

## Constituency Services and Office Budget Policy – Section 4.7 Policy Overview

### ***4.7 Councillor Expenses during an Election Year***

*Please also refer to "Policy on Use of City Resources during an Election" for limitations on City staff, resources and facilities during an election period.*

- Under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the City of Toronto cannot provide a subsidy to any candidate in a municipal election campaign. Therefore, special conditions for expenses for Councillors apply during an election year.
- An election year begins at the start of the no nomination period (first Monday in January of an election year) and ends with the end of Council term on November 30 of an election year.
- Councillors will not be allowed to use the Constituency Services and Office Budget for advertising, newsletters, flyers, community expenses and community events after **August 1** of an election year until the day after Election Day, except for emergency situations.
- The guidelines apply to all Members of Council, whether they are seeking re-election, acclaimed to the office, or not seeking re-election. Additional policies apply to Councillors who are not seeking re-election or who are not returning to office after the election.

#### **a. General**

- The Constituency Services and Office Budget for Councillors for the period January 1 to November 30 in a municipal election year is restricted to 11/12<sup>th</sup> of the approved Constituency Services and Office Budget with the provision that subsequent to election day.
  - new Councillors are allocated a budget equal to 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the approved budget amount for the month of December; and
  - re-elected Councillors have available to them the balance of funds remaining as of Election Day.
- Once a Councillor has filed nomination papers, the Councillor will no longer be eligible to receive donations for their community events, per the Council-approved policy regarding donations to Council Member-Organized Community Events. [Adopted by City Council at its meeting of July 15, 16 and 17, 2008, EX22.6, recommendation 12 – see Appendix 3]

## **b. Specific Limitations**

- Once a Councillor has announced after the nomination deadline<sup>1</sup> that they are not seeking re-election and plan to retire from office at the end of term, the Councillor will not be permitted to use City funds to:
  - Increase the salary of their staff.
  - Buy furniture and equipment for the office.
  - Attend conferences, seminars or undertake business travel.
  - Trade furniture with other Councillors.
- After August 1 of an election year and until Election Day, no Councillor will be permitted to:
  - Place any advertisement in newspapers, magazines, other publications or websites that have a publication date after August 1 of an election year, even though the ad placement itself may be made prior to August 1.
  - Organize any community events in their wards, including movie nights, picnics, environment days, community celebrations, BBQs, etc.
  - Use external resources paid by City funds to:
    - Update their existing personal Councillor website.
    - Perform website maintenance.
    - Create and post YouTube videos.
    - Create, monitor or manage facebook accounts or use other social media tools.
  - Link from the City's website or the Councillor's personal website to social media pages where campaign or election-related information is posted.
  - Distribute electronic newsletters including mass e-mails.
  - Pay for any new domain name for websites or pay for any web design services.
  - Conduct or authorize any automated phone campaigns, such as robocall or any similar automated virtual townhalls.
  - Print and distribute any newsletter to constituents.
  - Print and distribute any flyers to constituents, except in the case of emergencies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Amended and adopted by City Council at its meeting on July 11, 2012

- Order any new stationery, including business cards, envelopes or letterhead for their office in large quantities.
- Order new furniture or purchase office equipment, including computers or other computer accessories.
- Trade furniture with other Councillors.
- Attend any conferences or seminars other than those held by an inter-governmental organization such as FCM as a Board or Committee member (refer to Intergovernmental-Related Business Travel in Appendix 1).
- Purchase any gifts or promotional items for constituents, including greeting cards.
- Purchase any tickets for community events or functions.
- Order any congratulatory scrolls from the Protocol Unit.
- After Election Day, a Councillor not returning to Council will not be permitted to:
  - Use City funds to:
    - Increase the salary of their staff.
    - Buy furniture and equipment for their office.
  - Attend conferences, seminars and undertake business travel.
  - Incur community expenses, including purchasing tickets to events.
  - Organize community events other than community meetings for specific time-sensitive emergencies.
  - Order office stationery, business cards, holiday cards.
  - Purchase promotional gifts in premiums
  - Trade furniture with other Councillor offices.