SUBJECT: Council Remuneration Review Working Group recommendations

TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

FROM: Office of the City Clerk

Report Number: CL-33-21

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers:

Date to Committee: November 10, 2021

Date to Council: November 23, 2021

Recommendation:

Approve the recommendations from the Council Remuneration Review Working Group on council compensation, expense limits and resources attached as appendix A to office of the city clerk report CL-33-21.

PURPOSE:

To report on the activities and recommendations of the Council Remuneration Review Working Group (CRRWG), an objective third party, which undertook a review of council remuneration, benefits, expenses and resources.

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Background and Discussion:

In April 2021 through report CL-08-21, Council approved the terms of reference for the CRRWG on Council remuneration, benefits, expense limits and resources.

The mandate of the CRRWG is to complete the necessary research, review existing policies and practices, make comparisons with similar sized peer and neighbouring

municipalities, and produce an independent report with recommendations for the total level of compensation, benefits and expenses for the term of office commencing November 14, 2022.

The CRRWG's membership included balanced representation from stakeholders including:

- a representative from a financial institution in the City of Burlington,
- a local board member,
- a citizen advisory committee member,
- a representative from the Chamber of Commerce
- a representative of a community social services organization (e.g. Community Development Halton), and
- two (2) City of Burlington residents.

The slate of members was established by canvassing members from the previous term(s) and filling vacancies through direct appointment based on the representation in the Terms of Reference. In keeping with the Committee Framework approved in principle, the City Manager authorized the appointment of the following individuals were appointed to the Group:

Dave Conrath (Chair)
John Chisholm
Sean Ballard
Colleen Mulholland
Diana Tuszynski
Sharon Portelli
Rameen Sabet
Carrie Overholt

The CRRWG began meeting in June and met 7 times to discuss research, review notes and brainstorm, and prepare their final report. Members of Council and the City Manager were interviewed individually to gain their perspective related to remuneration, benefits, expenses, and resources.

Throughout its term the CRRWG was supported by the staff from the Office of the City Clerk, Finance Department and the Executive Director of Human Resources. The recommendations and report of the Committee is attached as Appendix A.

Financial Matters:

None.

Climate Implications

None.

Engagement Matters:

The Terms of Reference for the Council Remuneration Review Working Group were listed on a public agenda in April 2021 for Council's consideration. The Group's agendas and minutes were publicly posted on www.burlington.ca.

Conclusion:

The Group has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing all of the background information provided to them and analyzing information from comparator municipalities. The recommendations presented by the Group are intended to support good governance and fiscal accountability.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Fusco

Deputy City Clerk

Amanda.fusco@burlington.ca

Appendices:

A. Report from Council Compensation Review Committee

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.

Remuneration Committee Report – 2021

Before we begin our report per se, we want to express our sincere appreciation for the great support we received from the City of Burlington's staff. This includes everything from organizing our meetings, to taking minutes of them, to providing us well researched answers to our many questions. Those involved include: Kevin Arjoon, Amanda Fusco, Laura Boyd, Sandy O'Reilly, Kristin Sprukulis and Debbie Hordyk. Others may have been involved as well, and our gratitude is extended to them.

Our report will be broken down into several sections as our mandate covers issues beyond direct remuneration. These include the adequacy of support staff, expense budgets and the Deputy Mayor position, which was raised by the previous Remuneration Committee.

Salaries

Overall there is little discontent with the current salary structure, including annual increases based on the relevant Consumer Price Indices (CPIs). Perhaps one reason that annual earnings were not identified as a significant issue is that all Burlington Councillors and the Mayor are also members of the Halton Region's Council, and are remunerated for that position as well. Hence, when comparing a Councillor's annual total salary with other similar jurisdictions (extensive data were provided by the city's staff), they fared well as there are two sources of income.

Recommendation: The salary structure currently used, including annual increases based on CPIs, is maintained.

Benefits

The issue that the benefit package is significantly different for those over 65 was raised by at least two Councillors. This difference exists as Councillors receive the same benefit package as City employees. We heard through the interview process that this is an issue of fairness and equity. We are aware that there is a review being undertaken by the City of all human resources policies with a lens of diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation: The appropriate city staff should conduct a review of its benefit packages at they apply to City Councillors considering the bases of equity during their review of all human resources policies.

Expense Budgets

The general expense budget has been increased by $1,000 in response to the recommendation of the last Remuneration Committee which met in 2017. While there were no major concerns about the limitations established by the budgets, constraints

brought on by the pandemic were raised as an issue. For example, the ability to increase mailings to constituents due to the limitations placed on public meetings were constrained by some Councillors' budgets. The question was raised regarding the ability to accumulate past surpluses that could be used in such situations. A staff member indicated how it might be done. It was also noted that the expense budgets were not indexed.

Recommendations: The Council Expense Manual be amended to provide the following:

- Establish a reserve account accessible by all members of Council, made up of surpluses that exist at the end of the year. This would require establishing a policy for when and how such funds might be accessed.
- Increase each expense account by the increase in the relevant CPIs each year.

Staffing

All members of Council, without exception, stated their satisfaction with the staff support that each was receiving on an individual basis.

A review of the current staffing structure and previous Remuneration Committee reports revealed that over the years each Councillor was provided access to a full-time Councillor's Assistant, a City employee. The full-time Mayor's Assistant, approved by the 2017 Remuneration Committee, has not been put into effect. While the Mayor has access to several support personnel, none are City employees.

Historically Mayors have chosen to hire their own assistants. This has been based on the fact that the Mayor's role is vastly different from that of a Councillor, from which most mayors arise. And this has been recognized by the current Mayor. Still, through interviews and the arguments supporting the recommendation made in 2017, we believe that the transitioning between Mayors would be enhanced with a full-time City employee whose experience could foster an easier transition.

Recommendation: The Office of the Mayor hire a full-time permanent assistant who would be able to serve consecutive Mayors.

Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)

The City has a Customer Relationship Management System in house that allows enquiries from "customers" to be tracked, followed up and resolved. It is intended to be used in all customer-facing services and is being implemented in a phased approach. Due to privacy laws that govern City records (the ones that come into the CRM) and constituent records, there is a need to separate the two. A separate constituent record solution is being researched. This will be funded by each Councillor using their allowance. The cost per office (including access by the Councillor and their CA) is expected to be approximately $2,000 per year.

The use of the constituent records system was mentioned in a number of interviews as it was a major concern for most of the Councillors, and as it relates to staff support it is mentioned here. As it appears to be a work in progress we are not in a position to make recommendations. However, it may well be a subject of concern for the committee that succeeds us four years from now.

Deputy Mayor

Having been raised by the preceding Remuneration Committee we delved into this as well. Most Councillors felt that there was no need for an elected position of Deputy Mayor. However, there was clearly a recognition that there is a need for a Councillor to step into the role of Mayor when the person so elected is unavailable to fulfill that role.

The current solution is to assign the role of “deputy mayor” or “interim mayor” on a rotating basis, with the rotation done quite frequently. Any cycle of rotation should ensure that the Councillor assigned as Deputy/Interim Mayor has an adequate understanding as to what is on the Mayor’s plate so that the ability to fill the Mayor’s role when needed, while not seamless, would not be exceedingly awkward. This process would need to be defined by Council.

Recommendation:

- In the short term, Council and the Mayor should choose a rotation cycle length that leads to the most seamless transition for the “Deputy Mayor” should that role be required.
- In the longer term, Council and the Mayor should develop a clear definition of the role of “deputy” or “interim” mayor and incorporate this within a policy or by-law regarding its use.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Ballard, John Chisholm, Dave Conrath, Colleen Mulholland, Carrie Overholt, Sharon Portelli, Rameen Sabet, Diana Tuszynski