



# Policy

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Member of Council Expense Policy
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Corporate and Financial Services –Treasurer
<b>Approved by:</b>	Council
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## Purpose:

This Policy guides the expenditures that support Members of Council in performing their diverse roles and in representing their constituents. Members are provided with individual budgets to allow Members of Council to:

1. Administer their offices as a Member of Council.
2. Represent Richmond Hill at functions or events.
3. Perform their duties as Elected Officials.

This Policy is intended to:

- a) Identify the process that Members of Council and their support staff use to administer their Councillor Constituency Budgets.
- b) Recognize Members of Council accountability for managing Richmond Hill resources allocated to them.
- c) Provide specific and clear direction regarding expenses and identify “eligible” and “ineligible” what expenses
- d) Provide Members of Council with the flexibility to allocate resources in the most efficient way to meet their own particular requirements.

Richmond Hill is committed to reimbursing Members of Council for all reasonable costs incurred in the course of fulfilling their duties. It is expected that all Members of Council who incur business expenses will exercise their best judgment when incurring such expenses. The responsibility for determining the appropriateness of expenses rests with the individual Elected Official. The Elected Official is accountable to the public.

## Policy Principles:

When interpreting this Policy, the following principles shall be considered:

### Integrity of Council

- The integrity of Council as a whole and the offices of the Members of Council must be protected.
- The interest of Council as a whole takes precedence over the personal interest of individual Members of Council.

### Accountability

- Members of Council are to use public funds prudently.
- Members of Council are the stewards of Richmond Hill resources and are ultimately accountable to the public and their constituents for the type and level of expenses they incur.
- Members of Council expenses must be reasonable, not exceed approved budgets and reflect what the public expects of an elected official.

### Transparency

- Information associated with public funds Richmond Hill allocates to Members of Council is public information.
- The public's ability to access information relating to the expenses of Members of Council must be balanced against the need to protect privacy and personal information, and allow time for proper accounting and reconciliation of expenses.

### Compliance

- Councillor Constituency Budgets must be administered in accordance with Richmond Hill policies and procedures as well as all other statutory requirements.

## Definitions:

In this Policy, the following words and/or terms have the associated meaning:

“Council”	means the Council of the City of Richmond Hill.
“Councillor Constituency Budget”	means the annual individual budget allocated for each Member of Council.
“Eligible Expense”	means an expense for which a Member of Council is permitted use, or be reimbursed from, his or her Councillor Constituency Budget or other corporate account as outlined in this Policy.
“Ineligible Expense”	means expenses for which a Member of Council is not permitted to use, or be reimbursed from, his or her Councillor Constituency Budget or other corporate account as outlined in this Policy.

“Member of Council”	Means a member of the Council of the City of Richmond Hill, and “Member” has the same meaning.
Municipal Elections Act	Means the <i>Municipal Elections Act</i> , 1996, S.O. 1996, C.32, as amended.
“Regular Election Year”	means the calendar year in which an election is held pursuant to subsection 4(1) of the Municipal Elections Act.
“Residents Meetings”	means a meeting held by one or more Members to provide information and/or solicit feedback; on a matter, including a land development matter, that is currently being considered by, or will likely be considered by, Council; or a project/policy that has been initiated or will be initiated by Council and/or the City of Richmond Hill.
“Rhub system”	the City’s Enterprise Resource Planning system.
“Richmond Hill”	Means the Corporation of the City of Richmond Hill.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all Members of Council and sets out the rules governing the eligibility and ineligibility of expenses of Members of Council and the conditions for reimbursement and the process for receiving payment of Eligible Expenses through Councillor Constituency Budgets.

## Policy

Members of Council are committed to the principles of this Policy in the use of their Individual Constituency Budget. Council determines the annual amount of an individual Constituency Budgets. These Constituency budgets are an amalgamation of previously separate Constituency, Communications and Support budgets. Members have discretion, subject to this Policy, over how they allocate their individual Councillor Constituency Budgets. The Policy sets out those expense categories in which Members of Council could incur expenses when performing their diverse roles and in representing their constituents, and defines which of those expenses are eligible expenses and which are ineligible expenses. The Policy also sets out those conditions under which eligible expenses will be reimbursed from a Member of Council’s Council Contingency Budget. A Member of Council shall not exceed their annual budget.

A Member of Council may carryforward a portion of their annual unused budget for specific expenses in which previous commitment to a third-party has been made and verified. Each carryforward will be reported to Council.

## Constituency Budgets in an Election Year

In an election year the amount of the approved Constituency Budget available for a Member’s use will be prorated based on the date of the end of the current term of Council.

No Member shall incur expenses that exceed the prorated amount of Constituency Budget prior to the end of term of Council. A Member who is reelected, and any new Member, may use the remaining balance of the annual Constituency Budget beginning on the first day of the new term of Council.

## **Eligible and Ineligible Expenses**

### **1. Communications, Newsletters, Advertising and Promotions**

#### Eligible Expenses

- a) The design, production, printing and distribution costs for newsletters, mass mailings, and other digital communications.
- b) The design, production, printing and distribution costs of other forms of advertisements or promotions that:
  - i. is related to the business of Richmond Hill in all types of media, including print, radio, television, telephone, outdoor and electronic media
  - ii. supplements advertisements that Richmond Hill departments place to promote specific programs or events;
- c) The postage costs of notices sent by a Councillor related to any statutory planning meeting or a meeting being held in accordance with the Councillor-Held Residents Meetings on High Density Development Applications Policy within the area to which the Office of the Clerk distributes statutory notices.

#### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Any costs of advertising that promotes for-profit organizations, other levels of government, political parties, or candidates in any election campaign.
- b) Those expenses that do not comply with the Use of Corporate Resources for Election Campaign Purpose Policy.
- c) Any cost of communications, advertising or promotion related to any election campaign.
- d) Any cost of communications, advertising or promotion distributed outside of the geographical area that the Member of Council has been elected or appointed to represent, unless the extra-territorial distribution is:
  - i. in a publication normally distributed outside of the geographical area (e.g. a local newspaper or magazine); or
  - ii. as a result of Canada Post's un-addressed ad-mail policies.

#### Conditions for Reimbursement of Expense

- a) Council Members must provide a copy of the newsletter or other advertising as an attachment to the submission of their invoice or receipt.
- b) Richmond Hill's corporate postage accounts may be used, subject to prior written approval of the Clerk or designate, to pay for eligible newsletters, mass mailings, other forms of advertisements

or promotions, and notices of statutory and residents meetings provided that Richmond Hill's costs are reimbursed through or applied against a Councillor Constituency Budget.

- c) No reimbursement will be provided for any advertising and promotion expenses incurred during a Regular Election Year between 4:30 p.m. on the day prior to Nomination Day and 8:30 a.m. on the day after Voting Day as those terms are defined in the Municipal Elections Act.
- d) The communication, newsletter, advertising or promotional expense must comply with Richmond Hill's "Use of Corporate Resources for Election Campaign Purposes Policy" or any successor policy thereof

## **2. Books, Magazines, Newspapers and Periodicals**

### Eligible Expenses

- a) Books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals that are related to the business of Richmond Hill.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Lifestyle or entertainment magazines (e.g. sports, cooking, gardening, fashion, celebrity, travel etc.).

### Conditions

- a) Name of the publication must be included on the invoice.
- b) Members of Council must identify the business purpose for the book, magazine, newspaper and/or periodical when the business reason is not evident.
- c) Delivery address must be Richmond Hill Offices or the Member of Council's home address (e.g. for daily newspaper deliveries).

## **3. Business Meeting**

### Eligible Expenses

- a) The following are eligible expenses if they are related to Richmond Hill business:
  - i. Business meals in the interest of Richmond Hill for meetings with Richmond Hill employees, external parties (constituents, business contacts, government officials, or business visitors from out of Richmond Hill) or employees of Richmond Hill agencies, boards, commissions or a special purpose body.
  - ii. Residents' meetings
  - iii. Facility rental.
  - iv. Catering order, including coffee, tea, juices, pop, cookies, snacks, light food.
  - v. Venue set-up fees, including audio-visual equipment, flip charts, set-up fees, cleaning charges.
  - vi. External facilitator fees.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Business meeting expenses of a personal nature.
- b) Business meeting expenses associated with a meeting with other Members of Council that constitute a majority of Council.
- c) Residents Meetings held by a local Ward Councillor where the Member has deliberately invited constituents from another Member's Ward without the consent of that other Member.
- d) Alcohol expenses.

### Conditions

The full names of all participants attending the meeting, the date of the meeting and the purpose/circumstances of the meeting must be identified on receipts.

## **4. Community Expense – Event Tickets and Support**

### Eligible Expenses

- a) Up to a maximum of two (2) tickets to a charitable or fund-raising event (in circumstances where it is customary and expected that a spouse/companions attend, based upon the nature of the event (e.g. gala).
- b) Participation fees for the Council Member to participate in charitable or fund-raising events such as golf tournaments or walk-a-thons.
- c) Entertainment events such as theatre shows, musical performances or other concerts provided that the event is charitable or fund-raising in nature.
- d) Tickets for table prizes purchased at charitable or fund-raising events.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Raffle tickets or silent auctions at events.
- b) Donations to organizations or individuals, are not eligible expenditures.

### Conditions

- a) The charitable or fund-raising event must be for a charitable/non-profit organization that provides services to residents in York Region.
- b) For charitable events or dinners, event organizers must make out charitable receipts to the City of Richmond Hill.
- c) If a table prize is received and the amount exceeds \$350.00, the Member of Council must complete a Disclosure Statement as set out in the *Council Code of Conduct*.

## 5. Community Expenses – Gifts and Promotions

Richmond Hill's Communication Services division is able to provide an inventory of gifts and promotional items for Members of Council to present to individuals/groups on behalf of the municipality upon their request. Large quantity requests for gifts and promotional items should be brought to the attention of the Director, Strategy, Innovation & Engagement. Costs and quantity limits may apply.

All costs associated with gifts and promotions are ineligible expenses. Examples of items in this category are set out below.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Promotional items, including but not limited to fridge magnets, souvenir T-shirts, promotional chocolates, glassware, books, golf balls, towels, umbrellas, lapel pins and pens, not provided from Richmond Hill's Communication Services promotional merchandise inventory.
- b) Gift baskets/flowers for constituents for special occasions
- c) Table prizes for local community groups that are not provided from Richmond Hill's Communication Services promotional merchandise inventory
- d) Gifts for Richmond Hill staff or employees of Richmond Hill, agencies, boards, commissions and special purpose bodies
- e) In memoriam gifts for constituents, such as trees and floral tributes
- f) Plaques for constituents
- g) Awards and scholarships for constituents

Although the items above are ineligible expenses for purchase by individual Members of Council, purchases in relation to such items that are representative of the whole of Council may be purchased using the corporate Gifts and Awards account (e.g. recognition plaques, certificates).

## 6. Computer Hardware, Software and Accessories and Mobile Devices

The Information Technology (IT) Division provides and pays for (through established IT accounts) all computer hardware, software and accessories and mobile devices required to facilitate off-site communications and to access Richmond Hill e-mail accounts and calendars required by Members of Council.

The following are ineligible expenses in relation to computer hardware, software and accessories and mobile devices:

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Personal computing devices, hardware, software and accessories that are not Richmond Hill's corporate standard.
- b) Personal computing devices, hardware, software and accessories that Members of Council acquire outside of Richmond Hill's procurement processes and procedures.

Provision of IT related equipment will be in accordance with Richmond Hill's *Personal Computing Standards Policy* (IT-03). Reference should be made to this policy for a complete listing of procedures relating to the use and supply of personal computing devices.

## **7. Memberships**

### Eligible

- a) Memberships for the Member of Council that are related to the Member of Council's work in the community and/or for Richmond Hill.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Retail memberships
- b) Award programs
- c) Personal health or recreational memberships

### Conditions

- a) Members of Council must identify how a membership is relevant to Richmond Hill business when the business reason is not evident.
- b) Members of Council are permitted to utilize the group discounts associated with fitness centre access as a result of Richmond Hill's Wellness Program for staff. Questions relating to health and wellness programming and access to such programs should be directed to the Manager, Employee Health, Safety and Benefits.

## **8. Office Accommodation and Office Furniture Standards**

Members of Council are provided with office space at the main Municipal Offices (City Hall). These offices are furnished and equipped with furniture that is based upon Richmond Hill's standard as supplied by Richmond Hill's vendor.

At the beginning of each term, office furniture needs for Members of Council will be reviewed and offices will be equipped accordingly. Any and all expenses in relation to office accommodation and furniture are ineligible expenses. Examples of items in this category are set out below.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Office furniture or office equipment for home offices.
- b) Non-standard office supports (dedicated internet lines, cable etc.)

## **9. Photographic Supplies and Services**

### Eligible

- a) Professional photographer and/or videographer fees.
- b) Processing and digital print fees.

- c) CDs, DVDs and other output formats.
- d) Film or other storage mechanisms.

#### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Photographic supplies and services for personal or election related use.
- b) Expenses incurred during the period in which Members of Council may not use corporate resources as set out in Richmond Hill's policy on the *Use of Corporate Resources for Election Campaign Purposes* (as may be amended).

#### Conditions

- a) Eligible expenses must be for Richmond Hill business.
- b) Members of Council must identify how the photographic supplies and services are relevant to Richmond Hill business.
- c) Photographic supplies and services shall not be used for any election related purpose.

### **10. Stationary and Office Supplies**

#### Eligible Expenses

- a) Personalized and customized envelopes, letterhead and business cards (e.g. with custom branding and/or custom photographs).

#### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Stationary and office supplies for personal use.

#### Conditions

- a) Council Members should use Richmond Hill's retained vendor of service for the purchase of stationary, office supplies and office furniture.
- b) Council support staff are able to directly order supplies from Richmond Hill's vendor on-line.
- c) All stationary and office supplies must comply with Richmond Hill's Brand Guidelines.

### **11. Transportation – Highway Tolls**

#### Eligible Expenses

- a) Highway toll charges for business trips and business meetings.

#### Ineligible Expense

- a) Highway tolls related to travel between home and the normal work location. For Members of Council, Richmond Hill's Municipal Offices (City Hall) are considered the normal work location.

#### Conditions

- a) Reimbursement will be limited to the trip toll charges and service fees associated with the trip and will exclude any amounts related to the purchase of a transponder or service fees associated therewith.

## 12. Transportation – Mileage and Parking

Members of Council who are not provided with a corporate vehicle receive a monthly transportation allowance. This allowance level reflects the key cost elements of owning and operating an automobile, such as depreciation, financing, insurance, maintenance, fuel costs, and mileage. Members of Council receiving a monthly transportation allowance will not be eligible to claim any mileage reimbursements for regular business.

### Eligible Expenses

- a) On street or private/public parking lot fees incurred while conducting Richmond Hill business

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Mileage reimbursements for regular business (see above)
- b) Personal vehicle maintenance and repair costs
- c) Vehicle licensing fees
- d) Traffic and parking fines
- e) Tow and impound fees
- f) Car-wash fees
- g) Fuel

## 13. Transportation – Taxis

### Eligible Expenses

- a) Taxi fares for matters of Richmond Hill business and in situations where transportation is required locally, for airport service or where private vehicles are unavailable.

### Ineligible Expense

- a) Taxi fares between home and the normal work location. For Members of Council Richmond Hill's Municipal Offices (City Hall) are considered their normal work location.

### Conditions

- a) Members of Council must identify the business purpose for the trip (e.g. business meeting, constituent meeting, ward visits, special event).
- b) All taxi fare expenses must be supported by original detailed receipts including a notation specifying the point of origin and the destination. Credit card receipts and statements will be accepted.

## 14. Transportation – Public Transit

### Eligible Expenses

- a) Public transit fees incurred while conducting Richmond Hill business

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Monthly YRT/Viva transit passes (due to provision of monthly mileage allowance – unless a Member of Council chooses to forego their monthly transportation allowance)

### Conditions

- a) Train, subway or bus transit receipts are required along with an identification of the business purpose for the trip. Receipts should be supported by notation specifying the point of origin and the destination.

## **15. Travel, Conferences, Seminars, Business Trips and Training**

### Eligible Expense

- a) Conference and seminar registration that relate to the Member of Council duties as a Member of Council, and must be related to Richmond Hill business.
- b) Transportation (air, train or bus)
- c) Ground transportation (between home and the terminal and between the terminal and a hotel or conference facility)
- d) Hotel
- e) Taxi expenses related to conference/seminar functions or meetings.
- f) Business meeting expenses (please see section 8.3 - Business Meeting and related conditions).
- g) Trip cancellation insurance
- h) Business telephone calls
- i) Business faxes
- j) Business computer and internet charges
- k) Vehicle rental
- l) Parking
- m) Educational or other training courses

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Medical/hospital treatments beyond Richmond Hill benefit guidelines and coverage
- b) Costs associated with purchase of luggage or clothing
- c) Costs associated with lost luggage or misplaced belongings
- d) Sightseeing expenses
- e) In-suite services including movies and bar services
- f) Alcohol beverages
- g) Personal expenditures (e.g. travel costs for a spouse)

- h) Educational or other training courses not related to the Member of Council duties as a Member of Council

### Conditions

- a) When submitting travel, conference, seminar and business trip expenses, Members of Council shall include:
- i. Itineraries outlining travel dates and transportation bookings.
  - ii. Original hotel invoices itemizing room costs and other incidentals.
  - iii. Conference or seminar registration expenses supported by a copy of the conference or seminar brochure confirming the cost and conference/seminar dates.
  - iv. Air and train travel will be covered/reimbursed for economy class fare. Where possible, flights and/or train travel should be arranged in advance to take advantage of travel discounts. Air and train fare receipts and boarding passes must be included with the travel claim unless supported by a requisition in advance of travel.
  - v. Rental vehicles will be permitted only in those circumstances where shuttle bus service to the conference or seminar is not provided. Where possible, economy or compact cars should be rented. Collision insurance coverage must be secured.
  - vi. Hotel rate must be the lowest or government rate category available.
  - vii. Expenses in connection with the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Federation of Canadian Municipalities conferences will not be applied against Councillor Constituency Budgets and will be covered by corporate accounts.
  - viii. Up to 50% of the cost of other training or educational courses may be allocated, at the discretion of the Treasurer, to a corporate budget other than a Councillors Constituency Budget.

### Per Diem Meal Conditions

- a) Meal allowances are provided for conference, seminar and business trips and are to be claimed as actual expenses based on receipts.
- b) Meal allowances may not be claimed where meals are provided on a travel carrier or as part of a business activity such as a conference dinner.
- c) To qualify for per diem meal allowances, overnight stay is required.
- d) Travel the day before or the day after a conference/seminar/business trip does qualify for the per diem meal allowance.
- e) Original itemized receipts must be retained and submitted as part of the travel claim.
- f) Costs over the maximums listed below will be the responsibility of the individual claimant:
- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Breakfast | \$15.00 maximum (inclusive of taxes/tips) |
| Lunch     | \$20.00 maximum (inclusive of taxes/tips) |

Dinner	\$30.00 maximum (inclusive of taxes/tips)
Sub-total	\$65.00/day
Incidentals	\$10.00/day
TOTAL	\$75.00/day

- g) When requiring and claiming all three meals, Members of Council are permitted to exceed the maximum amount on any one meal, however the total for the day may not exceed \$75.00, inclusive of taxes, tips and incidentals.

## 16. Websites and Social Media Tools

### Eligible Expenses

- a) Design, web development, writing, domain name registration, web-hosting fees for websites that support the Member of Council's work in their ward or constituency and outside of that which is provided to all Council Members through Richmond Hill's website, provided these do not advocate for a political party, other levels of government, for-profit organizations or individuals not related to the business of Richmond Hill, or candidates in any election campaign..
- b) Database creation and management fees.
- c) Costs for creating, adding content and promoting YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social media accounts. that support the Member of Council's work in their ward or constituency.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Websites and social media accounts that are election related.

### Conditions

- a) The website of a personal nature of each Member of Council that is hosted outside of Richmond Hill's internet URL address is entirely the responsibility of the Member of Council.
- b) Richmond Hill staff cannot provide any advice related to these external sites, including wording for disclaimers and technical assistance/support.
- c) Members of Council may link their personal sites from the Richmond Hill.ca site. When users navigate off of Richmond Hill's website to a Member of Council's personal site, a disclaimer noting that the user is leaving Richmond Hill's website will be displayed.
- d) Members of Council should reference Richmond Hill's policy on the *Use of Corporate Resources for Election Campaign Purposes* for specifics on the use of websites during election years.

## 17. Wireless Products and Services

Wireless devices and services required by Members of Council are provided by the IT Division and paid for through established IT accounts. Members should refer to the Assigning & Use of Wireless Communication Devices Policy IT-02 for more information. Any and all expenses in relation to wireless devices and services are Ineligible Expenses. Examples of items in this category are set out below.

### Ineligible Expenses

- a) Personal long-distance calls
- b) Pay-per-use calls
- c) Personal messaging/downloads

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

### **Members of Council**

1. Submit only Eligible Expenses to the Treasurer in accordance with this Policy
2. Meet all financial and legal obligations
3. Ensure that all purchases are in keeping with this Policy and that invoices are authorized after orders have been received or services rendered
4. Comply with purchasing, accounting and financial policies approved for Members of Council
5. Reimburse Richmond Hill for any expenses that are determined to be Ineligible Expenses which are incurred using corporate accounts, failing which Richmond Hill may set off the amount of such expenses against any payments owing to the Member of Council?
6. Members of Council shall not exceed their annual budget
7. Ensure that their individual support staff collect, organize and process original/itemized receipts and any supporting documentation from Members of Council relating to expenses

### **Treasurer**

1. Ensure supporting receipts and ensure prompt payment of Expenses that are properly documented and meet the conditions set out for reimbursement
2. Advise Member of Council of the status of their Councillor Constituency Budgets and related expenditures, as well as provide advice on all of the Policy
3. Advise the Member of Council when there is a claim for an Ineligible Expense.
4. Monitor changes in Richmond Hill policies and procedures and review relevance of these changes for the Council Member Expense Policy and related procedures
5. Provide training and orientation for Members of Council at the beginning of each term and when required or as requested during the term.

## **Conditions of Reimbursement and Disclosure**

All expense reimbursement and purchasing card details need to be entered into RHhub in order to receive reimbursement. This must be supported by original itemized and detailed receipts and signed credit card receipts providing all necessary details to meet conditions of expense.

The Treasurer is required to report to Council the remuneration and expenses paid to Members of Council in the previous year by March 31 of the following year, as required by the Municipal Act, 2001.

The Treasurer will publish Members of Council's expenses, including year-to-date expenditure details, on Richmond Hill's website within a reasonable timeframe after the end of the quarter or the year-end closing date. Supporting transaction documentation will have personal and exempted information governed by Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act redacted prior to posting.

The Treasurer shall also disclose and post online the postage costs associated with newsletters and resident meeting notices that are funded by corporate accounts.

## **Compliance**

The responsibility for determining the appropriateness of expenses rests with the individual Member of Council. The Member of Council is accountable to the public.

## **Related Documents**

- Municipal Act, 2001
- Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
- Richmond Hill - Council Code of Conduct
- Richmond Hill - Use of Corporate Resources for Election Campaign Purpose Policy
- Richmond Hill - Assigning & Use of Wireless Communication Devices Policy IT-02
- Richmond Hill - Personal Computing Standards Policy (IT-03)