

Appendix A

Citizen Committee for Council Compensation – Recommendation Report

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Purpose

In September 2022, Council established a Citizen Committee to review the total compensation package for Council and report back. Terms of reference for the committee can be found in Appendix B of report 23-082-CRS.

Background

- The Committee met several times during the period from September 2022 through January 2023.
- The Committee fulfilled their mandate through reviewing Council compensation related policies, interviewing and surveying members from the 2018-2022 term of Council, and seeking additional documentation and information from City staff.
- The Committee consisted of the following members and their representative sectors
 - Jeff Donkersgoed – representing the educational community;
 - Kim Decker – representing the non-profit sector;
 - Erik Reed – representing the business community;
 - Vacant – representing the healthcare community;
 - Vacant – representing the organized labour community.

Recommendations

The Committee has made the following recommendations to Council compensation, to be implemented at a time that Council deems suitable:

Mayor

- Salary to remain at \$110,000, and receive an annual cost of living adjustment based on a relevant consumer price index (CPI)
- Benefits and OMERS contributions paid for by the city to remain the same.
- \$8,000 car allowance in lieu of having a leased vehicle provided by the city.

Council

- IF Council agrees that the commitment of a councillor can truly be a part-time commitment, councillor salary should increase 3.59% annually, along with annual cost of living adjustments based on a relevant CPI.
- IF at this time or in the future Council deems that the role of councillor is a full-time commitment, then the annual salary should range between \$85,000 to \$100,000.

Expense Policy

- The proposed expense policy can be viewed in its entirety in Appendix C of report 23-082-CRS.
- Council and Mayor can expense up to \$80 per month for home internet expenses. This is reflective of the current practice which the committee finds to be a reasonable support but adds in a cap which will eliminate the need to perform pro-rated calculations of bundled home internet, cable and phone services.
- Meal per diems to be increased to \$20 for breakfast, \$25 for lunch and \$50 for dinner. The current rates have not increased since 2016 and are not reflective of meal costs likely to be incurred while travelling.
- Each councillor's yearly discretionary fund to remain at \$2,500 per year, and \$4,300 for the Mayor. The committee did not find any indication from its interviews that the current amounts were insufficient for covering the incidental costs covered by these funds.
- Mileage and business travel reimbursement to be increased to a maximum of \$1,000 per year. The committee recognizes that travel costs have increased significantly over the course of the past term, and does not expect Council or Mayor to incur out of pocket expenses to cover travel to and from conferences, or constituent related work.
- Council and Mayor can opt in to a Grand River Transit monthly pass (approximately \$90 value) with the intention of covering constituent and intra-city work related travel. The committee believes this is a cost-effective way to cover the cost of necessary travel within the city, while also giving Council and Mayor an opportunity to become more familiar with effectiveness of public transportation options offered to their constituents.
- Up to \$1,000 to be reimbursed per term for the purchase of home security equipment and installation. Up to \$50 per month for related subscription or monitoring services. Equipment and providers to be selected at Council and Mayor's discretion, purchased through a City vendor. There will be no need for notification from the Waterloo Regional Police Service of a verifiable incident or perceived threat to the safety of the Mayor or a member of Council. The committee regrettably recognizes that public service in today's political climate brings about extra security and personal safety concerns. Members of Council should be provided with peace of mind provided by home security, which may also act as a deterrent to those looking to cause harm.

Deputy Mayor

- The committee recommends to council that they formalize a process for selecting a Deputy Mayor when the need arises, and formally outline duties they are expected to undertake. For example, when might a Deputy Mayor be needed, and the rotating chair is not sufficient? How are they appointed? As well, we strongly believe that the duties taken on by a councillor in a Deputy Mayor role are a significant increase on top of their normal commitments. Therefore, if

anyone takes on the duties of the Mayor as a Deputy Mayor, they should receive extra pay of \$1,000 per week, which is slightly below the prorated difference between what a councillor and the Mayor earn on a weekly basis.

Analysis

Council Interviews

The committee conducted video interviews with eight members of 2018-2022 term of council, including the former Mayor, and received one set of answers via written submission. A series of questions were prepared addressing the nature of the work, weekly commitments, ability to work another job on top of Council duties, and how the City would be best served when a Mayor is unable to perform their duties.

General findings

1. There was not a consistent amount of time that all councilors spent on their role. Much of the time it depends on the individual councilor and how they conduct their interactions with constituents.
2. There was no differentiation between time spent on council business and time spent on constituent concerns. The work is often inter-related.
3. Most of the issues councilors deal with are related to bylaw, property, snow clearing, water main breaks, noise complaints etc. Any issues that are regional in nature are referred to regional staff. Some issues are referred to city staff where appropriate.
4. There is a general feeling that Cambridge residents are confused or do not understand what the city has jurisdiction over.
5. As a result of COVID, meetings became virtual and much longer. More time was spent reading and preparing for meetings. They were not able to connect with other councilors in the same way as prior to the pandemic.
6. Council members noted various challenges they experienced over the previous term in office with reference to conducting their duties, including a lack of financial security, physical and mental health concerns, accessibility issues, toxic and challenging situations with members of the public as well as other members of council, family and work obligations, and a lack of time for acquiring the knowledge and expertise necessary in order to make informed decisions during council meetings and when meeting with constituents.
7. A majority of respondents experienced a serious incident of harassment or trespassing during the past term. There was no opposition to making a security system reimbursement available before an incident was serious enough to warrant police involvement.

8. Respondents were split over whether a Deputy Mayor should be permanently assigned, or if the Council should remain with the current rotational chair system. As well, there was a lot of concern over whether a Deputy Mayor should be directly elected or assigned by the Mayor. Governance aside, it was agreed that someone performing the duties of a Deputy Mayor (for example attending Regional Council and other board meetings) should receive additional pay for the extra work performed.
9. The consensus amongst council members was that the role of a councilor should be considered a full-time position with an appropriate professional level of pay. The City of Cambridge would be better served by councilors fully able to dedicate themselves to the position, and councilors could better provide prompt responses to constituents, attend local events more readily, and meet with staff during business hours in order to properly prepare for meetings.
10. It was nearly unanimous that in present employment, or hypothetically while in previous careers, council members would not be able to balance council commitments on top of a full-time career.
11. Members of council who worked in other capacities noted they had difficulty conducting their council duties and/or had difficulty obtaining and/or sustaining other work, often leading to financial insecurity.
12. There would be more interest from citizens of all demographics in seeking election if the position were considered full-time and accompanied by requisite pay.
13. Council members stated that they generally had no major issues with the current expense policy. They were understanding of the need for proper procedures, transparency, and accountability related to their expenses.

Suggested Council Salary

Respondents were asked what they viewed as appropriate pay based on their personal and professional experience, which included the following answers:

- \$47,000 to \$48,000;
- \$65,000 to \$70,000, as Waterloo councilors currently earn \$65,000;
- \$75,000 to \$85,000;
- \$75,000 to \$100,000 would attract great candidates. \$45,000, the current pay is challenging for a working person to make ends meet;
- \$90,000 to \$95,000 to attract the best candidates, as it really is a full-time job;
- Full-time councilors in large cities earn more than \$100,000.

The committee also took into consideration the cost of living in the City of Cambridge.

Comparator Survey

The committee was provided with a comparator survey containing information about Council and Mayoral compensation offered in other similarly sized jurisdictions in Ontario. However, the comparator information only provided a surface level analysis. It did not take into consideration the actual number of hours worked by council members in other jurisdictions, nor whether they are in a two-tier regional government and receive additional pay for serving at a regional level, or for taking on other city related responsibilities.

After reviewing reports from other cities that recently concluded their own compensation reviews, it is apparent that other jurisdictions are also realizing that the part-time roles their councilors are elected to are in reality full-time commitments. See *Citizen Committee to Review Council Remuneration – Final Report to City Council – March 2022 from the City of Kingston* and *The Role of a Municipal Councillor Background Report – Prepared by Watson and Associates for the City of Guelph*.

Full-time v Part-time

It is the view of this committee that the role of a City of Cambridge Councilor is indeed a full-time commitment requiring at least 30-40 hours per week on average in order to adequately address constituent concerns in a timely manner, review relevant material ahead of Council meetings, and dedicate necessary time for conducting normal Council operations.

During the 2022-2026 term, City staff are anticipating that a ward boundary review will take place. This will be an opportune time for the current council to assess the projected growth of constituents, and what number of councilors would be needed to serve them in the future in either a part-time or full-time capacity. An appropriate debate can be had at that time as to what type of commitments and council pay will be needed to attract a slate of candidates that will best serve the city in subsequent terms, and whether the city would be better served with relatively a larger contingent of part-time or a smaller number of full-time councilors.

This committee finds that the current balance of pay versus the actual time commitment, growing threat of harassment faced by politicians, and career hardships faced by anyone of working age quite unbalanced. Compensation that truly recognizes the effort and commitment put in by a councilor would better attract a broader, more diverse set of candidates capable of fully representing the citizenry of Cambridge. In its current configuration, serving as a city councilor seems largely to be accessible only by those that are independently wealthy, retired, are lucky enough to have an employer that allows them the flexibility to serve on council, or have the fortune of living off another benevolent individual. Fairness, access to opportunity, and community equity can all be addressed by deeming the role of a councilor as full-time commitment, with requisite compensation.

If council decides to continue to recognize the role of a councilor as a part-time commitment, then they must enact changes to ensure it truly is part-time. This could include delegating constituent related inquiries to be handled by city staff, especially those that pertain to other levels of government, as well as streamlining meetings, in particular where IT issues cause repeated delays.

Concluding Remarks

We strongly recommend that council and staff initiate the work of the Council Compensation Committee in the year prior to the next election year to provide more time for recruitment and the committee.

The committee recognizes that any pay adjustment, no matter how big or small, will attract proponents on both sides of the discussion. It is our recommendation that this council objectively consider the different paths that lie ahead of them. Keeping with the status quo may continue to see a large portion of our community shut out from considering running for council as the time commitment, as well as harsh working conditions coupled with low pay, make the prospect untenable. On the other hand, council can consider a substantial shift that will honestly recognize the time, effort and personal sacrifice put in by councilors, and fairly compensate them for it.

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Members of Council – 2018-2022 Term, Interview Questions

1. On average, how much time do you spend in this role (weekly, monthly)? Are you able to distinguish between time spent on constituent concerns and time spent on city hall business?
2. Generally, what kinds of issues do you deal with from constituents on a weekly basis?
3. Has your role changed during COVID? If so, how?
4. In your opinion, do you believe that a councillor's job in the City of Cambridge should be full-time?
5. Do you believe the current format for Council expenses is fair and equitable? Are there items that are missing? Are there items that should not be included, either because they are not necessary OR because they should be considered a "benefit" of being an elected official?
6. What other paid employment do you hold outside of your Council duties?
 - a. (If working another job or running a business) do you feel that you're able to find a manageable work-life balance while managing your professional and your desired level of Council commitments?
 - b. (If retired) Do you believe you could have balanced your previous professional commitments on top of your current Council duties, while maintain a meaningful work-life balance?
7. Over the past term, have you ever felt any fear for the security of yourself or family members, or experienced harassment from constituents in any form?
8. What has been your greatest challenge over your term as councillor? Do you see that changing over the next four years?
9. Do you believe the city would be better served a by a permanently assigned deputy mayor where the Municipal Act provides the authority to have one member as an alternate to the Mayor or do you feel the City is better served by an acting-Mayor-rotation for all Council members to fill, which the Municipal Act prevents from granting the Mayor's authority to all? Where there any challenges that Council face during this past term when a fill-in for mayoral duties was required?