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To: Clerks Richmondhill clerks@richmondhill.ca

Subject: SRCFS.25.044 - Member of Council Expense Policy Review

While the current policy allows councillors to spend constituency funds on personal websites and social media tools that “support their work,” this category is fundamentally inconsistent with:

- the City’s existing communications infrastructure
- public expectations of transparency
- the principles of prudent spending
- the clear distinction between City business and personal political branding
- the ongoing need to reduce discretionary expenses

Richmond Hill already provides:

- an official councillor webpage for every Member
- official City managed social media channels
- staff supported communications pathways

Yet councillors can still use taxpayer funded budgets for:

- website development
- content writing
- consultants
- video and social media promotion
- domain hosting

This creates duplication and unnecessary spending. It also blurs the line between City communication and personal branding or political promotion.

Although the policy states that expenses must not be political or election related, the distinction is subjective and requires staff to evaluate intent. This places staff in an

uncomfortable position and creates avoidable administrative work. Removing the entire category eliminates this problem.

Final Recommendation:

Website and social media spending should be removed as an allowable councillor expense. These platforms are, in reality, personal branding tools, and the City already provides each councillor with an official webpage and corporate communication channels. Councillors who wish to operate personal websites or social media accounts can do so at their own expense. Removing this category will eliminate duplication, reduce administrative subjectivity, prevent unintended political use, and result in meaningful cost savings for taxpayers.

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