

2021 Common Travel Plan

Office of the Councillors

Recommendation

That the February 9, 2021, Office of the Councillors Common Travel Plan, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the Office of the City Manager report OCC00320, be approved.

Executive Summary

As set out in *City Policy C618, Councillors' Budget and Expenses*, registration costs and travel by a Councillor for officially-appointed representation at conferences and meetings fall under the common travel and conferences budget and are approved by Council Services Committee at the first meeting of the year.

The policy states that the budget will cover expenses for Councillors to attend the annual conferences of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Federation of Canadian Municipalities, if funds are available for all who wish to attend. Otherwise, the budget for these conferences will be prorated so that each Councillor attending receives an equal amount. Expenditures exceeding the common budget allocations are funded from ward budgets.

Due to the COVID-19 health pandemic, regional and national conferences and board meetings are currently being held remotely through virtual participation.

This report addresses travel up until the October 18, 2021 Municipal Election.

Report

The Office of the Councillors common budget requirements are considered at the first Council Services Committee meeting of each year. Eligible conferences and meetings include:

- Annual conferences or board meetings of any organization on which a Councillor sits as an official representative of the City of Edmonton, or conferences where the City of Edmonton is entitled to voting delegates through its membership;
- Annual conferences of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for all Councillors;
- Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities board, executive committee, standing committee, and task force

meetings if the Councillor is a director, table officer, committee member or task force member.

Due to continuing COVID-19 public health measures, Administration reached out to conference and board meeting organizers to determine meeting formats for 2021. At the time of writing this report, all meetings and conferences are being held virtually; however, meetings in the latter half of the year are yet to be determined. If in-person attendance becomes an option later in the year, Administration will bring back an amended 2021 Travel Plan to a future Council Services Committee for Council's consideration.

Budget/Financial Implications

During the 2020 Supplementary Operating Budget Discussion, the 2020 common travel budget was reduced by \$44,500 as part of a larger one time reduction of \$695,000 to the Office of the Mayor and Office of the Councillors budgets. Since March 2020 all attendance at conferences and board meetings have been through remote participation. Resulting in a positive variance in the 2020 common travel budget.

2020 Budget

| | Amount |
|--|--------------------|
| Reduced base budget (one time) | \$35,002 |
| Expenditures* | \$6,976.46 |
| Total remaining due to virtual attendance | \$28,025.54 |

*Note: The Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference was cancelled in 2020

For 2021 and beyond, the common travel budget has been reduced by \$6,500 on an on-going basis as part of the budget reduction of \$37,000 applied to the Office of the Councillors common budget, approved at the Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment in December 2020. Prior to this reduction the base budget for common travel was \$79,502 per year.

2021 Budget

| | Amount |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Reduced base budget (ongoing) | \$73,002 |
| Estimated expenditures | \$7,300* |

*Note: There are a number of conferences and board meetings scheduled in 2021 where the fees and format are unknown at this time. The plan (Attachment 1) will need to be amended later in the year as more information becomes available.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

| Corporate Outcome(s): Current Corporate Outcomes | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|-----------|
| Outcome(s) | Measure(s) | Result(s) | Target(s) |
| Efficient and effective service delivery | Number of budgeted conferences and meetings | 12 in 2019 10 in 2020 | N/A |

Attachments

1. 2021 Common Travel Plan