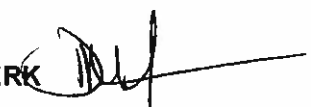


TO: GENERAL COMMITTEE


SUBJECT: USE OF CITY FACILITIES BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

WARDS: ALL

PREPARED BY AND KEY CONTACT: D. MCALPINE, CITY CLERK, EXT. 4421

SUBMITTED BY: D. MCALPINE, CITY CLERK 

GENERAL MANAGER APPROVAL: E. ARCHER, CMA, GENERAL MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES 

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER APPROVAL: C. LADD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER 

RECOMMENDED MOTION

1. That the following Council Policy regarding the Use of City Facilities by members of Council be maintained:

"Use of City Facilities

Individual expense accounts will be charged for the usage of Corporate Facilities based on the applicable rate established in the City's Fees By-law and the amounts will be included in annual Council remuneration reports."

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

2. On April 6, 2009, City Council adopted motion 09-G-136 with respect to the 2008 Council Remuneration Report and the use of Councillor/Mayoral expense accounts, as follows:

"2008 COUNCIL REMUNERATION REPORT

1. That the 2008 Council Remuneration Report attached as Appendix "A" to Staff Report FIN006-09 be received for information.
2. That individual Councillor/Mayoral expense accounts be charged for the following expenses:
 - a) Usage of Corporate vehicles based on the Corporate mileage rate times the number of kilometres driven; and
 - b) Usage of Corporate facilities (based on the applicable rate established in the City's Fees By-law) beginning January 1, 2010

and the amounts be included in annual Council remuneration reports."

3. On October 1, 2012, City Council adopted motion 12-G-257 regarding the Use of City Facilities by Members of Council, as follows:

"12-G-257 USE OF CITY FACILITIES BY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

That the following item be referred to staff in the City Clerk's Office for a report back to General Committee to identify whether there is a continued need for the use of the City Facilities Policy:

"That the following Council Policy regarding the use of City Facilities by members of Council be deleted:

Use of City Facilities

Individual expense accounts will be charged for the usage of Corporate Facilities based on the applicable rate established in the City's Fees By-law and the amounts will be included in annual Council remuneration reports."

ANALYSIS

4. When the 2008 Council Remuneration Report was presented, members of Council identified that there were two services that were not reflected in the report – the use of Corporate facilities and the use of the Corporate vehicle(s). This was deemed by members of Council to represent an inconsistency and inadvertently cause a lack transparency in the accounting of expenses associated with individual members of Council.
5. It was noted by members of Council at the time, that certain Corporate facilities (primarily the Southshore Community Centre) were being booked relatively regularly for very small gatherings with constituents (given the size of the facility). As the satellite facilities do not have assigned staff, these bookings resulted in costs to the Corporation associated with the requirement to bring in additional part time staff for set up and clean up of the facilities without recovery of these costs, as well as lost revenue as the facilities were unable to be utilized by paying clients.
6. Since the implementation of the policy, these facilities have not been utilized by the members of Council for these purposes and are available for rental to the public.
7. A more disconcerting aspect that was raised by members of Council related to requests from community groups or organizations to book Corporate facilities under a Councillor's name, in order to avoid paying the fees associated with facility rental. While the community group or organization's meeting was a valuable community event, members of Council indicated that they felt these requests were placing them in an awkward position. They noted that they felt these requests were the equivalent of providing a subsidy or grant to the community group or organization, that was not provided on a consistent or transparent basis.
8. It also became challenging for members of Council as typically when a booking is made under a Councillor's name, it is anticipated that the Councillor will be hosting and/or at a minimum participating in the event as a speaker. Members of Council felt that they were being disingenuous with staff if they indicated they were hosting the event and/or a speaker at the event. While a member of Council might support obtaining community input on a topic, they felt it was inappropriate to be seen as the host of the event. The front line staff in the Recreation, Facilities and Transit were often placed in the awkward position of interpreting whether the booking is truly for Council/City business.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

9. There are no environmental matters related to the recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES

10. The following alternative(s) are available to the General Committee in regard to this report:

Alternative #1 General Committee could recommend that a maximum of one or two free bookings per year, per Council member for specific purposes such as Town Halls/Ward meetings be permitted.

There aren't City facilities in each of the wards, which would lead to some inequity amongst Councillors. It would also create a financial exposure associated with the costs for facility set up and clean up without the offsetting revenues.

Alternative #2 General Committee could delete the current policy and allow members of Council to book any City facility without charging Councillor expense accounts the fee to recover the Corporation's costs.

Any "free booking" would result in costs to the Corporation for the additional part time staff for set up and clean up of the facilities without recovery of these costs, as well the lost revenue as the facilities were unable to be utilized by paying clients.

FINANCIAL

11. There are no direct financial implications for the Corporation relating to the recommendation to maintain the policy. It should be noted that the issues that lead to the instigation of this policy in 2009 are still relevant therefore staff recommend that the policy be maintained.

LINKAGE TO 2010-2014 COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

12. The recommendations included in this Staff Report are not specifically related to City Council's Strategic Plan.