



Corporate Policy

Council, Boards, Committees

Council Discretionary Budget

Approved by Council on: 05/17/2022

Report Number: F-17-22

Effective: 05/17/2022

Reviewed on: MMMM d, yyyy

Amended: MMMM d, yyyy

Next Review: 11/01/2025

Note:

The City of Burlington funds the expenditure activities and supply requirements of the Mayor and Councillors that:

- Fall within the general categories of expenditure as outlined in the Council Member Expense Guide.
- Are non-partisan or personal in nature.
- Are within the limits City Council has set for its members.

Policy Statement:

On an annual basis the City will provide to the Mayor and Council an office expense budget and a discretionary budget.

The office expense budgets are intended to fund the general support provided for all council members including staff support. The office expense budgets are approved as part of the City's overall operating expense budget. It is subject to the budget guidelines as approved annually by Council.

A discretionary expense budget is provided to the Mayor and each Councillor to pay for expenses that are allowable as outlined in the Council Member Expense Manual.

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- Council members are expected to not exceed their annual discretionary expense budget. Any over-expenditure is the personal responsibility of the Council member and is to be paid by the Council member.

Council members cannot transfer budgets between years. However, unspent funds remaining at the end of each fiscal year except for in an election year will be transferred to a reserve fund to be used for special initiatives.

The discretionary budget will be reviewed by a citizen committee convened every four years prior to an election year to provide an independent review of Council remuneration and expenses and make recommendations on any adjustments that may be needed.

Use of the discretionary budgets allocated to Mayor and Councillors will be guided by the Council Member Expense Manual.

Scope:

This policy addresses the Mayor and Councillors' discretionary budgets and does not apply to expenses funded by city programs, agencies, boards committees and other special purpose bodies.

Objectives:

Supports the Mayor and Councillors to:

- Administer their offices in City Hall.
- Represent the City at functions and events.

Supports Councillors to:

- Communicate with their constituents about the meetings and activities of city council and its committees
- Communicate with their constituents about the businesses and services of the City and its agencies.
- Enhance and promote an engaged community in their wards.

Supports the Mayor to:

- Communicate with constituents about city-wide initiatives and activities of City Council related to city-wide initiatives.
- Communicate with constituents about the meetings and activities of committees that the Mayor is appointed to as council's representative.
- Enhance and promote an engaged Burlington community.

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Councillors and the Mayor are personally responsible for expenditures that do not fall within these criteria.

Principles:

When using the guide that accompanies this policy the following principles should be observed:

Integrity of Council

- The integrity of Council as a whole and the office of Mayor and offices of Council must be protected.
- The interests of City Council as a whole take precedence over the personal interest of individual members of Council.

Accountability

- Councillors and the Mayor are the stewards of City resources and ultimately are accountable to the public and their constituents for the type and level of expense they incur.
- Councillors' and Mayor's expenses must be reasonable and reflect what the public expects of an elected official.
- Councillors' and Mayor's business expenses and personal expenses must be kept separate.

Access to Resources

- There should be a level playing field among all Councillors regardless of personal financial circumstances.
- Councillors should have access to the same level of funding to run their offices.

Flexibility and Limits

- Councillors engage their communities in different ways.
- Councillors require flexibility to perform their roles and operate their offices.
- Expenditures must not conflict with rules set out in elections and other legislation.
- All accounting, audit and income tax act principles and rules must be followed.

References:

Council Member Expense Manual

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Roles:

Accountable:

Mayor and Council

Responsible:

Chief Financial Officer for the timely review of the policy and manual