Agenda – Executive Policy Committee – December 7, 2022

REPORTS

Item No. 26 Councillors' Office Resources

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 23, 2022, the Governance Committee of Council recommended to the Executive Policy Committee that the following be referred to the 2023 budget review process:

1. That funding for the Councillors' Ward Allowance (CWA) be restructured as follows:

    A. Dedicated budget for staffing costs including but not limited to salary, benefits and vacation pay;

    B. Dedicated budget for the setup, and maintenance of a constituency office, including renovations, furnishings, equipment purchase, services, maintenance, rent and other expenses directly related to operation of the constituency office;

    C. Dedicated budget for all other expenditures as currently permitted under the Councillors Ward Allowance Policy;

    with funding in each of the 3 categories above restricted to expenses in that funding area.

2. That the City of Winnipeg provide pension (including employee contributions) and benefits to Councillors' office staff, similar to Mayor's Office employees, with funding provided corporately.

3. That funding for the CWA be increased annually at the rate of the Consumer Price Index of the previous year, as determined by Statistics Canada.

4. That use of purchasing cards be eliminated from the CWA policy, with all expenditures required to be via invoice, to be approved by the public service as currently outlined in the CWA Policy.

5. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to Council with amendments to the Councillors' Ward Allowance Fund Policy which reflect the intent of the foregoing.

6. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 23, 2022, the Governance Committee of Council passed the following motion:

WHEREAS City Councillors are provided with an annual office budget of $84,924 known as the Councillors Ward Allowance (CWA), which is used for staff salaries and benefits, the purchase of items required to operate their offices including supplies, equipment and furnishings as well as and other business expenses that are incurred in order to execute their duties, communicate with their constituents, and represent their wards;

AND WHEREAS a Winnipeg Public Service report submitted to the Governance Committee of Council on October 21, 2020 revealed that in comparison to other major Canadian cities, City of Winnipeg Councillors receive amongst the lowest levels of funding to perform their duties and is the only City that does not provide a pension for Councillors' office staff (see Attachment A with 2020 statistics);

AND WHEREAS an independent Governance Review of the City of Winnipeg conducted by MNP LLB, submitted to Council on January 27, 2022, further confirmed that "individual Councillor ward allowances are quite low compared to other Cities, at less than half of the lowest comparable amount", and further recommended "increases in individual budgets to enable Councillors to hire additional capacity";

AND WHEREAS the current level of CWA funding makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified candidates as Councillors assistants, with over a 50% turnover rate for the 2018 - 2022 Council term, resulting in loss of institutional knowledge and a lessened ability to respond to citizen concerns;

AND WHEREAS on average, approximately 62% of funds from the CWA are used to pay the salaries and benefits of executive assistants, leaving Councillors with limited resources to adequately support and represent their wards, including establishing constituency offices which would allow Councillors to provide direct easily accessible ward based service to constituents;

AND WHEREAS funding was included in the 2022 budget for the purpose of instituting a pension plan for Councillors' office staff, but to date has not been implemented;

AND WHEREAS it is critical that transparency be at the forefront of how taxpayers funds are incurred, with the ideal being that all spending for Councillors Offices occur through submissions of invoices that can be verified and approved by staff in the Corporate Finance and City Clerk's Departments who are currently required to approve CWA expenditures, prior to any funds being paid out;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the following be referred to the 2023 budget review process:

1. That funding for the Councillors' Ward Allowance (CWA) be restructured as follows:

    A. Dedicated budget for staffing costs including but not limited to salary, benefits and vacation pay;

    B. Dedicated budget for the setup, and maintenance of a constituency office, including renovations, furnishings, equipment purchase, services, maintenance, rent and other expenses directly related to operation of the constituency office;

    C. Dedicated budget for all other expenditures as currently permitted under the Councillors Ward Allowance Policy;

    with funding in each of the 3 categories above restricted to expenses in that funding area.

2. That the City of Winnipeg provide pension (including employee contributions) and benefits to Councillors' office staff, similar to Mayor's Office employees, with funding provided corporately.

3. That funding for the CWA be increased annually at the rate of the Consumer Price Index of the previous year, as determined by Statistics Canada.

4. That use of purchasing cards be eliminated from the CWA policy, with all expenditures required to be via invoice, to be approved by the public service as currently outlined in the CWA Policy.

5. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to Council with amendments to the Councillors' Ward Allowance Fund Policy which reflect the intent of the foregoing.

6. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee.

Attachment A

2020 Cross Jurisdictional Results					
City	**Office Budget**	**Staff Budget**	**Staff Pension**	**Per Capita**	**Average Ward Size**
Ottawa	$266,565		Yes	$6.36	41,922
Manitoba MLA	$89,923	$52,416	Yes	$5.81	23,869
Toronto	$51,005	$482,000	Yes	$4.88	109,263
Calgary	$280,900		City RRSP contributions up to 7.5% of base salary	$3.22	87,314
Edmonton	$176,984		Yes	$2.36	74,954
Winnipeg	$84,924		No	$1.66	51,126
Vancouver**	$47,522	$30,000	Yes	$1.23	63,149

**In addition to the office and staff budget above, the 10 Councillors in Vancouver share 5 Assistants who are city employees paid out of a $400,000.00 budget which equates to an additional value of $40,000 per Councillor and increases the value of each Councillor's budget to $117,522 with a per capita rating of $1.86