

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 8, 2022

SUBJECT: District Boundary Resident Review Panel – Honorariums

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

ORIGIN

February 8, 2022 motion of Halifax Regional Council directing the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a supplemental report exploring the possibility of providing honorariums for members of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to
(a) provide good government; ...

20 (3) The Municipality shall adopt an expense policy and a hospitality policy.
(6) An expense may only be reimbursed if that expense is authorized pursuant to the expense policy or the hospitality policy.

21 (1) The Council may establish standing, special and advisory committees.
(2) Each committee shall perform the duties conferred on it by this Act, any other Act of the Legislature or the by-laws or policies of the Municipality.
(3) The Council may appoint persons who are not members of the Council to a committee and may establish a procedure for doing so...
(6) A committee member who is not a Council member may be:
(a) paid an annual honorarium for serving on the committee, as determined by the Council by policy, and an honorarium may be a different amount if the person is chair of a committee and honorariums may differ for different committees; and
(b) reimbursed for expenses incurred as a committee member.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council reimburse the members of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel for local expenses incurred while serving on that Panel as outlined in the discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

On February 8, 2022 Halifax Regional Council considered Administrative Order Number 2022- 001 – GOV, Respecting the Creation of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel. The District Boundary Resident Review Panel will participate in Phase Two of the District Boundary Review Project, both as collaborators in the public engagement process and analyzing responses and themes from the engagement. Once the analysis is complete, it is proposed that the committee, with support from HRM staff, will provide a Phase Two report proposing polling district boundaries to Regional Council through Executive Standing Committee.

Over the course of discussion on this matter, Council requested that staff investigate the possibility of providing an honorarium to members of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel due to its scope of work relative to Phase Two of the District Boundary Review project, volunteer time commitment, and the member competency requirements.

DISCUSSION

Generally, volunteer Board and Committee members who serve on internal advisory committees are not provided with an honorarium or the reimbursement of expenses unless it is specifically directed by Council. Clause 21(6)(a) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter gives Council the authority to provide an honorarium to Committee members, by Administrative Order, provided those members are not members of Council. Clause 21 (6) (b) also allows for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by committee members, who are not members of Council. The Charter does not require the reimbursement of committee members expenses be listed in the Administrative Order creating the Panel.

Council's approach to remuneration of volunteer committee members has been to include provisions which enable it within the committee's terms of reference through Administrative Order. Factors such as the scope of work, mandate, expertise as well as an evaluation of comparable committees in other jurisdictions are typically included in staff's recommendations when determining if remuneration should be considered within a new committee's terms of reference.

Currently, there is one active internal committee which offers an honorarium to its members through its terms of reference. The License Appeal Committee was established on September 22, 2020. It is an arm's length committee of Council that adjudicates taxi license appeals under By-law T-1000. In establishing this Committee, staff reviewed various models of appeal committees and tribunals in other jurisdictions and recommended an honorarium of \$250.00 per member for each appeal hearing and \$300 per appeal hearing for the Committee chair. At the time of writing this report, the License Appeal Committee has held four appeal hearings. Similarly, the former Taskforce for the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History, established by Council on October 22, 2018 included provisions within its Terms of Reference to provide its members with an honorarium. Although the Taskforce is now inactive, it's eight members received an honorarium of \$150.00 per meeting up to a maximum of \$2100 (14 meetings). The Taskforce met 16 times from October 22, 2018 to March 16, 2020 prior to the submission of its final report to Council and the conclusion of its mandate.

There are examples of other committees where members receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties. The Youth Advisory Committee terms of reference (Administrative Order 2017-007-GOV) references this specifically in section 25. It notes that while the committee does not receive an

honorarium, its members are eligible for reimbursement of expenses related to committee business. At the time of its creation, it was identified that transportation costs associated with attending in person committee meetings and other public engagement activities were viewed as a barrier to participation especially for youth. Therefore, the reimbursement of travel expenses (mileage and parking) or providing alternative transportation options to members (taxi chits and transit tickets) was included within the Youth Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference to mitigate the financial constraints of participating on a volunteer advisory committee. It should be noted that this approach to committee member reimbursement is not applied to all volunteer committees of Council but only when specified in a committee's terms of reference. The Women's Advisory Committee, created in 2018, has a similar provision within its terms of reference which allows for the reimbursement of expenses related to committee business.

The District Boundary Review Panel will be comprised of individuals with specific expertise in urban planning, municipal governance, political science and municipal administration. While this type of resident panel is if-new to the Halifax Regional Municipality there are other examples of similar special committees struck for Ward and District Boundary reviews used in other jurisdictions. Municipalities such as Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Calgary have utilized ward boundary commissions in past reviews and have allowed for some form of remuneration or expense reimbursement to its members as per their unique respective administrative and legislative frameworks.

Recommendation

Staff are recommending that members of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel be reimbursed for travel expenses while serving on the panel at the rates set out in the HRM's Employment Expense Reimbursement Policy such as \$0.46 per kilometer. This would include reimbursement for travel, to and from in person meetings and in person public engagement activities where panel member attendance is required. Eligible expenses are mileage, bridge tolls, parking, taxi and transit fares. This is similar to approach under Administrative Order 17 respecting the Remuneration for Members of Council which says:

4. Members shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred as a Member in the same manner and to the same extent as employees of the Municipality on filing written proof that the expenses have actually been incurred.

Eligible mileage claims would include travel measured in kilometers from a member's residence to the meeting location and the return trip. If a member does not travel by personal vehicle, taxi or transit fare will be reimbursed or provided directly via taxi chit or transit tickets. Members would be provided with local travel forms and would be responsible to provide receipts, where applicable, to the Municipal Clerk's Office for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial impact of this report is anticipated to be low. The reimbursement of associated travel expenses for committee related business (travel and parking) would be absorbed in the budget for Legal, Municipal Clerk, and External Affairs (Elections).

If Council were to consider alternative recommendation one to amend the District Boundary Resident Review Panel's term of reference to provide honoraria to its members, the estimated budget impact would be \$14,700. This figure is derived from an honorarium of \$150 per meeting up to maximum of \$2100 and is based on the rate provided to members of the former Taskforce for the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History. This can be accommodated from the proposed 2022/2023 operational budget in A125 – 6399 (Elections – Contract Services) reserve account Q511- Election Reserve is included in 2022/23 reserve budget.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Halifax Regional Council could choose to give notice of motion to amend Administrative Order 2022-001-GOV to allow for an honorarium of \$150 per meeting to each member of the District Boundary Resident Review Panel up to a maximum of \$2100.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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