Policy No. GP-2026-06
Council Professional Development Policy
Motion: 2026-114

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a clear, accountable, and transparent framework for professional development of members of Council.

This Policy ensures that public funds are used prudently to support elected officials in fulfilling their duties under the Municipal Government Act (MGA), while maintaining public trust and fiscal responsibility.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All professional development under this Policy shall:

1. *Support Effective Governance*
   Enhance the knowledge, skills, and decision-making capacity of Council.
2. *Provide Municipal Value*
   Deliver a clear and direct benefit to the Town of Raymond and its residents.
3. *Ensure Fiscal Responsibility*
   Reflect reasonable and necessary use of public funds.
4. *Promote Equity*
   Provide fair and consistent access to funding for all Councillors.
5. *Maintain Transparency and Accountability*
   Be open to public scrutiny and supported by clear reporting.

ELIGIBILITY

This Policy applies to all duly elected members of Council for the Town of Raymond.

FUNDING LIMIT

a) Maximum Allocation

Each Councillor is eligible for professional development funding up to:

- *$3,000 per four (4) year Council term*

b) Conditions

- *The funding limit is absolute and shall not be exceeded under any circumstance*
- *Funds are non-transferable between Councillors*
- *Funds do not carry forward between Council terms*
- *Unused funds have no cash value*

Budget Authority

All expenditures must:

- *Be approved by Council; and*
- *Fall within the approved municipal budget*

New Council Term Eligibility

At the commencement of each new Council term, each Councillor is eligible to access professional development funding in accordance with this Policy, regardless of whether they accessed funding in a previous term.

Eligibility in a new term:

- *Is treated as a new and separate entitlement; and*
- *Remains subject to all provisions of this Policy, including the maximum funding limit and approval requirements.*

ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development must be directly related to the duties of an elected official and may include:

- *Municipal conferences and conventions*
- *Governance training and workshops*
- *Courses related to municipal law, finance, planning, infrastructure, or leadership*
- *Training offered by recognized municipal, governmental, or accredited institutions*

ADVANCED AND ACCREDITED TRAINING

Eligibility

Council may approve advanced or accredited training, including:

- *University or college courses*

- *Certificate or diploma programs*
- *Executive education or governance certification programs*

Conditions

Approval shall only be granted where:

1. *The training is directly relevant to Council roles and responsibilities;*
2. *The training provides a clear benefit to the municipality; and*
3. *Participation does not interfere with Council duties.*

Funding Restriction

All advanced or accredited training:

- *Must be funded entirely within the $3,000 per term limit*
- *Shall not receive additional or supplemental municipal funding*
- *Shall not create any multi-year or ongoing financial obligation*

INELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

The following are not eligible for reimbursement:

- *Personal, recreational, or social activities*
- *Expenses for spouses, family members, or guests*
- *Alcohol or entertainment expenses*
- *Luxury travel or upgraded accommodations*
- *Any expense not directly related to Council duties*
- *Programs exceeding the available funding limit*

APPROVAL PROCESS

Pre-Approval Required

All professional development must receive prior approval by Council resolution and within the funding limit established in this Policy.

Submission Requirements

Requests must include:

- *Description of the training or event*
- *Location and duration*
- *Estimated cost*
- *Explanation of relevance to Council responsibilities*

Decision Criteria

Council shall consider:

- *Relevance to governance responsibilities*
- *Cost relative to benefit*
- *Budget availability*
- *Equity among Councillors*

EXPENSE MANAGEMENT

Eligible Costs

Eligible expenses include:

- *Registration fees*
- *Economy travel (airfare or mileage)*
- *Standard accommodation*
- *Meals and incidentals at reasonable rates*

Payment Options

- *Reimbursement upon submission of receipts; or*
- *Direct payment by the Town where feasible*

Claim Requirements

All claims must:

- *Be submitted within 30 days of the expense*
- *Include itemized receipts*
- *Comply with Town financial policies*

ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT

Administration shall:

- *Track expenditures for each Councillor*
- *Ensure compliance with funding limits*
- *Provide updates to Council upon request*

NON-COMPLIANCE

- *Expenses that are not pre-approved or exceed the funding limit shall not be reimbursed*

- *Council may require repayment of any funds improperly claimed*

INTERPRETATION

This Policy shall be interpreted:

- *In accordance with the Municipal Government Act; and*
- *Consistently with Town financial and governance policies*

Where ambiguity exists, Council shall determine interpretation by resolution.

REPEAL

Policy GP-2018-01 (Council Professional Development Policy) is repealed.