day when overnight accommodation forms part of an authorized expense, the Claimant shall be paid a meal allowance for each meal for which the Claimant is required to pay **in the amount of [\$15.00] for breakfast, [\$25.00] for lunch, and [\$40.00] for supper**. This allowance includes gratuities and taxes.
24. Claimants whose religious beliefs or medical requirements prohibit them from consuming certain foods should be aware that appropriate meals can normally be obtained from caterers, provided that adequate notice of a special requirement is given. Should special dietary requirements negate the ability to participate in a meal that is provided free of cost, and as a result the Claimant must pay for a meal, the claimant shall be paid a meal allowance for that meal.

### **Kilometrage**

25. The kilometrage allowance reimbursed for Claimants using personal vehicles for authorized travel shall be at the rate stipulated from time to time by the Province of Nova Scotia as the maximum kilometrage rate for its employees.



26. Where several Council members, the CAO, and/or employees of the Municipality or any combination thereof, attend the same meeting, conference or function, each shall make reasonable efforts to share a vehicle.

### **Vehicle Rentals**

27. The cost of rental of a vehicle shall be a reimbursable expense in instances where:
  - (1) reasonable ground transportation services such as public transit, taxis or hotel shuttles are unavailable; or
  - (2) two or more Council members, the CAO, and/or employees of the **Municipality**, or any combination thereof, are traveling together, and it is more economical than the combined cost of other reasonable ground transportation.
28. Compact, economical vehicles must be used unless three or more persons are travelling together, the bulk or weight of goods being transported necessitates a larger vehicle, or a compact, economical vehicle is unavailable.
29. For the protection of the Claimant and the Municipality, Claimants must ensure that adequate insurance (collision, comprehensive and third-party liability insurance) is in place for all drivers by either renting the vehicle using a personal credit card with an insurance option, or by purchasing a policy from the rental agency. The applicable deductible must be the lowest available given the coverage described above.

### **Expense Claims**

30. Expense claims must be submitted on the form provided from time to time by the Municipality and shall be signed by the Claimant.
31. The business reason for each expense must be submitted with all expense claims and a detailed itemized receipt is required for all expense claims except:
  - (1) claims for per diem meal allowances;
  - (2) incidental expenses of less than **\$15.00** for reasonable tips, bridge tokens, parking meters or coffee;
  - (3) claims for personal vehicle kilometrage for authorized travel.
32. If no receipt is available, a written attestation signed by the Claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expenses must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.

33. Expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
34. No expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by two Signing Authorities who have authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that:
  - (1) the claim is consistent with this policy;
  - (2) the expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
  - (3) appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and the claim documentation is appropriately filed;
  - (4) the expenses claimed have appropriate justification; and
  - (5) all requirements, as determined by the municipal audit committee, have been fulfilled.
35. In considering an expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may request additional explanations, documentation or justification from the Claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that the Signing Authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this policy.
36. The use of petty cash to pay an expense claim is prohibited.

### **Timeframe**

37. A claim for reimbursement of an expense shall be submitted for approval within thirty (30) days of the expense being incurred.
38. Expenses must be submitted and charged to the year in which they occurred. Expenses cannot be carried forward to future years.
39. Claimants who charge for goods or services in a fiscal year must have received the goods or services from the vendor in that fiscal year.

### **Fraud, Misuse or Misappropriation of Municipal Funds**

40. Fraudulent irregularity, misuse or misappropriation of Municipality funds may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
41. Suspicious activity and potential misuse of funds must be reported to the CAO for investigation.

## **Reporting Requirements**

42. Pursuant to section 65A of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Municipality does the following:
  - (1) Within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts an expense report on the Municipality website for the Warden, CAO (including an employee of the Municipality delegated any of the responsibilities or powers of the CAO pursuant to subsection 29(b) of the *Municipal Government Act*) and each member of Council on their expenses regarding the following:
    - (a) Travel and travel related expenses, including transportation, accommodation and incidentals;
    - (b) Meals;
    - (c) Training and education.
  - (2) By September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the expense reports for the preceding fiscal year, that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

## **Review Requirements**

43. The Municipality's Audit Committee shall review the expense annual summary report by October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
44. By the January 31<sup>st</sup> immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy and, following a motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.

## **Repeal**

45. All former policies and/or practices with respect to Conference/Seminar/Training Attendance & Expense Reimbursement, including Policy #2017-02-21, are hereby repealed.