

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Policy:	F10 – Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement
Policy Department(s):	Council
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Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish compensation for Elected Officials.

Objectives are to:

- Provide fair, consistent, and adequate compensation for Elected Officials at a level that will attract community-minded citizens as candidates for public office;
- Ensure compensation provided to Elected Officials is done in a transparent and cost-effective manner;
- Ensure that personal costs related to conducting Council business are minimized for Elected Officials; and
- Maintain compensation relative to comparative municipalities in Alberta.

Policy Statement

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1 shall provide compensation to Elected Officials for Council Business. It is necessary for the County's Elected Officials to network, to meet with residents, and to support community, committee, and other events. Council will utilize best governance practices and committee structures that encourage and support a work life balance for Council and Committee members. This policy applies to all County of Grande Prairie Elected Officials and Board/Committee members.

Definitions

"Alternate" means the individual(s) who is appointed to a board/committee/commission as an alternate member and is expected to attend on behalf of the appointed elected official when they are unable to attend, or when invited by the appointed elected official or board/committee chair.

"Board" means any board or other body established by the Council of the County of Grande Prairie or, any external board or other body to which a Councillor is appointed by the Council of the County of Grande Prairie.

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council Policy F10

“Committee” means any committee or other body established by the Council of the County of Grande Prairie or, any external board or other body to which a Councillor is appointed by the Council of the County of Grande Prairie.

“CAO” also known as “County Manager” or “Chief Administrative Officer” means the person, or delegate appointed by Council to the position of Chief Administrative Officer under the Municipal Government Act for the County.

“Conference” means a formal meeting at which individuals participate in the exchange of ideas, information, and expertise in work-related subject areas.

“Convention” means an assembly, usually of members of a professional group or delegates, whose primary purpose is to elect officers, report progress and obtain approval for future activities.

“Council Business” means the activities conducted by Council in keeping with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act. Examples of Council business includes, but is not limited to, attendance at Council and Committee meetings, municipally sanctioned events, meetings with the CAO, and meetings with constituents.

“Councillors” means the Elected Officials of the County of Grande Prairie, excluding the Reeve.

“County” means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

“Designate” means the person authorized by Council to conduct the duties and functions assigned to the Reeve by Council under the Municipal Government Act and under this or any other bylaw or policy.

“Elected Officials” means the Reeve and Councillors of the County of Grande Prairie.

“Expenses” means the costs incurred by Elected Officials when conducting Council business.

“Reeve” means the Chief Elected Official as defined in the Municipal Government Act.

“Receipt” means the original documentation provided by a vendor which provides detail about the item(s)/services received and the amount of GST paid. Debit and/or credit card slips are not considered receipts and are not sufficient for reimbursement purposes.

“RMA” means the Rural Municipalities of Alberta Association.

“Training and Development” means a process of enhancing a Council member’s ability to perform in relation to their governance role.

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Elected Officials shall
 - 1.1. Follow this policy to demonstrate transparency and accountability to the taxpayers;
 - 1.2. Approve any amendment to this policy. Rates may be adjusted annually to reflect the same adjustment that the staff may receive as approved during budget deliberations (i.e. COLA);
 - 1.3. Engage the services of a public committee to review this policy in accordance with the terms of reference that are specified by Elected Officials;
 - 1.4. Obtain receipts and/or other required documents to substantiate all expenditures. Only detailed itemized receipts with GST number (if applicable) will be accepted. Debit and credit card receipts do not provide sufficient information to substantiate expenditures; however, in the instance where a receipt could not be obtained (i.e. Parking machine), approval will be at the discretion of the designated approver;
 - 1.5. Submit their expense claims to the CAO's office;
 - 1.6. Provide a Council Report prior to each regularly scheduled Council Meeting. Council Reports must be in writing and are in the form of a list of meetings, conferences or community events the Elected Official has attended since the last Council Meeting and may include highlights. Council Reports are to be included in the Council Meeting Minutes.
 - 1.7. Elected Officials should demonstrate a prudent use of resources focusing on transparency and accountability.
2. Administration shall
 - 2.1. Review and budget sufficient funds during the budget cycle, in consultation with Elected Officials, to enable individual Elected Officials and Council as a whole to carry out their respective duties and manage their individual budget;
 - 2.2. Review all Elected Officials expense submissions for accuracy and compliance with this policy, and authorize payment of all claims that fully comply with the provisions of this policy;
 - 2.3. Inform Elected Officials of any expense claims that do not fully comply with the provisions of this policy;
 - 2.4. Coordinate travel, accommodation, convention and conference activities of Elected Officials to benefit from group rates or discounts to the extent feasible and practical;
 - 2.5. Coordinate and manage travel and accommodation for mandatory training, conventions, conferences and County events;
 - 2.6. Present copies of Council honorarium and expense claims to Council on a monthly basis;

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council Policy F10

- 2.7. Report basic honorarium and approved expenses of Elected Officials in the annual audited financial statements for the County and disclose to the public in the County Connections newsletter, published three times annually.

Policy Guidelines

3. Basic Honorarium – (equivalent to 4.75 per diems)
 - 3.1. A basic (monthly) honorarium shall be paid to Elected Officials for the performance of their duties as Elected Officials. The current rates are identified in Schedule A.
 - 3.2. The Reeve shall receive a ten (10%) percent honorarium differential.
 - 3.3. Each Elected Official shall receive basic honorarium for the following duties:
 - 3.3.1. Elected Officials meetings with residents and community.
 - 3.3.2. Meetings with Administration to discuss County business.
 - 3.3.3. Meetings with constituents and business of the County.
 - 3.3.4. Preparation work, including agenda and correspondence review.
4. Per Diems
 - 4.1. The current rates are identified in Schedule A.
 - 4.1.1. An Elected Official, when acting as the official spokesperson for the County, as authorized by the Reeve and Council, shall receive a ten (10%) percent honorarium differential.
 - 4.1.2. A Designate for the Reeve, when acting in official capacity, shall receive a ten (10%) percent honorarium differential.
 - 4.2. Elected Officials are to provide details of meetings that they have attended, including the length of the meetings (inclusive of travel time) on their expense submission.
 - 4.3. A maximum of one and a half per diems are allowed per day.
 - 4.4. Half-day or evening meetings are subject to the following qualifications for per diems per meeting, inclusive of travel time:
 - 4.4.1. Meeting 0:00 – 4:00 hours – one half per diem
 - 4.4.2. Meeting 0:00 – 4:00 hours which extends through the lunch hour – one per diem
 - 4.4.3. Meeting 4:01 – 8:00 hours – one per diem
 - 4.4.4. Meeting greater than 8 hours – one and a half per diem

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council Policy F10

- 4.5. Per diems will be paid for attendance at the following:
- 4.5.1. Council or Committee of the Whole meetings, which qualifies as a minimum of an eight (8) hours day for each meeting, this also includes Special Council Meetings and Municipal Planning Commission.
 - 4.5.2. Conducting annual evaluations of the CAO.
 - 4.5.3. Meetings where attendance as a dignitary or representative of the County. The Reeve or Designate is eligible.
 - 4.5.4. Special Council Meetings such as capital grants and disaster/emergency meetings that may be called from time to time.
 - 4.5.5. Meetings of any external committee or board to which the Elected Official is appointed by Council. Or attendance as an alternate when the appointed Elected Official is unable to attend, or when invited by the appointed Elected Official or board/committee chair. Honorariums and expenses shall be paid for attendance at regular committee meetings and subcommittee meetings. Or for attendance of the primary function conferences or training by the primary Elected Official appointee as may be required from time-to-time by the committee or board. If an alternate is to attend a conference, a Council motion is required.
 - 4.5.6. Internal Elected Officials committees or boards to which the Elected Official is appointed by Council, or attendance as an alternate when appointed Elected Official is unable to attend, or when invited by the appointed Elected Official or committee chair.
 - 4.5.7. Meetings with other governments and government agencies outside of Council or Committee of the Whole meetings days, including joint council meetings.
 - 4.5.8. Conferences and conventions as identified in Schedule B or as otherwise approved by Council. The maximum per diem to be claimed while attending a conference is one per diem. This one per diem includes attendance at evening events and hospitality suites, etc. If a Councillor attends a formal meeting in the evening an additional .5 per diem may be claimed.
 - 4.5.9. Mandatory training sessions as identified in Schedule D or as otherwise approved by Council.
 - 4.5.10. Approved Professional Development courses.
 - 4.5.11. Elected Officials Strategic Planning sessions.
 - 4.5.12. If per diems are paid by external organizations, no per diems will be paid to the Elected Official by the County of Grande Prairie.

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council Policy F10

- 4.5.13. Attendance at internal County functions in the context of celebrations or functions.
- 4.5.14. Attendance at community events (i.e., Parades, Ticketed Events (i.e., Grande Spirit Foundation, STARS, Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention, etc.) or other events by invitation)
- 4.5.15. Meetings with local rural crime watch groups.
- 4.5.16. Meetings with local interest groups (i.e. cemetery operators) by invitation from CAO.
- 4.5.17. Educational or informational webinars offered through municipal, provincial or federal government or related agencies.
- 4.5.18. Inter-municipal social functions by invitation (i.e. municipal bonspiel, golf tournaments, etc.).
- 4.5.19. Compensation related to an extraordinary circumstance, or where a State of Local Emergency is declared, shall be paid in accordance with Policy L14 – Compensation During Extraordinary Circumstances.

5. Virtual Meeting Attendance

- 5.1. Elected Officials are eligible to participate by means of virtual attendance as provided in the Procedural Bylaw. This requirement may be varied in extenuating circumstances (i.e., Health pandemic) or otherwise pre-approved by Council.

6. Benefits

- 6.1. Elected Officials will be given the opportunity to join the County Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) up to a maximum of ten (10%) percent of the gross pay for all per diems claimed on the monthly time sheets including the Basic Honorarium.
- 6.2. If an Elected Official chooses not to participate in the Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), or is not eligible due to age, the County will pay an amount equal to ten (10%) percent of the gross pay for all per diems claimed on the monthly time sheets including the Basic Honorarium.
- 6.3. Elected Officials are also eligible to participate in County-provided benefits, as listed below, in accordance with the requirements and limits set out in each plan:
 - 6.3.1. Extended Health Care, Vision Care, Out-of-Province Emergency Travel Benefits, Dental.
 - 6.3.2. Employee Family Assistance Program.
 - 6.3.3. Group Life Insurance.
 - 6.3.4. Basic Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance.
 - 6.3.5. Health/Wellness Spending Account.
 - 6.3.6. Optional group benefits available at the Elected Officials expense for:

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council Policy F10

- 6.3.6.1. Enhanced Health and Dental coverage
 - 6.3.6.2. Critical Illness Insurance
 - 6.3.6.3. Life and Dependent Life Insurance
 - 6.3.6.4. Additional AD&D Insurance
 - 6.3.6.5. Elite Diagnostic Imaging
- 6.4. Elected Officials are to provide sufficient information to Payroll and sign up for eligible benefits.
- 7. Other Compensation/Allowances
 - 7.1. Personal Communication Device
 - 7.1.1. Each Elected Official shall receive a monthly allowance for the use of a personally owned communication device. The current rates are identified in Schedule A.
 - 7.1.2. *Elected Officials in office prior to October 16, 2017 have the option to remain under the County's Corporate-Issued Mobile Device Plan.*
 - 7.2. Electronic Devices
 - 7.2.1. Each Elected Official shall receive a monthly allowance for the use of data on a personally owned electronic device. This includes a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet. The current rates are identified in Schedule A.
 - 7.2.2. Each Elected Official shall receive a monthly allowance for the hardware, upgrade, or replacement of a personally owned electronic device. The current rates are identified in Schedule A.
 - 7.2.3. *Elected Officials in office prior to October 16, 2017 have the option to continue to use the Corporate-Issued Laptop.*
 - 7.3. Internet Service
 - 7.3.1. Each Elected Official shall receive a monthly allowance to cover basic high speed internet operation costs from their place of residence. The current rates are identified in Schedule A.
 - 7.4. Travel Expenses
 - 7.4.1. Refer to Policy L4 - Travel Expense Reimbursement for current travel expense rates and guidelines.
 - 7.4.2. Elected Officials are eligible to claim mileage for activities related to basic honorarium duties as outlined in Section 3.3 of this Policy.

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council Policy F10

7.5. Training and Professional Development

- 7.5.1. Elected Officials are encouraged to participate in professional training and development opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge to effectively fulfill their governance roles and responsibilities.
- 7.5.2. Mandatory training will be budgeted as general training in the Council budget. Mandatory training is identified in Schedule D.

7.6. Conference and Conventions

- 7.6.1. Elected Officials are expected to represent the County of Grande Prairie at conferences and conventions. Pre-approved conferences and conventions are identified in Schedule B. These will be budgeted in the Council budget, as it is encouraged that all of Council attend.

7.7. Other

- 7.7.1. Elected Officials have the option to use the County's Microsoft Home Use Program which provides a licensed copy of most Microsoft Office Desktop PC applications to install and use on a home computer. Antivirus software is also available. One License per Elected Official.
- 7.7.2. Elected Officials are eligible for a one-time wearing apparel allowance, to a maximum of \$200, to be used to purchase County branded apparel.

8. Exclusions

- 8.1. In the event that an Elected Official receives any remuneration from an external board or committee or commission for that Elected Official's duly authorized attendance on behalf of the County at a meeting of the said board, commission or committee, the Elected Official shall not be paid by the County.
- 8.2. In the event that a member of Council attends an event that is hosted by a provincial or federal political party (such as a provincial fund-raising function), the Elected Official shall not be paid a per diem by the County for their attendance. For expenses that are deemed to not be political, contributions shall be reimbursed as a meal expense only, up to a maximum of \$25, pursuant to the Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act Section 23(3)(a).
- 8.3. The County shall not pay for any spousal or guest expenses, with the exception of the annual banquet held at the Rural Municipalities of Alberta convention. Any upfront costs for spousal conference packages will be reimbursed to the County by payroll deduction.
- 8.4. The County shall not reimburse any Elected Official for, or otherwise directly or indirectly pay for, any political contributions.
- 8.5. Other related items including printers, land line phones, related long distance calls, telephone answering machine or services, paper and toner, etc. are the responsibility of the Elected Official.

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

9. Conflicts or Disputes

- 9.1. In the event that requested remuneration is beyond what is outlined in this policy, or a conflict arises, the details of the matter shall be referred to Council for decision through resolution.

10. Remuneration Review

- 10.1. A review of this Policy and applicable rates will occur every four years, prior to August 1 of the year of the upcoming municipal election, with any changes to the Policy being implemented following the municipal election.
- 10.2. The Policy shall be reviewed by a Committee established and appointed by Council.

11. Board/Committee Member Compensation

- 11.1. Board/Committee members, appointed by Council, shall be eligible to receive per diems and expenses in accordance with this Policy, unless otherwise stated.

12. Claim Submission and Approval Process

- 12.1. Monthly claim forms must be submitted electronically to the CAO's Office for processing by the 21st day of each month. Payment will be made by the last day of the month.
- 12.2. Administration will review all Elected Officials expense submissions for accuracy and compliance with this policy, and authorize payment of all claims that fully comply with the provisions of this policy;
- 12.3. Administration will inform Elected Officials of any expense claims that do not fully comply with the provisions of this policy;
- 12.4. Claims will be subject to peer review at the first Closed Session of each month. Any adjustments will be made on the Elected Officials subsequent pay.

Attachments

Schedule A – Honorarium, Per Diems and Allowances
Schedule B – Pre-Approved Conferences and Conventions
Schedule C – Mandatory Meetings
Schedule D – Mandatory and Pre-Approved Training

References

Legal Authorities	Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 Income Tax Regulation (ITR s. 7306) CRA guide "Employer's Guide - Taxable Benefits and Allowances T4130(E) Rev. 20
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	Policy B1 - Policy Development Policy L4 – Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy R1 – Electronic Devices, Messaging Tools and Internet Use

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Other	N/A
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Revision History

Review Date	Description
October 6, 2025	Reviewed and Amended CM20251006.049
May 20, 2025	Reviewed and Amended CM20250520.003
January 13, 2025	Reviewed and Amended CM20250113.010
October 21, 2024	Reviewed and Amended OM20241021.014
June 11, 2024	Reviewed and Amended CM20240611.005
January 15, 2024	Reviewed and Amended CM20240115.017
October 30, 2023	Reviewed and Amended CM20231030.010
February 27, 2023	Reviewed and Amended CM20230227.007
January 16, 2023	Reviewed and Amended CM20230116.029
April 4, 2022	Reviewed and Amended CM20220404.012
January 10, 2022	Reviewed and Amended CM20220110.018
September 13, 2021	Adoption Date CM20210913.007

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Schedule A – Honorarium, Per Diems and Allowances (rates effective October 6, 2025)

Basic Honorarium

Reeve	\$1,890.16 (\$397.93 per diem x 4.75) <i>The Reeve, or Designate, when acting in official capacity, shall receive a ten (10%) percent honorarium differential. An Elected Official, when acting as the official spokesperson for the County, as authorized by the Reeve and Council, shall receive a ten (10%) percent honorarium differential.</i>
Councillor	\$1,718.33 (\$361.75 per diem x 4.75)

Per Diems

Meeting Duration	4 hours or less	Over 4 – 8 hours or 4 hours or less over the lunch hour	More than 8 hours
Reeve	\$198.96	\$397.93	\$596.89
Councillor	\$180.88	\$361.75	\$542.63
Board/Committee members	\$180.88	\$361.75	

Allowances

Electronic Device	\$40.00 per month
Internet Service	\$100.00 per month
Mobile Device – Data	\$75.00 per month
Mobile Device – Hardware	\$35.00 per month

Mileage

Rate per Kilometre	As per Policy L4 - Travel Expense Reimbursement
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Meals

Rates	As per Policy L4 - Travel Expense Reimbursement
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Other Travel Expenses

Accommodation	As per Policy L4 - Travel Expense Reimbursement
Airfare/Luggage	Reimbursement by receipt at cost as per Policy L4 – Travel Expense Reimbursement
Cab Fare/Rideshare/Parking	Reimbursement by receipt at cost

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Registration Fees

Reimbursement by receipt at cost

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Schedule B - Pre-Approved Conferences and Conventions

Funds will be budgeted annually for Elected Officials to attend the following pre-approved events (includes travel and conference fees):

Conference/Activity
Agricultural Service Board Provincial Conference
Agricultural Service Board Summer Tour
Alberta Community Crime Prevention (ACCPA)
Alberta Economic Development Conference
Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA)
Alberta Municipalities Conference
Alberta Municipalities Spring Municipal Leader Caucus
Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA)
CPAA Annual Planning Conference
FCSSAA Conference
FCSS Spring Regional Meeting
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference
Growing the North Conference
Rural Municipalities of Alberta Conventions (Spring and Fall)
Rural Municipalities of Alberta Zone Meetings (two times per year)

Note: County representation is encouraged, however, attendance by all Councillors is not required.

Additional Conferences, Meetings and Conventions **requiring approval by Council motion:**

Conference/Activity
Alberta Recycling Fall Conference (CARE)
Alberta Recycling Spring Conference
Cross Roads
Rural Community Health Provider Attraction Conference
Rural Libraries – Peace Library System
Synergy Conference
Travel Alberta Industry Conference and Tradeshow

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Schedule C – Mandatory Meetings

Mandatory Meeting Attendance

Regular Council Meetings
(26 meetings per year)

Budget Council Meetings
(6 meetings per year)

Committee of the Whole Meetings
(12 meetings per year)

Strategic Priorities Planning Sessions
(2 days per year in an election year (held outside the jurisdiction area), 1 day per year in non-election year)

Council and Board Member Honoraria & Expense Reimbursement

Council
Policy F10

Schedule D – Mandatory & Pre-Approved Training

Mandatory

In the year following a municipal election, all Councillors are required to participate in the following orientation and training events:

- County of Grande Prairie Orientation Program
- County hosted training to enable the Elected Official to effectively use electronic devices and County related programs
- Media Training (Communications)
- Munis 101 Course (Elected Officials Education Program)

Pre-Approved

Funds will be budgeted annually for Elected Officials to attend the following pre-approved training events (includes travel and conference fees):

- Elected Officials Education Program – Municipal Elected Leaders Certificate courses
- Brownlee LLP Emerging Trends
- Reynolds Mirth Richards Farmer Municipal Law Seminar