

**COUNCIL MEMBERSHIPS, CONFERENCES, EVENTS, AND TRAVEL POLICY**  
**Council Policy No. 20/25**

Council has deemed it financially prudent to undertake an annual review of the memberships identified within this policy as well as any association(s) in which Council contributes membership funding towards.

When received, renewal membership will be placed on Council's agenda for Council to consider the value received versus the cost incurred.

Council will attend conferences and fully participate in forums, workshops, business meetings and functions of those associations that have been approved for membership renewal.

**POLICY:**

1. Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)

This organization is the provincial association representing and serving all local governments in BC. UBCM is recognized as the advocate for local governments.

Policy:

Upon membership renewal in the UBCM, all members of City Council are authorized to attend the annual UBCM conference provided funds are available in the approved budget.

2. North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA)

This organization is a regional chapter of the parent, UBCM, and represents local governments in the broad geographic area from 100 Mile House to the northern border. The organization schedules an Annual Conference in April/May of each year in a member municipality.

Policy:

Upon membership renewal in the NCLGA, all members of City Council are authorized to attend the annual NCLGA Conference provided funds are available in the approved budget.

3. Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

This organization is the national voice for Canada's local governments. FCM advocates to the federal government on behalf of local governments across Canada to shape the national agenda and deliver tools for communities. Municipal leaders from across Canada assemble each year to set FCM policy on key issues.

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3. Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) (continued)

Policy:

Upon membership renewal in the FCM, all members of City Council are authorized to attend the annual FCM conference provided funds are available in the approved budget.

4. Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER)

This organization is a statutory public/private non-profit created by states and provinces of the Pacific Northwest region. PNWER's mission is to foster sustainable economic development throughout the entire region.

Policy:

Upon membership renewal in the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, up to two members of City Council are authorized to attend the annual PNWER conference provided funds are available in the approved budget.

5. BC Natural Resources Forum (BCNRF)

This Forum offers a positive, non-partisan arena to discuss and learn first-hand the latest news, trends, and opportunities linked to the resource sector in BC.

Policy:

All members of City Council are authorized to attend the annual BC Natural Resources Forum provided funds are available in the approved budget.

6. BC Mayor's Caucus

UBCM hosts an annual spring and fall BC Mayor's Caucus that provides the opportunity for Mayors around the Province to discuss local government topics. The spring meeting is traditionally held in May and the fall meeting coincides with the UBCM Conference.

Policy:

The Mayor is authorized to attend BC Mayor's Caucus meetings provided funds are available in the approved budget.

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7. Local Events

Council is invited to many local functions and events as part of their local government duties. Invitations to local events may not always include complimentary tickets. Council members are frequently invited to attend or participate in events scheduled during evenings and weekends, which may impact their personal and family time.

When an outside firm or organization invites Council to a dinner, function, or event, it is presumed to be that the invitation is extended to Council members only, unless the invitation specifically states otherwise. In the case of formal events such as galas, balls, fundraisers, etc., that are open to the community, Council members may bring their spouse as a guest. In the event of City hosted dinners, functions, and/or events, City Council shall indicate their intent to include spouses or not.

Policy:

Council members and their spouses are authorized to participate in local functions provided funds are available in the approved budget.

8. Miscellaneous Events

Conferences, workshops, forums, or events that are not listed within this policy and require travel outside of the Peace Region must have Council's approval by resolution for a Council member to attend. Attendance is subject to funds being available in the approved budget.

Attendance at conferences and events is beneficial although absences can have operational impacts since Council's calendar is very full with many local meetings and events. To assist in Council's decision-making process to approve a request that isn't specifically identified in this policy, the answers to the following questions will be provided as part of the Administration Report:

- If the event takes place on a Council meeting day, will there be quorum for the meeting if the Council member(s) is absent?
- Are there financial implications if a meeting or presentation must be canceled due to a lack of quorum because the Council member(s) is attending the conference?
- Is the request to attend a conference or to speak at a conference?
- If this is a speaking engagement requested by a conference committee, are the expenses being paid for by the conference committee in whole or in part, or is the City required to pay the expenses to attend?

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8. Miscellaneous Events (continued)

- What are the total expenses incurred by the City?
- Are there sufficient funds available in the Council Travel account for this conference and what is the balance in the account if approved?
- What local meetings or events will the Council member(s) be absent for if approval is given to attend the conference?
- Is the topic part of the Council member's portfolio assigned under Council Policy No. 30?
- Does this event relate to one of Council's strategic priorities? If so, which one(s)?

9. Council Members' Participation on Local Government Associations Boards and Executives

City Council is expected to contribute towards the betterment of Fort St. John, to provide leadership and to serve and act on behalf of all citizens in the community. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Union of British Columbia Municipalities and North Central Local Government Association have Boards of Directors who have established select committees, task forces, and sub-committees to advocate local government issues at the regional, provincial, and federal levels. Due to the important work of these associations, Council encourages and supports individual Council Members to apply for executive and leadership positions in these organizations.

Individual Council Members wishing to apply for executive and leadership positions can formally request Council's endorsement of their nomination at a Regular Council meeting. The questions identified in Section 9 of this policy will be used as part of Council's deliberations.

10. Meetings with Ministers, Ministry Staff, and Economic Development Interests

To allow members of Council the authorization to schedule special meetings with Ministers, Ministry staff, and companies that are beneficial to the City's economic or development interests to promote the City and convey its initiatives.

Policy:

Members of Council will be authorized to travel:

- For meetings with Provincial Ministers and staff as required to convey the City's future growth and development or emerging issues that the City is dealing with.
- For meetings with Federal Ministers and staff as required to convey the City's future growth and development or emerging issues that the City is dealing with.
- To meet with representatives to promote Fort St. John's economic and development interests.

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#### 10. Meetings with Ministers, Ministry Staff, and Economic Development Interests (continued)

##### Meeting Topics, Approvals, and Reporting:

- Council is required to discuss and identify the topics for the meeting(s) they are requesting staff to coordinate in accordance with this policy. This reiterates that this is an issue or topic that is important to Council as a whole and to ensure that all of Council is aware of the issue.
- A Council resolution is required that will indicate the topic who Council will be meeting with, and to provide travel authorization.
- Those Council Members in attendance at the meeting will be required to provide either a verbal or written update to those Council members who did not attend.

#### 11. Annual Budget Allocation:

This expense will be allocated to the Council Local Events, Conferences, and Travel account and \$10,000 will be placed in each year's budget for this travel.

The annual budget for Council memberships, attendance to local events, conferences, and other travel as approved by resolution will be distributed to one account to be allocated as follows:

- Council Memberships and Professional Development:
  - Budget to cover membership dues to UBCM, NCLGA, FCM, and PNWER will be allocated based upon the yearly dues collected by these organizations.
  - Every four years coinciding with the Municipal Election, additional funds will be allocated for an Elected Officials Workshop and Learning and Development Training for the new Council.
    - On years with a by-election this training will be funded by the reserve line item "Unplanned Events".
- Council Local Events, Conferences, and Travel:
  - The budget will be allocated based upon past practices and anticipated future needs.
  - Eligible expenses include all costs associated with attending events both locally and outside of the region as outlined in this policy and City Council Allowable Expenses Policy No. 98.
    - The annual budget to attend events is allocated for Council collectively to provide flexibility for who may attend miscellaneous events within the City and beyond. All miscellaneous events requiring travel outside of the region must be approved to attend by Council resolution.
  - A quarterly report will be included on a Regular Council meeting agenda to reflect how much has been spent on attending events and meetings individually and as a whole Council, which provides transparency to the public.

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11. Annual Budget Allocation: (continued)

Any remaining funds left in the Council Memberships, Local Events, Conferences, and Travel budget at the end of each fiscal year will not be transferred to the future budget year.