



Office of the Councillors

## COUNCILLOR – DUTIES, COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

### TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for a Councillor is four (4) years. A Councillor position is deemed to be a full-time position in respect to the time commitment required.

### DUTIES

Council is the governing body of the corporation and the custodian of its powers, both legislative and administrative. The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) provides that council can only exercise the powers of a municipal corporation in the proper form, by either bylaw or resolution.

Council is responsible for making the decisions necessary to allow the corporation to achieve its purposes by:

- Determining goals and priorities
- Developing and approving policies
- Raising and spending money
- Planning and providing services and programs
- Hiring the chief appointed official (City Manager)
- Representing the municipality

### COUNCIL ROLES

#### Representative role:

- Represent the electorate as well as the whole municipality
- Gather information and access in light of what is the common good and;
- Balance the wants of the individual constituents with the needs of the entire community

#### Legislative role:

- Participate in policy setting, law making process and

#### Executive role:

- Ensure policy is carried out appropriately through the Council process

## GENERAL DUTIES OF COUNCILLORS

In accordance with the MGA, Councillors have the following duties:

- 153** Councillors have the following duties:
- a) to consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and to bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality;
  - (a.1) to promote an integrated and strategic approach to intermunicipal land use planning and service delivery with neighbouring municipalities;
  - b) to participate generally in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality;
  - c) to participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies to which they are appointed by the council;
  - d) to obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer or a person designated by the chief administrative officer;
  - e) to keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council or council committee meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public;
  - (e.1) to adhere to the code of conduct established by the council under section 146.1(1);
  - f) to perform any other duty or function imposed on councillors by this or any other enactment or by the council.

RSA 2000 cM-26 s153;2015 c8 s17;2016 c24 s15

## BASE PAY

On September 23, 2002, Council passed Bylaw 31M2002 which established the Council Compensation Review Committee (CCRC). This Committee is responsible for making recommendations to Council regarding its pay, pension, benefits and other forms of compensation, or levels thereof.

CCRC's were subsequently formed every few years to market benchmark Council compensation and make recommendations for changes.

In July 2006, Council accepted the CCRC recommendation to use the annual change in the Alberta Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) as the basis for future pay increases and to increase Council pay by 6% (effective as of Oct 22, 2007). The AWE formula has been used ever since.

On May 29, 2017, Council accepted CCRC's recommendation that "Council vote, before each election, to accept or reject the use of the Alberta Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) indicator for the next four year

term” and its recommendation to reduce the Mayor’s salary by 6% to \$200,747 and to leave the Councillor salary at \$113,416.

For 2018, the AWE change was -0.08% and Councillor pay was reduced to \$113,325.63 and the Mayor’s pay reduced to \$200,586.40

On Dec 17, 2018, Council voted to freeze its pay for 2019.

On Nov 18, 2019, Council voted to freeze its pay for 2020.

On Nov 2, 2020, Council again adopted the recommendations of the latest Council Compensation Review Committee and agreed to freeze its pay for 2021 and to apply the AWE formula for the next Council.

As of Jan 1, 2022, based on AWE, Council pay increased 1.60 % to \$115,138.84 for Councillors and 203,795.78 for the Mayor.

As of Jan 1, 2023, based on AWE, Council pay increased 2.41 % to \$117,913.69 for Councillors and 208,707.26 for the Mayor.

As of Jan 1, 2024, based on AWE, Council pay increased 2.41% to \$120,755.41 for Councillors and \$213,737.10 for the Mayor

## **TRANSITION ALLOWANCE**

On Jul 14, 1997, Council created a “resettlement severance allowance” for Members of Council which would provide a payment equivalent to two weeks pay for each year in office, up to a maximum of six months, if they either retire, voluntarily leave elected office, or are defeated in an election. It was to be called a Transition Allowance.

On Nov 7, 2000, Council increased the ceiling for the Transition Allowance for elected officials to 26 years of service at two weeks per year.

CCRCs in 2006 and 2012 noted that Calgary’s Transition Allowance was in line with what was offered by other municipalities.

The CCRC, in 2017, proposed the elimination of the Transition Allowance but Council rejected this proposal on May 29, 2017.

On Nov 2, 2020, based on a recommendation of the CCRC, Council agreed to reduce the maximum number of weeks of Transition Allowance to 26 for those who resign or do not run, applicable for the next Council.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD (WCB) COVERAGE**

All members of Council are covered by the City's Workers' Compensation Board account. This means that should a member of Council experience a work-related injury or illness, WCB Alberta will provide wage replacement and medical treatment at no cost to the Council member. The maximum amount that can be paid out in wage replacement is set by WCB and for 2024 that maximum is approximately \$1,810.38 per week. Monies received by the member of Council from WCB are non-taxable.

## **PENSION & BENEFITS**

Participation is voluntary in the Pension Plan for Elected Officials of The City of Calgary.

Elected Official's contributions are at the rate of 9% taxable earnings and the municipality contributes according to a formula.

For each year of plan participation, the benefit will be 2% of the member's best three-year average earnings. An unreduced pension is available at age 60, while a reduced pension may start at minimum age of 55 and is reduced by 3% for each year prior to attainment of age 60. A 2/3 pension continues to the surviving spouse on the retired member's death.

Members of Council are eligible to participate in a benefits plan that is similar to the benefits provided to City Senior Management. Some benefits are optional and may require a premium to be paid by the Elected Official.

The benefits are as follows:

- Extended Healthcare – choice of Level 1 or Level 2 in the MEBAC benefits plan - MEBAC subsidy amount or employee contribution paid by the Elected Official. Eligible dependents may be covered.
- Dental Plan – choice of Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 in the MEBAC benefits plan- MEBAC subsidy amount or employee contribution paid by the Elected Official. Eligible dependents may be covered.
- \$300 Health Spending Account
- \$3,000 Flexible Spending Account for non-taxable expenses or cash
- Basic Life Insurance – 2x salary – City paid. Optional Life Insurance – an additional 5x salary can be purchased – 100% paid by the Elected Official. Spousal Life Insurance up to a maximum of \$400,000 can also be purchased – 100% paid by Elected Official.
- Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Group RRSP – optional and 100% paid by the Elected Official

Retiree benefit coverage is available to Elected Officials (and their eligible dependents) who retire from public service having served at least 2 full consecutive terms and are a minimum of 55 years of

age but are under age 65 and reside in Canada.

The benefit plan, the provisions and the 50% cost share is the same as available to City retirees as follows:

- Extended Healthcare
- Dental Plan
- Life Insurance

### **TRANSPORTATION & PARKING**

Councillors receive a car allowance of \$9,400 per year payable on a bi-weekly basis.

A parking stall at the City Hall complex is provided. Councillors also receive a special parking permit.

### **INDEMNIFICATION POLICY**

Members of Council are indemnified against legal liability arising from the performance of their duties.

### **WARD BUDGETS, ASSISTANCE & OFFICE SPACE**

Each ward is allocated an annual ward budget. In 2019, the annual Ward budget was adjusted down to \$285,900 from its previous level of \$288,000. In 2021, it was further reduced to \$278,400. For 2023, ward budgets were increased by 1.5% to \$282,576. For 2024, ward budgets were increased by 1.9% to \$287,945.

To support capacity in responding to constituents given a growing population, a further increase of \$75,000 to each ward budget was approved through the 2023-2026 Budget Adjustment meetings in November 2023. As a result, the total amount for each ward budget for 2024 is \$362,945.

The Councillor may spend this funding on salaries of staff (assistants) employed directly by them; miscellaneous expenses; communications, research, and office projects; and travel.

Budgets and corresponding expenses are tightly monitored by the Council Services and the City's Finance Department. Expenses are disclosed at [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca)

Each Ward office is provided a private office for the Councillor and assigned workspaces for three Ward Assistants. All workspaces are fully-equipped office work areas.

In addition, there is the Council Services team that serves the Councillors and their Ward offices and provides services which include, but are not limited to, accounting, payroll, human resources, and technology support functions.

## **COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Generally, there is one regular and one public hearing meeting each month and one Strategic Council meeting each quarter; no Council meetings are scheduled for August.

Council meetings are on Tuesdays, commencing at 9:30 a.m., in accordance with the Council calendar adopted annually by Council. The current Council calendar is available at [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca).

## **BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

Each year, at an Organizational Meeting of Council, Councillors are assigned to various Boards, Commissions and Committees. The guidance for this is the Governance and Appointments of Boards, Commissions and Committees Policy (CP2016-03), which can be found at [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca)

The listing of all Boards, Commissions and Committees of Council can be found at [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca)

To view the calendar of the meetings for all Boards, Commissions and Committees of Council can be found at [Calgary.ca](http://Calgary.ca). This site is maintained by the City Clerk's Office.

## **INFORMATION CONTACTS**

For information regarding nomination and election matters, please contact the Elections and Census office at 403-476-4100 or [elections@calgary.ca](mailto:elections@calgary.ca).

For general information regarding Council and/or Committee procedures, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 403-268-5861 or [cityclerk@calgary.ca](mailto:cityclerk@calgary.ca).

For general information on other Councillor-related matters, contact the Office of the Councillors at 403-268-2430 or [councillorweb@calgary.ca](mailto:councillorweb@calgary.ca).

*Some content was updated in **December 2023**.*