

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

FROM: COUNCILLOR LEE

SUBJECT: CONSOLIDATION OF PUBLIC COMPENSATION FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

PURPOSE: To seek Council approval for staff to prepare an annual financial report detailing total compensation received by Council members.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS transparency and accountability are principles of good governance and public service; and

WHEREAS it is difficult for the public to know the details of compensation of the elected officials;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Burnaby prepare a comprehensive annual financial report (starting in the 2024 calendar year) that details the total compensation received by Council members who serve on regional or provincial/national organizations, including but not limited to, Municipal Finance Authority, TransLink, Metro Vancouver, Union of BC Municipalities, and Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and that this report be made accessible to the public; and

THAT the annual financial report provides a complete itemization of each Council member's base salary and benefits, as well as per diems, stipends, allowances, retainers, expense, reimbursements, and any other compensation associated with their roles.

BACKGROUND

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles of good governance and public service. These principles ensure that elected officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions, fostering public trust. One significant area where transparency is often lacking is in the compensation of elected officials. Understanding the details of how public funds are utilized for compensating officials is crucial for maintaining trust between the public and their representatives.

In the City of Burnaby, there has been growing concern about the difficulty the public faces in accessing detailed information regarding the compensation of elected officials. This motion addresses these concerns by proposing the preparation of a comprehensive annual financial report that outlines the total compensation received by Council members for their roles within various regional, provincial, and national organizations. This report will be made accessible to the public, ensuring that citizens are well-informed about the financial aspects of their elected representatives' roles.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The implementation of this motion involves several financial implications:

- **Administrative Costs:** Preparing a comprehensive annual financial report requires administrative resources. This includes the time and effort of City staff to gather, compile, and verify the data from various sources such as the Municipal Finance Authority, TransLink, Metro Vancouver, Union of BC Municipalities, and Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
- **Publication and Accessibility:** Ensuring that the report is easily accessible to the public may involve costs related to publishing and distributing the document, both in print and online formats.

Despite these costs, the financial impacts are outweighed by the benefits of increased transparency and accountability. Providing detailed information on the compensation of elected officials can help prevent misuse of public funds, promote ethical behavior, and strengthen public confidence in local governance.

DISCUSSION

The motion emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in the governance of Burnaby. By making compensation details of elected officials readily available, the City of Burnaby aligns itself with best practices in good governance.

Several key points arise from this motion:

- **Public Trust:** Transparency in compensation fosters trust between the public and their elected officials. When citizens are informed about how public funds are allocated, they are more likely to have confidence in their leaders.
- **Deterrence of Misuse:** Public disclosure of compensation details serves as a deterrent against potential misuse of public funds. Elected officials are more likely to act ethically when they know their compensation is subject to public scrutiny.
- **Benchmarking:** The report can serve as a benchmarking tool, helping to compare compensation practices with other municipalities and organizations. This can lead to more informed discussions about fair compensation for public service roles.

The motion also addresses the specific components that should be included in the annual financial report. These components are:

- **Base Salary and Benefits:** The basic compensation package provided to Council members, including salary and standard benefits.
- **Per Diems and Stipends:** Daily allowances and additional payments for specific duties or attendance at meetings.
- **Allowances and Retainers:** Additional financial allowances for various responsibilities and retainers for ongoing advisory roles.
- **Expense Reimbursements:** Reimbursements for expenses incurred while performing official duties, ensuring transparency in the use of public funds.
- **Other Compensation:** Any other forms of compensation associated with their roles, providing a complete picture of financial remuneration.

In conclusion, the adoption of this motion reflects a commitment to transparency and accountability in the City of Burnaby. By providing a detailed and accessible annual financial report on the compensation of elected officials, the City demonstrates its dedication to good governance and public service. This motion not only enhances public trust but also sets a standard for other municipalities to follow in promoting transparency and ethical behavior among elected representatives.

Respectfully submitted,

COUNCILLOR RICHARD T. LEE