



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Finance and Labour Relations Committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Monday, August 11, 2025

Time: 7:05 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Mayor Ritsma, Councillor Beatty, Councillor Biehn, Councillor Briscoe, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar, Councillor Sebben, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services and Interim Director of Human Resources, Taylor Crinklaw - Director of Infrastructure Services, Neil Anderson - Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk

To watch the Committee meeting live, please click the following link:

<https://video.isilive.ca/stratford/live.html>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website

<https://calendar.stratford.ca/meetings> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

Councillor Henderson provided regrets for this meeting.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by

the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 3. | Sub-committee Minutes | 6 - 13 |
| | Sub-committee minutes are attached for background regarding the discussion held at the July 22, 2025, Sub-committee meeting. | |
| 4. | Delegations | |
| | None scheduled. | |
| 5. | Report of the Chief Administrative Officer | |
| 5.1 | Policy Update – Expressions of Sympathy (FIN25-016) | 14 - 20 |
| | Staff Recommendation: THAT Policy A.1.9 be amended to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 to this Report (FIN25-016). | |
| | Motion by | |
| | Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Policy A.1.9 be amended to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 to this Report (FIN25-016). | |
| 5.2 | Long Service Award Policy Updates (FIN25-020) | 21 - 26 |
| | Staff Recommendation: THAT the revised Long Service Award Policy H.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-020 be approved. | |
| | Motion by | |
| | Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the revised Long Service Award Policy H.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-020 be approved. | |
| 5.3 | Policy Update - Flags at City Hall Policy (FIN25-021) | 27 - 34 |
| | Staff Recommendation: THAT the Lowering Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 be rescinded and replaced with the Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-021. | |
| | Motion by | |
| | Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Lowering Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 be rescinded and replaced with the Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-021. | |
| 6. | Report of the Clerk | |

6.1 Composition and Size of Council for the 2026-2030 Term (FIN25-025) 35 - 40

This item will also be considered at the August 11, 2025, Council reconvene meeting.

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be provided if City Council is interested in initiating notice of intent to change the composition of City Council in time for the 2026 municipal election and that City Council identify the proposed change(s) to the composition and/or size of Council.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT City Council initiate the notice of intent process to change the composition of City Council to 9 members (8 Councillors and a Mayor) in time for the 2026 municipal election.

6.2 Appointment of Deputy Mayor (FIN25-023) 41 - 44

This item will also be considered at the August 11, 2025, Council reconvene meeting.

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be given to the City Clerk on the process for selecting a Deputy Mayor for the City commencing with the 2026-2030 term of office.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT direction be given to the City Clerk to develop a policy outlining a process for selecting a Deputy Mayor by rotation, with a maximum of four (4) Councillors permitted to serve in the role per term, and commencing with the 2026-2030 term of office.

6.3 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Alternative Voting Methods (FIN25-024) 45 - 63

This item will also be considered at the August 11, 2025, Council reconvene meeting.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election be approved;

AND THAT free transit on election day be approved to support access and remove barriers to voting for the 2026 municipal and school board election;

AND THAT the Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election be approved;

AND THAT free transit on election day be approved to support access and remove barriers to voting for the 2026 municipal and school board election;

AND THAT the Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election.

7. Report of the Council Committee Coordinator

7.1 Advisory Committee Renumeration (FIN25-026)

64 - 70

Staff Recommendation: THAT remuneration be paid to each member of Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per meeting for each Committee meeting attended and \$50.00 per meeting for Heritage Stratford site plan review meetings, Heritage Stratford permit review meetings and Accessibility Advisory Committee site plan review meetings commencing January 1, 2026;

AND THAT Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees be updated to reflect the changes to remuneration.

Motion by

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT remuneration be paid to each member of Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per meeting for each Committee meeting attended and \$50.00 per meeting for Heritage Stratford site plan review meetings, Heritage Stratford permit review meetings and Accessibility Advisory Committee site plan review meetings commencing January 1, 2026;

AND THAT Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees be updated to reflect the changes to remuneration.

8. For the Information of Committee

8.1 Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

71 - 74

The following Advisory Committee Minutes are provided for the information of Committee:

- Stratfords of the World (Ontario) Advisory Committee Minutes of November 28, 2024

9. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

Committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Committee meeting adjourn.



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee

MINUTES

Date: July 22, 2025
 Time: 4:30 P.M.
 Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Hunter - Chair Presiding, Councillor McCabe - Vice Chair, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Nijjar

Regrets: Councillor Beatty

Staff Present: Karmen Krueger - Director of Corporate Services, Tatiana Dafoe - City Clerk, Victoria Trotter - Council Committee Coordinator, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

Also present: Members of the public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to Order.

Councillor Beatty provided regrets for this meeting.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the July 22, 2025, Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting.

3. Delegations

3.1 ADDED - Request for Delegation by Paul Brown

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT Paul Brown be heard.

Carried

Paul Brown, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, spoke to Sub-committee to provide a follow up on the April 16, 2025, "Discover the Future of Homecare Symposium". Highlights of the presentation included:

- the City of Stratford having provided seed funding, matched by sponsorship support;
- the symposium having generated widespread awareness of homecare in the healthcare system;
- an overview of the symposium agenda and speakers was provided;
- an overview of the financials was provided with a copy being provided to the Treasurer;
- the contribution from the volunteers having brought costs down;
- they recommended a second symposium be held in spring 2026;
- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group research moving towards homecare with dementia research to come;

- regarding dementia research, consideration for construction and adaptation for accessible residential dwellings to support mental health and well being supports in home care; and
- there being a societal shift regarding affordability of health care through homecare and aging at home.

Regarding funding for a 2026 symposium, a Member noted the community grants program should be considered with information being available on the City's website including criteria for compliance.

4. Report of the Chief Administrative Officer

4.1 Policy Update – Expressions of Sympathy (FIN25-016)

Staff Recommendation: THAT Policy A.1.9 be amended to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 to this Report (FIN25-016).

Motion by Councillor McCabe

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT Policy A.1.9 be amended to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 to this Report (FIN25-016).

Carried

4.2 Long Service Award Policy Updates (FIN25-020)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the revised Long Service Award Policy H.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-020 be approved.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the revised Long Service Award Policy H.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-020 be approved.

Carried

A Member asked if there is acknowledgement for more than 25 years of service. The Director of Corporate Services noted milestones after 25 years being infrequent with recognition of additional years being at time of retirement.

4.3 Policy Update - Flags at City Hall Policy (FIN25-021)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Lowering Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 be rescinded and replaced with the Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-021.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the Lowering Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 be rescinded and replaced with the Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-021.

Carried

5. Report of the Clerk

5.1 Composition and Size of Council for the 2026-2030 Term (FIN25-025)

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be provided if City Council is interested in initiating notice of intent to change the composition of City Council in time for the 2026 municipal election and that City Council identify the proposed change(s) to the composition and/or size of Council.

Sub-committee Discussion: A member noted that the current compensation for Council and the part time position present barriers for younger or lower income residents from participating on Council. The member suggested the size of council be reduced to 9 members: 1 Mayor and 8 Councillors. It was further recommended that the compensation in the budget remain at its current level and be divided among the 8 councillors.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT City Council initiate the notice of intent process to change the composition of City Council to 9 members (8 Councillors and a Mayor) in time for the 2026 municipal election.

Members discuss the motion. Highlights of the discussion included:

- a Member spoke in support of the motion;

- a Member noted Council being functional with the current composition allowing for meetings to go forward when there are Member regrets;
- it was asked if there would be a high amount of savings with a reduced composition;
- a Member asked how the composition is typically changed;
- the City Clerk noted typically municipalities undertake a review to look at at-large or ward election systems and how much representation there would be per number of councillors with these findings presented to Council;
- Council can change the composition in keeping with the requirements of the Municipal Act;
- a Member asked if a review of Council's composition and remuneration was completed prior to the 2022 election;
- the Director of Corporate Services noted Council opted for an internal review and market check against comparative municipalities with the remuneration having been set based on that review;
- Council being required to review remuneration once per term with composition of Council being separate; and
- discussion regarding population size and growth of the residential base touching on proposed changes to the meeting structure.

The Chair called the question.

Carried

5.2 Appointment of Deputy Mayor (FIN25-023)

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be given to the City Clerk on the process for selecting a Deputy Mayor for the City commencing with the 2026-2030 term of office.

Sub-committee Discussion: Members of Sub-committee and staff discussed the report. Highlights included the following:

- a Member noted appointments in Open session being awkward with previous appointments for Deputy Mayor having been in Closed Session but no longer being permitted;
- a Member suggested a rotation of 4 Council Members as Deputy Mayor with appointments still being made by Council;
- alternatively, the councillors with the highest number of votes could be appointed as Deputy Mayor with the top two appointees to split the term; and
- a Member commented that a rotation would allow more opportunity for fulsome participation in Council.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT direction be given to the City Clerk to develop a policy outlining a process for selecting a Deputy Mayor by rotation, with a maximum of four (4) Councillors permitted to serve in the role per term, and commencing with the 2026-2030 term of office.

Carried

5.3 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Alternative Voting Methods (FIN25-024)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election be approved;

AND THAT free transit on election day be approved to support access and remove barriers to voting for the 2026 municipal and school board election;

AND THAT the Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election be approved;

AND THAT free transit on election day be approved to support access and remove barriers to voting for the 2026 municipal and school board election;

AND THAT the Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election.

Carried

Sub-committee Discussion: Members of Sub-committee and staff discussed the report. Highlights included the following:

- a Member asked how many people used telephone voting in the 2022 election;
- the City Clerk advised this information would be provided to Sub-committee;
- the City Clerk noted members of the public not having access to computers and preferring the option to vote by phone; and
- a scent free polling station with masks not being included in the recommendation as the Municipal Elections Act provides authority to the Clerk to set up enhancements needed to address barriers.

6. Report of the Council Committee Coordinator

6.1 Advisory Committee Renumeration (FIN25-026)

Staff Recommendation: THAT remuneration be paid to each member of Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per meeting for each Committee meeting attended and \$50.00 per meeting for Heritage Stratford site plan review meetings, Heritage Stratford permit review meetings and Accessibility Advisory Committee site plan review meetings commencing January 1, 2026;

AND THAT Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees be updated to reflect the changes to remuneration.

Motion by Councillor Nijjar

Sub-committee Recommendation: THAT remuneration be paid to each member of Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per meeting for each Committee meeting attended and \$50.00 per meeting for Heritage Stratford site plan review meetings, Heritage Stratford permit review meetings and Accessibility Advisory Committee site plan review meetings commencing January 1, 2026;

AND THAT Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees be updated to reflect the changes to remuneration.

Carried

7. Advisory Committee/Outside Board Minutes

The following Advisory Committee Minutes were provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- Stratfords of the World (Ontario) Advisory Committee Minutes of November 28, 2024

8. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting is September 16, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:30 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:03 P.M.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
 Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: FIN25-016
Attachments: 1. Flowers and Donation Policy A.1.9 (current); and
 2. Expression of Sympathy A.1.9 (revised)

Title: Policy Update – Expressions of Sympathy

Objective: To present proposed amendments to Policy A.1.9, “Flowers and Donations”, including updated language for clarity and consistency; and formatting for accessibility.

Background: The current ‘Flowers and Donations’ policy was adopted in 1997 and has not been updated since that time. This policy outlines who receives flowers or a memorial donation from the City of Stratford as an expression of sympathy upon their death. The policy does not speak to the application or oversight of the policy, who is considered an ‘employee’, or the process for initiating a public statement or book of condolences if required.

Analysis: Although this policy is administratively situated with the CAO’s office, it is administered through the Office of the Mayor and expressions of sympathy are provided on behalf of the Mayor and Council.

While administering this policy over time, questions have arisen as to who constitutes a current or retired City employee. For example, whether the policy applies to members of Stratford Police Services or the Stratford Public Library or their families.

Under the provisions of the amended policy, clarification is provided that a current or retired City of Stratford employee is a member of any internal department reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Stratford.

Should the Office of the Mayor wish to extend an expression of sympathy on behalf of Stratford City Council for an individual that does not fit within the criteria of the policy, arrangements can be made for a card to be sent.

Additional updates to the revised policy include establishing clearer procedures regarding oversight and administration of the memorial donation, as well as communication to Council and the appropriate Director.

The former name of the policy is “Flowers and Donations”. After a review of other local municipal policies with respect to expressions of sympathy, and in consideration that flowers are not always requested, it is determined that it would be more appropriate to name the policy “Expression of Sympathy”.

The review of this policy also identified an opportunity to increase the funds to allow for a more meaningful contribution to a chosen charity or, if requested, a floral arrangement. In 2025, the average cost of a floral donation for a memorial service ranges from \$75.00 - \$95.00 plus taxes.

Staff are recommending the policy limit be increased from \$50.00 to \$100.00.

A review of prior year expenditures shows minor fluctuations each year.

Year	Budget	Actual Spent	Total Donations
2021	\$500.00	\$150.00	3
2022	\$500.00	\$400.00	8
2023	\$500.00	\$785.00	12
2024	\$500.00	\$253.00	5
2025	\$650.00	\$50.00	1 (to date)

The remaining 2025 budget would allow for 6 additional memorial donations. Should additional donations be required above the budgeted amount, the budget would be exceeded, and consultation with the Treasurer on the appropriate course of action would be pursued.

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

The new policy updates will increase transparency and allow for more consistency. The updates reflect the Corporation’s commitment to compassion for employees, while providing a thoughtful gesture with a memorial donation.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: This report does not align with One Planet Principles as it is administrative in nature.

Staff Recommendation: THAT Policy A.1.9 be amended to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 to this Report (FIN25-016).

Prepared by: Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
Recommended by: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

The Corporation of the City of Stratford

Policy Manual

A.1 Awards, Recognition and Promotion

Dept: CAO's Office

Committee: Finance and Labour Relations

A.1.9 Flowers and Donations

Adopted: August 18, 1997

Amended:

Reaffirmed:

Related Documents:

☒ Council Policy ☐ Administrative Policy

That the City of Stratford will endeavour to provide flowers or donations in an amount of \$50 on the death of any current employee, member of Council, retired employee, previous member of Council and the immediate family (parent, spouse or child) of current employees and current members of Council.

In the case of immediate families of retired employees and previous members of Council, the City will endeavour to send a card or letter.



The Corporation of the City of Stratford

Policy Manual

Policy Number: A.1.9
Policy Section: A.1 Expressions of Sympathy
Department: CAO's Office

Date Adopted: August 18, 1997
Date Amended: *(to be inserted if approved)*
Scheduled for Review: June 2030
Date of Last Review:
Policy Type: Council-adopted Policy

Expression of Sympathy

Policy Statement: The City recognizes that former elected officials and staff make meaningful contributions to the Corporation, and expressions of sympathy is one way to mourn and recognize the impacts they have had.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to set out consistent methods for expressing sympathy on behalf of Stratford City Council. Through this policy the City of Stratford will endeavour to provide a donation as requested or as outlined in the obituary or the family's wishes in the amount of \$100.00.

Scope:

Upon notification of the death of an eligible individual, as received from a City department, the Mayor's Office will ensure that an expression of sympathy is relayed in accordance with this policy on behalf of Stratford City Council. The Mayor's Office will communicate this action with City Council and the Director of the department. Should a Director wish to offer a different expression of sympathy than a donation (i.e. flowers in

the amount not to exceed \$100), the Director shall consult with the Mayor's Office for the purchase and identification of appropriate expense GL code.

This policy applies:

- a) Upon the death of:
 - a. A current Member of Council
 - b. A former Member of Council
 - c. A current City of Stratford employee
 - d. A retired City of Stratford employee
 - e. The immediate family (parent, spouse or child) of a current employee
 - f. The immediate family (parent, spouse or child) of a current Member of Council

or

- b) Upon a death of a significant community member where the Mayor, CAO or Council would like to express a shared mourning.

Definitions: A current employee includes:

- a) All staff of internal City departments reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Stratford
 - a. Mayor & CAO's Office
 - b. Human Resources Department
 - c. Stratford Fire Department
 - d. Community Services Department
 - e. Social Services Department
 - f. Corporate Services Department
 - g. Infrastructure Services Department
 - h. Building & Planning Services Department
 - i. Any other unionized, staff or administrative employee including part time, casual and students

Procedure:

When a department would like to offer an expression of sympathy on behalf of Stratford City Council, but the policy (Section A) does not allow for a donation, the Mayor's Office will endeavour to send a card or letter.

Similarly, in the case of immediate family members (parent, spouse or child) of retired employees and previous members of Council, the Mayor's Office will send a card or letter.

If it is determined by the Mayor or CAO, that a public statement is required, the Corporate Communications Specialist will coordinate with the Mayor and CAO's office any expressions of sympathy or commemorative services the City is undertaking.

When appropriate, the Mayor or CAO may request a book of condolences to be circulated or a signed by Council, staff or residents of the city.

DRAFT



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: FIN25-020
Attachments: 1. Long Service Award Policy H.1.7 (current)
 2. Long Service Awards Policy H.1.7 (revised)

Title: Long Service Award Policy Updates

Objective: To present proposed amendments to Policy H.1.7, “Long Service Award”, including updated language for clarity and consistency; and formatting for accessibility.

Background: This policy was put in place to formalize the practice of providing long service awards for municipal employees achieving 25 years of service with the City of Stratford.

The current policy lists out award items that the employee may choose from, including:

- Watch with the City Crest; or
- Sterling Silver Ring with City Crest; or
- An article purchased from a local jewellery store; or
- A travel voucher from a local travel agency
- A charitable donation to the charity of the employee’s choice.

Although this policy is administratively situated within the Human Resources Department, it is administered through the Office of the Mayor.

Staff, through the Corporate Leadership Team, have identified revisions/updates to this policy for Council’s consideration.

Analysis: After a period of review (post-pandemic), both the watch and ring options have been deemed to not fall within the \$400 limit; and not be an option of which staff are generally interested in. Therefore, it was proposed to have the option of a gift certificate from a local jewellery store. Should an employee wish to proceed with a City watch or ring, the recipient may use the gift certificate towards such purchase.

Additionally, requests have been made for gift cards outside of the travel and jewellery option; therefore, a gift card at alternate locations has been added to the list.

- A \$400 travel voucher from a local travel agency;
- A \$400 gift certificate from a local jewellery store;
- A \$400 gift card at a location of the employees choosing;
- \$400 Downtown Dollars; or
- A charitable donation to the charity of the employee's choice.

The dollar value of \$400 remains as this award/gift amount is treated as non-cash by the Canada Revenue Agency, providing it is for a retailer group identified on the card/certificate. When Downtown Dollars are provided, a list of the venues where the gift certificates can be utilized is to be provided to the employee.

If the award value exceeds \$400, it is taxable and included on the employees T4 as taxable income. It is recommended by the Corporate Leadership Team to leave the award amount at \$400.

The policy was also amended to add that awards presented to employees of the Stratford Public Library and Stratford Police Services are to be presented by specific individuals if received during a Council session:

- CEO of the Stratford Public Library and the Chair of the Board of Directors
- Chief of Police and the Chair of the Board of Directors

When a staff member reporting to the Corporate Leadership Team is to receive an award, the Mayor, CAO and/or another Director may present their award in a Council Meeting.

Should a staff member not wish to receive their award in a Council Meeting, the appropriate leadership member(s), may meet with the individual in their choice of location.

This policy was updated based on feedback received from staff throughout 2022 - 2025.

Financial impact to current and/or future year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

In celebrating a milestone of twenty-five years of services, the organization not only honours the work of the employee but also reinforces a culture of appreciation. A milestone of this length is a remarkable achievement that requires dedication and loyalty. A long service award is a meaningful way to recognize the contributions over the years and show that their commitment has helped shaped the City's success.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

Updating the Long Service Award policy allows the organization to adapt to the evolving needs of its staff ensuring greater flexibility and inclusivity in recognizing employee contributions. To ensure staff feel appreciated, means we must be mindful in the awards that are offered, so that staff may utilize them however would most benefit them, individually and culturally.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: This report does not align with One Planet Principles as it is administrative in nature.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the revised Long Service Award Policy H.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-020 be approved.

Prepared by:	Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
Recommended by:	Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Policy Manual

Policy Number: H.1.7

Policy Section: Human Resources

Department: Human Resources

Date Adopted: May 28, 1973

Date Amended: April 28, 2003, by R2003-235; April 23, 2012, by R2012-160

Scheduled for Review:

Date of Last Review:

Policy Type: Council-adopted Policy

Long Service Award

Policy Statement:

That the City continue the practice of Long Service Awards for municipal employees achieving 25 years of service with the City of Stratford. The employee may choose their award from one of the following options, at a cost not to exceed \$400:

- Watch with the City Crest; or
- Sterling Silver Ring with City Crest; or
- An article purchased from a local jewellery store; or
- A travel voucher from a local travel agency
- A charitable donation to the charity of the employee's choice.

All articles are to be selected and ordered through the Mayor's Office.

A presentation will be made to the employee either at a Council Meeting or by the employee's Director, whichever is suitable to the employee.



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Policy Manual

Policy Number:	H.1.7
Policy Section:	Human Resources
Department:	Human Resources
Date Adopted:	May 28, 1973
Date Amended:	April 28, 2003, by R2003-235; April 23, 2012, by R2012-160
Scheduled for Review:	
Date of Last Review:	June 2025
Policy Type:	Council-adopted Policy

Long Service Award

Policy Statement:

That the City continue the practice of Long Service Awards for municipal employees achieving 25 years of service with the City of Stratford.

Procedure:

The employee may choose their award from one of the following options, at a cost not to exceed \$400:

- A \$400 travel voucher from a local travel agency;
- A \$400 gift certificate from a local jewellery store;
- A \$400 gift card at a location of the employees choosing;
- \$400 Downtown Dollars; or
- A charitable donation to the charity of the employee's choice.

All articles are to be selected and ordered through the Mayor's Office.

A presentation will be made to the employee either at a Council Meeting or by the employee's Director, whichever is suitable to the employee.

A municipal employee includes:

- a) All staff of internal City departments reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Stratford:

- a. Mayor & CAO's Office
 - b. Human Resources Department
 - c. Stratford Fire Department
 - d. Community Services Department
 - e. Social Services Department
 - f. Corporate Services Department
 - g. Infrastructure Services Department
 - h. Building & Planning Department
 - i. Any other unionized, staff or administrative employee including part time, casual and students
- b) Staff at the Stratford Public Library
- a. If presented at a Council meeting, the CEO of the Library, and the Chair of the Board of Directors (Stratford Public Library Board) will present
- c) Staff at Stratford Police Services
- a. If presented at a Council meeting, the Chief of Police, and the Chair of the Board of Directors (Stratford Police Services Board) will present



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: FIN25-021
Attachments: 1. Current Policy A.1.7 – Lowering Flags at City Hall
 2. Amended Policy A.1.7 - Flags at City Hall Policy

Title: Policy Update - Flags at City Hall Policy

Objective: To present proposed amendments to the current policy including updated language for clarity and consistency; and formatting for accessibility.

Background: The current policy outlines when the National Flag at City Hall and at the corner of Ontario Street and Downie Street will be lowered upon the death of a number of individuals including the Prime Minister, Premier, Sovereign, Governor General; federal, provincial and municipal representatives, members of the Royal Family, City staff and persons whom the Mayor chooses to honour.

Analysis: This policy was updated based on national protocols, research of local municipal policies, and staff input. Considerations were made in conjunction with standard practices, health and safety factors, and consultation with City staff, to ensure that the City's commitment to respectful and meaningful flag-raising practices are adhered to. A clause is being recommended relating to the respectful disposal of the national flag, consistent with federal guidelines.

The flagpole at Ontario Street and Downie Street currently has the United Way campaign thermometer mounted, which poses safety concerns for staff to raise and lower the flag. City staff must use a bucket truck or lift to change the flag when the thermometer is installed which presents logistical difficulties. City staff are following up with the United Way to amend the thermometer to allow for easier access to the flagpole. Festival Hydro is responsible for the installation and removal of the thermometer. This flagpole will be addressed in the forthcoming policy under the category of 'City facilities,' and therefore falls outside the scope of the current policy and the mandatory lowering provisions applicable to City Hall.

The flagpole on the roof (peak) of the City Hall building also poses safety concerns for lowering and raising the National Flag. Therefore, when a half-masting is to occur, the recommendation is that a National Flag will be placed on the Community Flagpole at the corner of Wellington Street and Downie Street, and half-masted accordingly. The National Flag on the roof (peak) of City Hall, will remain raised.

The new flag policy elaborates and expands on the purpose of the policy, City facilities that have flagpoles, exemptions to the policy, responsibilities of the policy, and the addition of Federal annual Special Days for half-masting of the National Flag of Canada.

Additionally, the policy has been amended to include a procedure for external groups and organizations to request the flag-raising or half-masting of flags on the Community Flagpole. City Council approves these requests, which are later coordinated by the Mayor's Office.

Financial impact to current and/or future year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

This policy aligns with this priority as it ensures consistency and alignment with national standards for half-masting, commemorative observances and special recognitions; reinforcing a shared sense of respect and unity.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

This report aligns with this priority as the proposed additions to the policy, including the dedicated community flagpole, will create greater opportunities for community engagement and cultural recognition by allowing groups and organizations to display their flags at City Hall and demonstrate our commitment to inclusivity, diversity and local representation.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Equity and Local Economy

Flying community flags supports equity by ensuring that diverse voices, cultures and causes are visibly recognized and valued by the City and our community. By adopting an open and fair policy, the City demonstrates its commitment to equitable recognition for all to celebrate.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the Lowering Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 be rescinded and replaced with the Flags at City Hall Policy A.1.7 attached to Report FIN25-021.

Prepared by: Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
Recommended by: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

The Corporation of the City of Stratford

Policy Manual

A.1 Awards, Recognition Promotion

Dept: CAO's Office

Committee: Finance and Labour Relations

A.1.7 Lowering Flags at City Hall

Adopted: March 13, 2000 by R2000-102

Amended: March 17, 2008

Reaffirmed:

Related Documents:

☒ Council Policy ☐ Administrative Policy

That, subject to safety conditions, the Canadian Flags on City Hall and at the corner of Ontario and Downie Streets be lowered to half-mast up to and including the day of the funeral:

- on the death of the Sovereign;
- on the death of the Governor General, Lieutenant Governor, Prime Minister or Premier;
- on the death of the Mayor or a member of City Council;
- on the death of the M.P. or M.P.P.

That, subject to safety conditions, the Canadian Flag on City Hall be lowered to half-mast on the day of the funeral:

- on the death of a member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (spouse, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister);
- on the death of any city employee;
- on the death of a former member of Council residing in the community;
- on the death of a former department head residing in the community;
- on the death of any city employee with 25 years of service or more and still residing in the community;
- on the death of a person whom, in the opinion of the Mayor, it is desired to honour.



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Policy Manual

Policy Number:	A.1.7
Policy Section:	A.1 Awards Recognition Promotion
Department:	CAO's Office
Date Adopted:	March 13, 2000
Date Amended:	March 17, 2008
Scheduled for Review:	
Date of Last Review:	<u>June 2025</u>
Policy Type:	Council-adopted Policy

Flags at City Hall

Policy Statement:

This policy outlines and defines the criteria and process for raising, displaying, half-masting and disposing of flags at corporate properties and facilities of The Corporation of the City of Stratford.

Purpose:

The City of Stratford lowers flags to half-mast as a sign of respect, condolence, mourning and/or commemoration. The purpose of this Policy is:

- To ensure that all flags flown at half-mast uphold the dignity and respect for whom the flags are flown;
- To ensure that flags are flown at half-mast in a consistent and appropriate manner in accordance with the Order of Precedence established by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the [National Flag of Canada etiquette](#);
- To ensure flags are flown at half-mast in an inclusive and equitable manner to recognize significant events or dates relevant to diverse cultural, racial and marginalized communities within Stratford;
- To identify dates, occasions, durations, and locations for flag lowering;
- To ensure, when required, that national flags are disposed of in a dignified and respectful manner

- To provide direction for staff; and
- To provide public notice.

Application:

Flags may be lowered at other City facilities as approved by the Mayor or CAO subject to occurrence and staff availability.

These facilities are:

- Rotary Complex
- Dufferin Arena
- City Hall Annex Building
- Police Station
- Stratford Public Library
- Cenotaph Memorial Gardens
- Corner of Ontario Street and Downie Street
- Fire Stations One and Two
- Parks Yard
- Public Works

Exemptions:

- This policy does not apply to flags representing community/non-profit groups or organizations, flown on the City's designated flagpole(s);
- This policy does not apply to promotional banners that may be hanging temporarily outside of City facilities;
- This policy does not apply to flags flown at City facilities that cannot be lowered without aerial truck apparatus;
- Half-masting procedures as described in this policy are subject to safety conditions and weather conditions.

Responsibility:

- This policy will be administered and monitored by the Office of the Mayor and CAO;
- Flags will be lowered by City staff as determined by the appropriate Director;
- Notification of a flag lowering with regards to (b) and (c) below, will be sent to the Corporate Management Team (CMT); and
- Public Notice of half-masting will be provided by the Corporate Communications Lead or as designated by the CAO.

Procedure:

Half-masting at City of Stratford facilities will occur:

- a) On the following Special Days as recognized by the Federal Government of Canada:

28 April	National Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (Worker's Mourning Day)
23 June	National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
Second Sunday in September	Firefighters' National Memorial Day
Last Sunday in September	Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day
30 September	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
11 November	Remembrance Day
06 December	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

- b) In the event of the death of any of the following, from the time of notification of death, up to and including the day of funeral or memorial service:

- The Sovereign;
- The Governor General, Lieutenant Governor, Prime Minister or Premier of Ontario;
- The Mayor or a member of City Council;
- The Member of Parliament (M.P.);
- The Member of Provincial Parliament (M.P.P); or
- National Chief in the Assembly of First Nations;

- c) In the event of the death of any of the following, on the day of funeral or memorial service:

- A member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (spouse, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister);
- Any current City employee (an employee under the Corporate Leadership Team);
- A former Mayor or member of Council residing in the community;
- A former department head residing in the community; or
- A person whom, in the opinion of the Mayor, CAO, or their designates, it is desired to honour.

- d) At the discretion of the Mayor, CAO, or their designates, to honour a significant event, date, or occasion.

- e) If a masting (lowering or raising) date falls on a weekend or holiday observed by the City, the flag will be lowered the regular day of work before and returned to full mast the first available regular day of work following.
- f) Where there is no known funeral or memorial service planned to take place, the half-masting of flags shall occur on the date of notification of the death up to a maximum of three (3) days.
- g) Where the date of the funeral or memorial service is scheduled to be more than fourteen days from the date of notification of death, the flag will be lowered to half-mast for a period of three (3) days. The flag may be lowered again on the date of the funeral or memorial service, or a different duration as advised by the Mayor or CAO.

Community Flagpole

Groups or organizations who would like to request a flag-raising or half-masting on the Community Flagpole at City Hall, must provide the Clerk's Office with a formal request in writing at least four weeks prior to the date requested. This request will be noted on the first available Council Agenda for approval by Council. This request should include:

- Name of the requesting organization;
- Contact information;
- Requested event or occasion;
- Date or time period of event or occasion;
- Explanation or purpose of the event or occasion;
- Description of the organization, any local/national/international affiliation, brief history and any other relevant information.

If Council Approval is granted based on the request made to the Clerks office, the organization must provide the flag a minimum of three business days prior to the approved date. The Mayor's Office will coordinate the raising of the approved flag with the appropriate Director.

This policy is intended to align with the City's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, to ensure the corporation's objectives are met.

Disposal of the Canada Flag

The key principle is to treat flags with respect reflective of the values they symbolize, drawing on available local resources and traditions.

A flag is considered to be worn when the colour has faded, it has developed a hole or the outermost seam (fly) of the flag has become frayed. When a flag becomes tattered

and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it should be disposed of in a dignified manner.

The disposal of a flag may be handled in the following manner:

- Flags made of natural fibres (wool, cotton, linen) should be burned in a dignified manner, privately, without ceremony or public attention being drawn to the destruction of the material.
- Flags made of synthetic material (nylon or polyester) should not be burned due to environmental damage and potential fire hazard. They should be respectfully torn into strips, with each element of the flag reduced to a single colour, so that the remaining pieces do not resemble a flag. The individual pieces should then be placed in a bag for disposal – the shreds of fabric should not be reused or fashioned into anything

In Canada, while the national flag has specific recommendations due to its symbolic importance, disposal practices can vary for other types of flags, such as provincial, municipal, or organizational flags. Here are some generalized guidelines for disposing of other types of flags in a respectable manner:

- Dignified Disposal: Like the national flag, any flag representing an organization, community, or cause should be disposed of in a manner that reflects its importance. This usually means avoiding simply throwing it in the trash.
- Burning: Similar to the national flag, ceremonial burning is often considered respectful, held with care to prevent harm and impart dignity to the process.
- Deconstruction: Cutting the flag into pieces so it can no longer be recognized as a flag can be an alternative, allowing for the parts to be disposed of as regular waste if no other options are available.
- Recycling Programs: Some local organizations or recycling programs may offer specialized services for flag disposal. Contacting local government services or flag manufacturers might provide additional options; these programs are more likely in communities with historical or cultural connections to specific flags.
- Return to Source: Returning the flag to the organization or entity it represents for appropriate disposal or reuse can be considered. Some organizations may have specific protocols in place for retiring their own flags.
- Local Guidelines: Checking with municipalities might reveal tailored regulations or recommendations, particularly for flags associated with local jurisdictions or special regional significance.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk
Report Number: FIN25-025
Attachments: None

Title: Composition and Size of Council for the 2026-2030 Term

Objective: To consider the pre-election report on the composition and size of Stratford City Council and to seek direction.

Background: Since 1885 when the then Town of Stratford was incorporated as a City, the composition of Council and how members are elected has changed several times. Over the past several elections, electors have been asked to vote for:

- 1 Mayor, and
- 10 Councillors

Section 186 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 (hereinafter the "Act") specifically allows Council to, among other matters, change the composition of Council. Council by way of a by-law may change the composition of Council but for the by-law to be effective for the 2026 election it will need to be passed prior to January 1, 2026. If it is not passed prior to that date, then the by-law will not be in effect for the 2026 election but will apply to the subsequent 2030 election.

Section 217 (1) of the Act allows municipalities to change the composition of its council subject to the following rules:

1. There shall be a minimum of five members, one of whom shall be the head of council.
2. The members of council shall be elected in accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.
3. The head of council shall be elected by general vote.
4. The members, other than the head of council, shall be elected by general vote or wards or by any combination of general vote and wards.

5. The representation of a local municipality on the council of an upper-tier municipality shall not be affected by the by-law of the local municipality under this section.

Composition / Size of Council:

The size of Council has ranged from as high as 15 members to the current 10 members (not including the Mayor's position). Since 1931, the number of Aldermen/Councillors has been 10 representatives and this number has not changed even with an expanding City size and growing population.

Method of Electing Council:

The City has experienced ward and at-large elections since at least 1885. In 1886, a ward system for electing Aldermen was put in place. Wards were abolished in 1890 and replaced with an at-large system. Then in 1922, the ward system was re-established. In 1923 the ward system was abolished and replaced with at-large elections.

As the next Municipal Election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026, the purpose of this report is to consider whether the composition and size of Council is to remain at 11 members elected at large or whether it is to be changed.

Analysis: A summary of municipalities with populations between 25,000 and 50,000 has been compiled showing the corresponding size of Councils and type of local government.

Table 1: Comparison of selected information of similar size municipalities

Municipality	Population*	Single or Lower Tier**	Size of Council
Bradford West Gwillimbury	42,880	Lower tier	9
Brant County	39,747	Single tier	11
Cornwall	47,845	Single tier	11
Fort Erie	32,901	Lower tier	7
Georgina	47,642	Lower tier	7
Grimsby	28,883	Lower tier	9
Innisfil	43,326	Lower tier	9
Lakeshore	40,410	Lower tier	8
LaSalle	32,721	Lower tier	7
Leamington	29,680	Lower tier	7
New Tecumseh	43,948	Lower tier	10
Orangeville	30,167	Lower tier	7

Municipality	Population*	Single or Lower Tier**	Size of Council
Orillia	33,411	Single tier	9
Owen Sound	32,712	Lower tier	9
Quinte West	46,560	Single tier	13
St. Thomas	42,840	Single tier	9
Stratford	33,232	Single tier	11
Timmins	41,145	Single tier	9
Whitchurch-Stouffville	49,864	Lower tier	7
Woodstock	46,705	Lower tier	7

*2021 Census

** Lower tier municipality forms part of a County or Regional Government (Upper tier)

Municipalities that have reviewed the composition of their councils have considered the following points:

- Past changes and current composition
- Population forecasts
- Legislated roles, responsibilities, duties and workload of councillors
- Potential impact of having fewer councillors
- Representation should be fair and responsive
- What is the appropriate number of constituents to be represented by a councillor
- Cost of governance

Stratford is a single tier municipality and provides the following services:

- Public works / infrastructure: roads, bridges, sewers, storm water, waste water systems
- Municipal water treatment and distribution systems
- Fire services and emergency control
- Public transportation systems
- Waste collection, recycling and yard waste collection
- Building and by-law services
- Land-use planning
- Ontario Works, Housing and Child care and Day care services
- Administration services
- Parks and forestry, recreation facilities and programming
- Parking and Crossing Guard Services (contracted)
- Municipal property and buildings
- Animal Control services (contracted)
- Operation of a municipal airport
- Operation of a municipal cemetery

The above list does not include mandated and discretionary services operated by outside boards and entities but for which the municipal corporation is the shareholder or major funding source: electrical utility, policing, library, economic development, tourism, public health, long-term care, paramedics, provincial offenses, museum and archives.

Considerations:

There is no definitive technique of determining the appropriate composition or size of Council.

There is also no definitive answer to the question of how many councillors are appropriate to govern the municipal corporation, participate in meetings, attend city advisory committee meetings and attend outside committee and board meetings as City Council representatives. Lastly, there is no optimal number regarding how many residents each councillor should represent in a ward system, if a change from at-large is made.

By means of this Pre-election Report, Council is asked to consider whether they wish to change the composition/size of Council in time for the 2026 election.

The following options are identified:

- Maintain the current composition of City Council
- Reduce the current composition of City Council
- Increase the current composition of City Council

As outlined in a separate Pre-election report, Council may also consider changing the method of how the Deputy Mayor position is selected. This would further impact on the composition/size of Council.

If City Council is interested in changing the composition/size of City Council, parameters for the review could include:

- Population
- Whether or not ward representation or continue with at-large
- Parameters used by other municipalities

There have been no requests made to the City Clerk to consider changing the composition or size of Council.

If there is no interest in changing the composition/size of Council, no decision is required, and this Pre-election report may be received as information.

If Council would like to consider changing the size and composition, then direction is required and there will be public notice requirements. The City's Notice Policy requires

the following notice to be given when considering a change to the composition of Council:

"Before passing a By-law to change the composition of Council, Notice of Intent to be given:

Content of Notice:

- A general description of the subject matter;
- Purpose of the Public Meeting at which the subject matter will be considered, including date, time and location of the Public Meeting;
- General provisions guiding the submission of information before or at the Public Meeting of which notice is being given;
- Instructions on obtaining any additional information which may be made available by the City or submitting comments or making a presentation at the Public Meeting;
- The name and title of the person to whom written comments are to be sent, together with the address of the official and the deadline for receipt of such submissions.

Manner of Notice:

- Notice of Public Meeting to be published once at least 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled public meeting in a newspaper, Municipal website, and City Hall Bulletin Board."

There is no appeal mechanism for a by-law adopted under section 217 of the Municipal Act changing the composition/size of Council.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

Implementing a change in the composition/size of City Council will have 2025 budget implications. The cost will depend on the extent of the review and level of public consultation. Public consultation could range from a public meeting with website feedback to a full consultant and on-line engagement process.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

With respect to the 2026 election budget, there would be increased costs for adding additional races to the voting system and in counting additional races on the ballot. The financial impact has not been estimated at this time.

Neither the cost savings from a reduced composition of City Council, nor the cost increases from an increased composition of City Council have been considered at this time. Remuneration for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and ten Councillors are included in the annual budget.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: This report does not align with one of the Strategic Priorities as the purpose is to consider the size of council.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: This report does not align with one of the One Planet Principles as the purpose is to consider the size of council.

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be provided if City Council is interested in initiating notice of intent to change the composition of City Council in time for the 2026 municipal election and that City Council identify the proposed change(s) to the composition and/or size of Council.

Prepared by: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk

Recommended by: Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk
Report Number: FIN25-023
Attachments: None

Title: Appointment of Deputy Mayor

Objective: To consider the pre-election report on the deputy mayor position and to seek direction.

Background: The next Municipal Election will be held on Monday, October 26, 2026. Historically, electors have been asked to vote for:

- 1 Mayor, and
- 10 Councillors

Section 186 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 (hereinafter the "Act") specifically allows Council to, among other matters, change the composition of Council. Council by way of a by-law may change the composition of Council but for the by-law to be effective for the 2026 election it will need to be passed prior to January 1, 2026. If it is not passed prior to that date, then the by-law will not be in effect for the 2026 election but will apply to the subsequent 2030 election.

The position of Deputy Mayor on Stratford City Council has historically been appointed from among the elected Councillors following a regular municipal election.

The Deputy Mayor position is included in the City's Procedural By-law 140-2007 as outlined below:

2.5 Absence – Mayor – Deputy Mayor – authority

In the absence of the Mayor or if the office is vacant, the Deputy Mayor shall act in the place and stead of the Mayor, including presiding at Council meetings, and shall have all the rights, powers and authority of the Mayor.

2.6 Absence – Deputy Mayor – Acting Deputy Mayor – appointed

In the event that the Deputy Mayor is unable to act in the place and stead of the Mayor, the Chair of the Finance and Labour Relations Committee is deemed to be Acting Deputy Mayor in the place and stead of the Head of Council and has and may exercise, while so acting, all the rights, powers and authority of the Head of Council, including presiding at Council meetings.

Previous Councils have appointed the Deputy Mayor position to act in the absence of the Mayor at meetings and to represent the city at functions and events. A resolution and by-law is adopted in open session to appoint the Deputy Mayor and to confer all the powers and duties of the Mayor, in their absence.

If Council wishes to change the way the deputy mayor position is selected, direction is required, including whether the deputy mayor position is an additional position on Council (meaning the composition of Council would increase to 12), or whether the size of Council is to be reduced from 10 councillors to 9 with the 10th member being the directly elected deputy mayor.

The City's Notice Policy requires the following notice to be given when considering a change to the composition of Council:

"Before passing a By-law to change the composition of Council,
Notice of Intent to be given:

Content of Notice:

- A general description of the subject matter;
- Purpose of the Public Meeting at which the subject matter will be considered, including date, time and location of the Public Meeting;
- General provisions guiding the submission of information before or at the Public Meeting of which notice is being given;
- Instructions on obtaining any additional information which may be made available by the City or submitting comments or making a presentation at the Public Meeting;
- The name and title of the person to whom written comments are to be sent, together with the address of the official and the deadline for receipt of such submissions.

Manner of Notice:

- Notice of Public Meeting to be published once at least 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled public meeting in a newspaper, Municipal website, and City Hall Bulletin Board.”

Analysis: Traditionally the Deputy Mayor appointed at the beginning of a new term of office has served a minimum of one term of Council and has experience with Council proceedings.

It is noted that with an elected Deputy Mayor position, the Deputy Mayor would continue to have one vote.

The following options have been identified for consideration by Council:

1. Status Quo: Appointment of the deputy mayor continues to be completed by the Mayor and Council.
2. Elected at Large by the Electorate: Electors directly vote for the deputy mayor position.
3. Rotation: Development of a policy which outlines the rotation of members of Council serving as Deputy Mayor. The appointments to be confirmed by By-law.

All three options are in use throughout Ontario. The most commonly used approach within Ontario is having the electorate select the Deputy Mayor, either by position or by appointing the elected official that receives the most votes.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There are no financial implications to the 2025 operating budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

With respect to the 2026 election budget, there would be increased costs for adding another race to the voting system and in counting an additional race on the ballot. The financial impact has not been estimated at this time.

Remuneration for the deputy mayor is included in the annual budget.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: Consideration of this report and the appointment of a deputy mayor do not necessarily align with the strategic priorities developed.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: Consideration of this report and the appointment of a deputy mayor do not necessarily align with the One Planet Principles.

Staff Recommendation: THAT direction be given to the City Clerk on the process for selecting a Deputy Mayor for the City commencing with the 2026-2030 term of office.

Prepared by: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk

Recommended by: Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk
Report Number: FIN25-024
Attachments: Attachment 1: Benefits and drawbacks of each voting method
 Attachment 2: Voting Methods Review: How each voting method works

Title: 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Alternative Voting Methods

Objective: To obtain direction on the vote method to be used in the upcoming 2026 municipal and school board election, and to seek support for offering free transit on Election Day on October 26, 2026.

Background: The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) governs the administration of local elections in Ontario. The Clerk holds independent legislative authority to administer all municipal and school board elections as the Returning Officer. These elections are planned and conducted in line with policies and procedures that reflect and uphold the principles of the MEA, generally recognized as follows:

- The secrecy and confidentiality of the voting process is paramount;
- The election shall be fair and non-biased;
- The election shall be accessible to the voters;
- The integrity of the voting process shall be maintained throughout the election;
- There is to be certainty that the results of the election reflect the votes cast; and,
- Voters and candidates shall be treated fairly and consistently.

In keeping with the election principles, accessibility is vital to ensuring participation for individuals of all abilities, supporting the City's commitment to inclusive elections. Section 12 of the MEA requires the Clerk to ensure an accessible election and remove barriers for voters and candidates with disabilities. Staff continually work to review and improve accessible options for electors, candidates, and election staff including continuously monitoring legislation updates, and municipal trends and practices.

Section 42 (1) of MEA does provide that a municipality may pass by-laws authorizing the use of alternative voting methods, including the use of vote counting equipment, vote by mail, and telephone and internet/online voting.

Analysis: The 2026 Municipal Election will take place on Monday, October 26, 2026. Since the 2022 election, there has been some positive legislative amendments including in areas such as the voters' list data quality with the change to use the Elections Ontario list. This will give a more accurate list based off drivers' license and health card information rather than home ownership information used by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC).

Should Council wish to proceed with the use of alternative voting methods, beyond vote count tabulators, a by-law must be passed by May 1, 2026. Upon passage of such a by-law by Council, the Clerk is required to establish procedures and forms for the use of any such alternative voting options, therefore the earlier the decision is made, the earlier planning can commence should Council decide to move forward with a new method.

Factors considered when selecting an alternate voting method and use of voting and vote-counting equipment have expanded over several elections to include:

- Risk analysis
- Elector eligibility
- Confidentiality
- Security of the system
- Systemic design
- Ballot design
- Security of the ballots
- Security of ballot boxes
- Voting places
- Election personnel needed
- Count and Recount
- Community capacity / demand
- Community education outreach
- Accessibility
- Voter engagement vs voter exclusion
- Costs / cost comparison
- Impact on candidates

Each method of voting has pros and cons to be considered when planning for the next election.

Voter turnout does not appear to be affected by the method of voting used by Stratford. It was previously anticipated that the easier it was for electors to vote, more people would vote and participation rates would increase.

Voter participation at the municipal level continues to be the lowest of the three-levels of government even after alternate voting methods were introduced 20 years ago.

Stratford's experience in voter turnout has been in the 45% to 50% range whether using paper ballots with manual count, paper ballots with optical scanners or internet / telephone voting.

Table 1: Voter Turnout 1994 to 2014

Year of Election	Voter Turnout	Number of Voters
1994*	49.3 %	n/a
1997*	46.0 %	9,865
2000	50.0 %	11,393
2003	49.7 %	n/a
2006	45.5 %	10,124
2010	47.8 %	10,303
2014	47.6 %	10,864
2018	49.79 %	11,677
2022	43.9 %	11,661

Note: * includes PUC candidates

Factors influencing voter turnout:

- controversial issues during the election campaign
- number of candidates for mayor's race
- level of interest in the candidate campaigns by electors – this can be influenced by age, education and economic conditions
- previous voting history within the family or networking group
- recent provincial and federal elections or by-elections in the municipality can lead to voter fatigue by the time the municipal election is held
- weather conditions on voting day

The City has received positive feedback on the use of internet and telephone voting such as:

- allows voters to vote anywhere, anytime during the voting period (including when on vacation)
- allows voters to vote comfortably within their own home
- is easy to use

Questions or concerns which have been raised including:

- wanting to vote in-person with paper and pencil
- questioning security and accuracy of the system

The City would issue a tender or request for proposal to select the voting system, once the type of alternate voting method is determined. The system selected will need to be compatible with other systems used to maintain and update the voters list received from Elections Ontario, accommodate vote anywhere and anytime during the voting period, be easy to operate, accessible, and able to have third-party certification or review.

A by-law is required to authorize an alternate voting method in place of a paper ballot and to authorize the use of voting and vote-counting equipment in place of a manual count. The Clerk is required to have procedures and forms for use of voting and vote counting equipment authorized by by-law developed by June 1, 2026.

Stratford has used internet and telephone voting for the 2010, 2014, 2018, and 2022 municipal and school board elections.

Options:

1. Continue to use internet and telephone voting
2. Use internet voting and eliminate telephone voting
3. Use internet voting and paper ballot with vote tabulators
4. Consider another voting method identified by Sub-committee
5. Use paper ballot with manual count

A draft by-law has not been included as part of this report. A by-law will be brought forward at a later date based on Council's direction.

Council direction through a by-law is only legislatively required regarding voting or vote-counting equipment and alternative voting methods. A decision regarding accessible voting service enhancements is at the discretion of the City Clerk under Sections 12 (1) and (2) of the MEA which speaks to the City Clerk's responsibility to ensure an accessible election and planning to ensure the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect voters and candidates with disabilities. Information and the intention of the City Clerk is included for Council and the public's awareness.

Accessibility and Human Rights Considerations

The City is committed to proactively planning for accessible election services that are designed to be inclusive. It is paramount that voters have the ability to mark their ballot independently and ensure the confidentiality of a vote. Staff also understand the duty to accommodate. If established service options do not support a voter, accommodations are offered in line with the principles of respect for dignity, individualization, integration and full participation. Due to the principle of individualization, each person's unique

needs are considered on a case by-case basis when an accommodation request is made. City staff have, in the past, supported case-by-case needs in past election cycles and will continue to make such support available through individual discussions.

Masked/Scent-Free Location

A separate location will be offered for individuals to vote where all individuals are masked, and no scents are worn or used in the room. This option will be piloted at City Hall in 2026 in consideration of the pandemic and public comfort attending a voting location or voter help centre. The intent of this pilot is to support barrier reduction for individuals with scent sensitivities or who may be immunocompromised.

A masked option was offered by the Cities of Hamilton, Toronto, Barrie and Guelph. It is staff's understanding that only the City of Guelph offered a scent-free location.

This option would likely be offered at City Hall as a central location in 2026 during advanced voting and on Election Day. This allows for preparation and cleaning of the space ahead of voting and affords staff greater control of the area, which would not be possible in other spaces.

Transit Consideration

The budget during a municipal election year includes funds to provide free transit on Election Day to support increased community access to voting in-person. The City Clerk's Office intends to work closely again with colleagues in the Transit Division to offer free transit again on voting day. A free fare day supports the reduction of barriers or transportation friction to get to a voting location. The cost to offer this is estimated to be \$5,000 and can be funded from the existing election reserve.

This option is being recommended for the municipal and school board election. Civic participation is important at all levels of government and each election authority is responsible for supporting voter engagement and removing barriers to voting. It is recommended that these options be offered for the municipal election as transit is a municipal service. A local election subsidized by local funding is being proposed. No request has been received by the City to offer this option for other elections at higher levels of government and there is no indication from Elections Canada or Elections Ontario that this is something they would pursue. Funding from other levels of government would be necessary if similar services were to be offered for Federal or Provincial elections in the future.

Vote Methods:

Internet Voting

An internet voting option allows a voter to securely login to an online platform to access, mark and cast their ballot. Step-by-step information on how this alternative

voting method works can be found in Attachment 2 of the Voting Methods Review: How each voting method works.

Strengths

- Supports independent ballot marking with the ability to customize and use personal assistive technology.
- Convenient online 24/7 access.

Weaknesses

- Variance in public technology literacy and access.
- Voters' list data accuracy important to prevent issues accessing.
- Need to receive voter notification card as part of secure login.

Opportunities

- Potential to increase voter turnout through barrier reduction and based on engagement survey data.
- Move to the Elections Ontario voters' list for 2026 will improve data accuracy.
- Potential to pilot draft standards.

Threats

- Potential security risk due to malicious actors.
- Potential for voter fraud with fully remote method.
- Technical dependencies on platforms and systems outside of the City's control.
- Potential for technical dependencies to impact reliability of service and public trust in election process.
- Inability to conduct a recount in any other way. This may compromise MEA principles related to ensuring results reflect the proper majority of votes cast, votes are counted accurately, and only valid votes are counted and upheld.

Approximately 5 municipalities used internet voting only in the 2022 municipal election. Approximately 93 municipalities did not use internet voting.

Vote by Tabulators

Voters attend in-person and mark a ballot which is then fed into a tabulator. Vote tabulators read and record how the ballot is marked, deposits it into the ballot box, stores the information and produces election results after the close of the voting place.

Strengths

- The use of vote-counting equipment allows for increased consistency in vote counting over a manual counting process.
- Supports the reporting of unofficial election results on election night.

- Reduce human error in tabulating due to the complexity of municipal and school board election ballots with multiple contests and selection requirements.
- Upholds all principles of the MEA.
- Offers a consistent foundational technology.

Weaknesses

- vote tabulators are scanning and recording vote counts accurately prior to use at a voting location

Opportunities

- Thorough logic and accuracy procedures can be established to ensure that vote tabulators are scanning and recording vote counts accurately prior to use at a voting location.

Threats

- Machines and results have a risk that they can be tampered with.

Vote by Mail

A vote by mail option would allow a voter to request a vote by mail kit, receive, mark and return a paper ballot by mail before Election Day. Step-by-step information on how this alternative voting method works can be found in Attachment 2 of the Voting methods review: How each voting method works.

Strengths

- Established remote voting method used at all levels of government.
- Enhances access to voting by removing barrier of coming to an in-person poll.
- Familiarity from previous provincial and federal elections.
- Upholds all principles of the MEA.

Weaknesses

- Prolonged time to receive and return kit by mail.
- Limited time frame that it can be offered due to nomination, ballot printing and mail timelines.
- Does not offer a fully independent voting experience as some voters with disabilities may require assistance marking their ballot.
- Voters with physical disabilities that limit mobility may require assistance to drop off a marked ballot in the mailbox for return.
- Marked ballots may be received after the deadline to be counted.

Opportunities

- N/A

Threats

- Third party dependency on Canada Post.
- Potential for voter fraud with fully remote method.
- Separate ballot casting process without verification at the time of casting.

Vote by Phone

A vote by phone option would allow a voter to call into a digital platform to make selections using an automated voice system. The ballot would be recorded and cast using the digital platform the same as online voting. Step-by-step information on how this alternative voting method works can be found in Attachment 2 of the Voting methods review: How each voting method works.

Strengths

- Easily accessible and familiar phone technology.

Weaknesses

- Slow ballot reading takes time to complete.
- Limited accessible features in that call speed cannot be adjusted.
- Automated call features may be irritating and provide poor customer experience.

Opportunities

- N/A

Threats

- Potential security risk due to malicious actors.
- Potential for voter fraud with fully remote method.
- Technical dependencies on platforms and systems outside of the City's control.
- Potential for technical dependencies to impact reliability of service and public trust in election process.
- Inability to conduct a recount in any other way. This may compromise MEA principles related to ensuring results reflect the proper majority of votes cast, votes are counted accurately, and only valid votes are counted and upheld.

Vote by phone was used in conjunction with internet voting by municipalities in the 2022 municipal election.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend continuing the use of internet and telephone voting for the 2022 municipal and school board election. Staff are diligent in reviewing specifications and perform due diligence from the procurement process, to ensure the security requirements are met when choosing a vendor, through to logistic and accuracy testing leading up to the Municipal Election. Staff will continue to provide on-site services to assist voters in person or over the phone with casting their ballot electronically.

Approximately 145 municipalities in Ontario used internet and telephone voting to conduct their municipal election in 2022.

Financial Implications:

The cost for internet and telephone voting services during the 2022 municipal and school board election was approximately \$33,409.

Following the 2022 election, election reserve funding was increased through the budget process to address the impacts of inflation, sustain existing service levels and ensure enough funds were available after the election to support any post-election processes such as recounts, compliance audits, and by-elections. The total reserve funds available for the 2026 is currently estimated at \$275,103.

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

The cost to prepare and issue a request for proposal can be funded within current approved operating budgets. There are no other anticipated impacts.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

Online / Internet Voting (Vendor: Simply Voting) *Estimate subject to change

- Internet & Telephone Voting Fee: \$28,000
- Managed Voter Information Letter: \$5,500
- Security Audit: \$3,000.00
- Total Base Cost (estimate): \$36,500.00

The \$5,000 required to provide free transit on election day can be funded through the Election Reserve.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: This report does not align with one of the Strategic Priorities as the purpose is to provide direction on the vote method for the upcoming 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Material and Products

Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products which help people reduce consumption.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election be approved;

AND THAT free transit on election day be approved to support access and remove barriers to voting for the 2026 municipal and school board election;

AND THAT the Clerk be directed to prepare a by-law authorizing the use of internet and telephone voting in the 2026 municipal and school board election.

Prepared by: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk

Recommended by: Karmen Krueger, CPA, CA, Director of Corporate Services
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer



Attachment 1: Benefits and drawback of each voting method

In-person Voting

Benefits	Drawbacks
Offers registered voters a secure and monitored location to cast their vote. The polling stations would be monitored by municipal staff, volunteers, and scrutineers who would be able to ensure all votes were cast in a secure environment, and that all ballots were accounted for in a controlled process.	Voters have to attend a physical location in order to cast their ballot.
Considered the simplest and most familiar method of voting for many.	Additional staff and resources will be required to support the voting locations. This could also include a number of external elections staff, which would require time to put out postings, review applications, and train hired individuals
This system would require a communications plan as it would be a departure from the system used in the last three elections. Registered voters would be required to attend a designated polling station on Election Day to cast their ballot. Information on what to bring and where to go would be required.	Voting strictly in-person also introduces additional difficulties for seasonal residents and property owners. Those who will not be able to attend a designated polling station to vote in-person on Election Day or during advanced polls could therefore be at a disadvantage with this method.
	There would be a greater environmental impact with the use of ballot cards.

Vote by Mail

Benefits	Drawbacks
Offers an option for voters to cast a ballot without attending a physical voting location.	Will not help voters who realize they are unable to vote in-person after the deadline to register for a mail in ballot.
Convenience for voters who know they will be unable to attend a voting location well in advance of Election Day.	Mail processing timelines impact how long it takes a voter to receive and return a ballot.
May be familiar as this method is available for use in Federal and Provincial elections.	Ballots may be lost or damaged in the mail.
	Ballots received after Election Day or without a signed voter declaration card could not be counted.
	Higher chance of unintentional ballot marking errors or a spoiled ballot that could not be counted as there are no prompts for a voter if a ballot or race is blank, over-voted or under-voted like with in-person voting locations or other remote working methods.
	Additional costs to support mail out and return of ballots.
	Environmental impact of paper-based ballots.
	Challenging to access for voters who are moving addresses, who do not have a consistent residence or are homeless.
	Increased manual administrative processes to send, track, receive and verify only one ballot is cast per voter.
	Potential for fraudulent interference of vote by mail kits.
	Potential impact if a postal strike occurs during mail-in voting.

Vote by Phone

Benefits	Drawbacks
Offers an option for voters to cast a ballot without attending a physical voting location.	Potentially frustrating voter experience when stuck in a long phone automation script reading out all contests, all candidates and then verifying all selections.
Flexible voting times with an automated system.	Potential for fraudulent interference with ID on voter notification cards sent in the mail.
Decreased chance of a ballot being marked in error or spoiled unintentionally as the system flags ballot marking errors, such as blank, over, and under-voted races and allows the over to correct before casting the ballot just like in-person voting locations.	Operates on the same platform as internet voting system so any security considerations with that system would apply to this method as well.
Environmentally friendly as no paper ballot printing	Potential for technical difficulties to pause or delay voting.
Efficient automated administration of voter identity verification, ballot receipt and striking voter off the voters' list and counting.	No manual recount possible because there is no paper ballot.
Fast and accurate results tabulation.	
Cost effective based on flat rate per voter that uses the system.	

Internet voting

Benefits	Drawbacks
Offers an option for voters to cast a ballot without attending a physical voting location.	Internet access may be less available to some voters.
Flexible voting time (24/7)	Potential for technical difficulties to pause or delay voting.
Supports accessible voting with options to adjust colour contrast, screen size, font size and ability to use a screen reader on a personal device.	Potential for fraudulent interference with ID on voter notification cards sent in the mail, requiring a two-step registration process to enhance security with personal information verification and a PIN.

Benefits	Drawbacks
Environmentally friendly as no paper ballot printing.	Security of voting online and potential for fraudulent activity has been raised, based on use of personal devices or potential to interfere with the internet voting system.
Decreased chance of a ballot being marked in error or spoiled unintentionally as the system flags ballot marking errors, such as blank, over and under-voted races, and allows the voter to correct before casting the ballot just like in-person voting locations.	No manual recount is possible because there is no paper ballot.
Efficient automated administration of voter identify verification, ballot receipt and striking voter off the voters list and counting.	
Fast and accurate results tabulation.	
Cost effective based on flat rate per voter that uses the system.	
Digital audit trail for audit, investigation or recount.	



Attachment 2: Voting methods review

How each voting method works

In-person voting

1. This method requires voters to personally visit a polling station either during advanced voting periods or on election day.
2. At the polling station, voters physically complete a paper ballot, which is then processed through a vote tabulator on-site.
3. The system uses a composite ballot on which is printed the candidates' names. The elector uses a special marking pen to fill in the oval next to the candidate of their choice.
4. The ballot is then inserted into the vote tabulating unit by the election official in charge of the unit. The tabulator then reads and stores the information in the unit.
5. At the close of voting on Election Day, the vote tabulator will print cumulative totals of all votes cast.

Vote by mail

1. To vote by mail, a voter would need to complete a form requesting a mail in ballot and submit it online or by mail to the City Clerk's Office. This form would have to be received by a set cut-off date, to ensure the vote-by-mail kit could be received and mailed back in time before Election Day.
2. The City Clerk's Office would process requests to vote by mail and track who requests a vote-by-mail kit on the voter's list for security purposes.
3. Once a request for a vote-by-mail kit was processed, election officials would prepare and mail the vote-by-mail kit with the ballot, secrecy folder, voter

declaration card and a return envelope with postage pre-paid up to the cut-off date.

4. Once received, a voter would mark their ballot and seal it inside the secrecy envelope provided in the vote-by-mail kit. They would also sign their voter declaration card and mail it along with the secrecy envelope back to the election office using the provided return envelope. The voter declaration card acts as an affidavit or solemn oath and must be signed in order for the ballot to be counted.
5. When election officials receive the returned envelope, they will open the vote by mail package and separate the voter declaration card from the ballot, which is kept secret and sealed in the secrecy envelope. Election officials review and scan the voter declaration card to automatically strike that voter off the voters list. This is an important part of the ensuring a secure voting process by verifying the details on the voter declaration card and confirming that the voter is struck off the voters list at the time the mailed ballot is received. They will take the secrecy envelope containing the ballot and place it in a ballot box for safe keeping until Election Day.
6. If the voter declaration card is not signed, the ballot cannot be accepted or counted. These vote by mail packages will be separated out and securely stored should candidates or scrutineers wish to review this decision at the time of vote counting.
7. On Election Day, tabulators will be deployed at the election office. At the start of the scanning process, a report will be run to demonstrate to all officials and scrutineers that the results database is empty, and all candidate totals are zero. Secrecy envelopes containing ballots, which are anonymous and separated from anything identifying the voter, would then be opened. Ballots would be flattened and stacked in batches by election staff, and the batches would then be placed in the feeding trays of the tabulators.
8. After the close of voting locations on Election Day, the vote by mail results would be counted and announced at the same time as unofficial results on election night.

Vote by phone

1. To vote by phone, a voter will use a touchtone phone to call the toll-free number provided on their voter notification card. They are prompted to input the voter

identification (ID) listed on their voter notification card and are asked to answer a security question to verify their identity. This question is usually for the voters' birthdate which can be verified with the voters' list. Once the voter credentials are validated, the voter is presented with an audio version of the ballot.

2. The telephone voting system uses pre-recorded interactive voice commands to guide the voter through the voting process. Voters are prompted to make their ballot selections from the list of candidates for each ballot race. Voting will take more or less time depending on how many candidates there are in each race.
3. In the case of a single-member race, like for Mayor, the voting system will read back the candidate selection and prompts the voter to confirm if the selection is correct. If the voter indicates this was their choice, the system moves on the next available ballot race. In a multi-member race, the voter is prompted to make their next selection from the list of available candidates (those which they have not already selected) until all their selections are complete for that race.
4. Upon completion of all the races the voter is provided the opportunity to review the full ballot prior to providing final confirmation and casting the ballot. They can return to the ballot and update their choices before final confirmation if anything is not correct.
5. If the voter is disconnected before final confirmation, their voter credentials are still valid. They simply have to re-access the telephone voting system and would begin marking a blank ballot again. The ballot is only cast when the voter provides final confirmation to cast it at the very end of the call.
6. Once final confirmation is provided, the ballot is received electronically through the same system as internet voting. It is sent through an encrypted channel to secure servers. Ballot information is encrypted to protect the information on the ballot and hash coded to ensure the ballot is not altered by malicious intent before reaching the election servers.
7. Once at the application servers, the integrity of the information is then verified one last time against business rules. If there are any issues, the voter is prompted to review and make any further changes. If there are no errors, then the ballot is received and stored on secure servers. It is stored with an electronic audit trail that can be used to audit, investigate or conduct a recount if needed.

8. Once a ballot is cast, the voter is then struck off the voters' list and cannot receive another ballot over the phone or at an in-person voting location.

Internet voting

1. To vote online, a voter enters the website address provided on their voter notification card into a web browser on a computer, mobile phone or tablet to go to the secure internet voting website.
2. They will first register to vote online, which requires that they enter the unique voter ID provided on their voter notification card and verify other personal information to confirm their identity. This usually asks for the voters' birthdate. This automatically checks that they are eligible to vote if all information matches the voters' list. Once the registration step is complete, the voter will receive an encrypted email with a unique PIN for that voter. This two-step process increases security by ensuring that a single voter credential cannot be used alone to access, mark and cast a ballot.
3. The voter can now log in using their voter ID and PIN. They will be asked to accept a voter declaration statement indicating that they are aware of offences and penalties under the Municipal Elections Act and that they are not committing fraudulent or corrupt acts by voting.
4. The voter then receives their ballot. Instructions are provided on how to mark and navigate from one race to the next. Once the voter has completed all races on the ballot, they are presented with a confirmation screen which provides an overview of how each race is marked and shows any warning messages if the voter has left any races blank, under-voted or over-voted. This is an opportunity to update the selections. Once everything is marked as intended, the voter clicks the 'cast ballot' button.
5. If the voter is disconnected before selecting 'cast ballot', their voter credentials are still valid. They simply have to re-log in to the internet voting system and would begin marking a blank ballot again. The ballot is only cast when the voter provides final confirmation to cast it at the very end.
6. When a voter casts their ballot online, the ballot is sent through an encrypted channel to secure servers. Ballot information is encrypted to protect the information on the ballot and hash coded to ensure the ballot is not altered by malicious intent before reaching the election servers.

7. Once at the application servers, the integrity of the information is then verified one last time against business rules. If there are any issues, the voter is prompted to review and make any further changes. If there are no errors, then the ballot is received and stored on secure servers. It is stored with an electronic audit trail that can be used to audit, investigate or conduct a recount if needed.
8. Once a ballot is cast the voter is struck off the voters' list and cannot receive another ballot online or at an in-person voting location.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Vicky Trotter, Council Committee Coordinator
Report Number: FIN25-026
Attachments: Statutory Requirements of Advisory Committees
 Advisory Committee and Board Renumeration by Municipality

Title: Advisory Committee Renumeration

Objective: To consider remuneration for members of advisory committees.

Background: The City has a number of advisory committees, some of which are statutorily required or are established as a quasi-judicial tribunal. Other advisory committees have been established for specific purposes that have been deemed valuable by Council. Members apply and are appointed on a volunteer basis for specific terms.

Statutorily required:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee – statutory
- Heritage Stratford – statutory
- Committee of Adjustment (quasi-judicial)

Other advisory committees / local boards are:

- Active Transportation Advisory Committee
- Communities in Bloom Advisory Committee
- Energy and Environment Advisory Committee
- Stratfords of the World (Ontario) Advisory Committee
- Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

A governance review is currently being undertaken for all City advisory committees and local boards which includes reviewing remuneration for members. Currently, the City does not provide remuneration to advisory committee members, with the exception of members of the Committee of Adjustment.

Analysis: Staff have reviewed the policies of other municipalities and determined that remuneration is typically not provided to advisory committees, unless they are statutorily required or are a quasi-judicial tribunal. The remuneration paid by other municipalities for statutory committees is provided in recognition of the members' expertise and lived experiences.

On average, members of Committee of Adjustment receive \$112.42 per meeting compared to the City of Stratford that pays \$50.00 to Chairs and \$41.67 to members of the Committee of Adjustment.

Other municipalities average \$99.64 per meeting for Accessibility Advisory Committees and \$93.16 per meeting for members of Heritage Committees.

If the City were to create a remuneration structure consistent with comparators, this would more consistently provide members of statutory committees with remuneration that recognizes the time, expertise and lived experience shared and given by these volunteers.

A suggested rate of \$125.00 per meeting would cost approximately \$20,000 - \$30,000 annually and represent an addition to the budgeted amounts and impact on the tax levy. This is based on the current member structure for the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Heritage Stratford, both consisting of 8 members with an average of ten (10) meetings per year and the Committee of Adjustment consisting of five citizen positions with a maximum of 12 meetings annually. If remuneration were also provided for attendance at site plan review sub-committee meetings, and permit reviews this cost would increase.

Options:

1. (Recommended) That remuneration be paid to each member of the committees that are statutorily required, and include Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per regular meeting for each Committee meeting attended **and** \$50.00 per meeting for Heritage Stratford site plan review meetings, Heritage Stratford permit review meetings and Accessibility Advisory Committee site plan review meetings commencing January 1, 2026
2. That remuneration be paid to each member of the committees that are statutorily required, and include Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per regular meeting only for each Committee meeting attended commencing January 1, 2026.

3. That remuneration be paid to all members of all City advisory committees in the amount of \$125.00 per meeting for each Committee meeting attended commencing January 1, 2026.
4. That the report be filed – meaning no action would be taken.

Staff recommend proceeding with option 1, providing remuneration may assist the City with recruitment for these required committees. The recording secretary for each committee provides the required documentation quarterly to the Council Committee Coordinator who facilitates payment through the Finance Division. Staff would also develop a policy outlining any additional parameters, such as a maximum number of members that can be appointed to a sub-committee, to ensure the costs remain within the approved budget.

Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees will require updates to reflect the changes should remuneration be approved.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

Estimated costs of approximately \$30,000 would need to be included in the 2026 budget lines for each of the following committees: Accessibility, Heritage and Committee of Adjustment. This figure would be adjusted lower if option 2 were selected, and higher if option 3 were selected.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Not applicable: This report does not align with one of the Strategic Priorities as the purpose is to consider remuneration for advisory committees.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT remuneration be paid to each member of Heritage Stratford, Accessibility Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment in the amount of \$125.00 per meeting for each Committee

meeting attended and \$50.00 per meeting for Heritage Stratford site plan review meetings, Heritage Stratford permit review meetings and Accessibility Advisory Committee site plan review meetings commencing January 1, 2026;

AND THAT Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees be updated to reflect the changes to remuneration.

Prepared by: Vicky Trotter, Council Committee Coordinator
 Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk

Recommended by: Tatiana Dafoe, City Clerk
 Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

Advisory Committee/Board Remuneration by Municipality

Municipality	Remuneration
City of Woodstock	\$50.00 per meeting
Clarington	\$100.00 per meeting
Township of Spring Water	\$80.00 per meeting
Ajax	\$65.00 per meeting
Fort Erie	\$81.53 per meeting
Ottawa	\$298.00 per meeting

Committee of Adjustment

Accessibility Advisory Committee

Municipality	Remuneration
Huron County	\$207.52 per meeting plus mileage (1/2 day rate)
Perth County	\$134.63 per meeting (1/2 day rate)
St. Marys	None
Orillia	\$300 per annum or \$150 per annum for attending less than 75% of meetings
Oxford County	\$100.00 per half day meeting, \$175.00 for full day meeting

Heritage Advisory Committee

Municipality	Remuneration
Huron County	\$207.52 per meeting plus mileage
Perth County	None
St. Marys	\$20.00 per meeting
Orillia	\$300 per annum or \$150 per annum for attending less than 75% of meetings
Oxford County	None

Roles of Advisory Committees

Heritage Stratford

Heritage Stratford is the City's Municipal Heritage Committee under the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage Stratford was originally created in 1981 as a Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee through By-Law 70-81. The Committee was then amended in 2004 through By-Law 133-2004. Heritage Stratford has a Statutory Role and a Non-Statutory Role to fulfill in Stratford.

Statutory Role: (under the Ontario Heritage Act)

Heritage Stratford advises Council on the following issues regarding Heritage properties:

- Designations, or Repeals, Amendments or Alterations of Designations;
- Demolition;
- Easements or Covenants;
- Establishment of Heritage Conservation Districts.

Further, on receipt by the Development Services Division any applications for demolition, building or sign variance permits relating to Part IV and/or Part V heritage buildings, Heritage Stratford shall be notified immediately in order to review the application and contact the owner of the subject property to offer advice and assistance. Results of this review and contact shall be conveyed back to the Development Services Division within 5 working days.

Heritage Stratford provides advice on Heritage Impact Assessments where these are required under the Stratford Official Plan or other Planning legislation.

By-Law 133-04 charges Heritage Stratford with preparation of a building inventory.

Non-Statutory Role:

Heritage Stratford also assists in creating an informed environment that supports and enhances the preservation of a historical community through:

- Advocacy and promotion for Heritage Conservation;
- Education;
- Long Term planning;
- Management of the James Anderson Awards and the Blue Plaque program.

Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) sets out the process for developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards. The AODA requires

all municipalities of 10,000 or more residents to have an accessibility advisory committee, with the majority of members being persons with disabilities.

The three main activities of an accessibility advisory committee are to:

1. Advise municipal council about:
 - the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards;
 - the preparation of accessibility reports;
 - other matters for which the council may seek its advice
2. Review site plans and drawings described in section 41 of the Planning Act that the committee selects.

Perform all other functions that are specified in the regulations.

The Committee of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial tribunal appointed by City Council and is independent and autonomous from City Council and City Administration. It derives its jurisdiction from the Planning Act of Ontario.

Mandate:

- To hear and make decisions on Applications for "Minor Variances" - where a requirement of a Zoning By-law cannot be met (under Section 45 of the Planning Act). This includes applications which deal with the enlargement or extension of a building or structure that is legally non-conforming or for a change in conforming use.
- To hear and make decisions on Applications for Consent to "sever" a property or for any agreement, mortgage or lease that extends for 21 years or more (under Section 53 of the Planning Act).



Stratfords of the World (Ontario) Advisory Committee

MINUTES

A meeting of the Stratfords of the World (SOTW) Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, November 28, 2024, at 2:00 p.m., in the Hall Meeting Room at the Stratford Rotary Complex.

Committee Members Present: Joan Ayton – Chair Presiding, June Wells, Ken Clarke, Joyce Mohr, Susan Kummer, Kathy Hill, Barbara Finkelstein, Linda Hawken

Staff Present: Casey Riehl – Recording Secretary

Regrets: Councillor Geza Wordofa, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Joan Ayton, Chair presiding, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Reading of the Land Acknowledgment and Moment of Silent Reflection

Reading of the Respectful Workplace Policy

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None declared.

3. Adoption of the Previous Minutes

Motion by Kathy Hill

Seconded by Susan Kummer

THAT the minutes from the Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee meeting dated September 24, 2024 be adopted as printed. Carried

4. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

4.1 2025 Reunion Plans – New Zealand (January 8-15, 2025)

Joan Ayton provided the following updates on the upcoming Reunion in New Zealand:

- There are (14) Ontario delegates, (3) PEI delegates, (4) Australia delegates, (4) UK delegates and (5) Connecticut delegates;
- There is an itinerary and it is the same one originally issued;
- New Zealand organizers have reached out to delegates to offer helicopter rides as part of their visit. This would be an additional cost if delegates choose to participate;
- The names of host families have not been shared as of yet. Organizers stated that they would have the list distributed by the end of November;
- As per the e-mail from Vicky Trotter, members will be reimbursed the cost of their registration, even if their terms were not renewed;
- New Zealand has requested that the visiting Stratfords do not bring gifts or make donations as part of their visit. Arrangements have been made for Mayor Ritsma to write a letter for members to take with them;
- Ken Clarke noted that during the last New Zealand Reunion, all the Stratfords planted trees. He has a photo from when the tree was originally planted and will try and take another picture of the tree during this visit;
- There will be a final information session held on December 10, 2024 for delegates attending;

Motion by Susan Kummer

Seconded by June Wells

THAT the Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee spends \$307.20 for refreshments at the December 10, 2024 Reunion information session. Carried

Ken Clarke suggested that perhaps they could inquire if the City could fly the SOTW flag while members are away at the New Zealand Reunion.

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Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Linda Hawken

THAT The Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee requests that the Stratfords of the World flag be flown at Stratford City Hall during the week of the New Zealand Reunion (January 8-15, 2025). Carried

Joan Ayton has the flag and will drop it off at City Hall.

Members discussed the possibility of SOTW assisting with fundraisers in the future to help the committee get additional exposure.

5. New Business

5.1 Update on Committee Appointments

Joan Ayton reported that she has re-submitted her application for the committee. Staff has assured her that applications will be going to Council on the December 16, 2025 meeting. Members have submitted letters of support to be included in the re-appointment consideration. Members will also e-mail Council members on behalf of Ms. Ayton. If re-elected, Ms. Ayton has requested staff include in their report that she remains chair of the committee until elections are held. Alternatively, Ms. Ayton would like to hold a meeting before the Reunion to do elections.

Members noted it was disheartening to hear Councillors at the meeting state that they do not know what the City's SOTW Committee does. Ken Clarke suggested that SOTW could do a presentation to Council to let them know what the committee does. Joan Ayton stated that after all the work the committee did hosting the 2023 reunion here, Council should already know what they do.

Members understand that if new citizens applied for the two vacancies that they would have been appointed, however there were no other applications received. Perhaps in this situation Council could have granted an exemption for the two renewals, as was the case for other committee appointments.

Kathy Hill suggested that the Committee could do a write up of their visit to the New Zealand Reunion once they are back and provide it to Council for their information.

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6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SOTW Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 9:00 a.m., in the Mansbridge Room at the Stratford Rotary Complex, 353 McCarthy Road, Stratford.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Ken Clarke

Seconded by Kathy Hill

THAT the November 28, 2024 Stratfords of the World Advisory Committee meeting adjourn. Carried

Start Time: 2:00 P.M.

End Time: 2:55 P.M.