
Haldimand County

Report FIN-10-2025 Eligible Expense Policies

For Consideration by Council in Committee on June 17, 2025



Objective:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval on the establishment of a new expense policy framework, which includes repealing the previous Expense Reimbursement Policy (Policy #01-05) and the corresponding creation of two separate eligible expense policies, as a result of a comprehensive review, conducted by staff, of expense policies across Ontario's municipal sector.

Recommendations:

1. THAT Report FIN-10-2025 Eligible Expense Policies be received;
2. AND THAT the Expense Reimbursement Policy (Policy #01-05) be repealed;
3. AND THAT the Employee – Eligible Expense Policy be enacted;
4. AND THAT the Members of Council – Eligible Expense Policy be enacted.

Prepared by: Tareq El-Ahmed, CPA, CMA, Treasurer

Reviewed by: Mark Merritt, CPA, CA, General Manager, Financial & Data Services

Respectfully submitted: Mark Merritt, CPA, CA, General Manager, Financial & Data Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

Staff propose that Council approve repealing the current Employee Reimbursement Policy (Policy #01-05) and the subsequent creation of two new separate policies: (i) Employee – Eligible Expense Policy and (ii) Members of Council – Eligible Expense Policy.

The current policy is out dated and does not align with current purchasing practices, including the organization wide deployment of purchasing cards. Staff completed a comprehensive review of municipal sector expense policies, resulting in the development of two separate eligible expense policies that promote accountability, transparency, value for money, and fairness regarding how eligible expenses, with respect to business-related event(s) and travel, are managed at Haldimand County. The report provides an overview of the updates and the rationale for the changes being made, relevant to both policies being recommended.

Background:

The primary purpose of an eligible expense policy is to provide clear guidelines and procedures for incurring employee work-related expenses, while ensuring responsible and transparent spending of Haldimand County funds. It outlines what expenses are eligible to be incurred when conducting Haldimand County business, how to submit claims and receive a reimbursement (when applicable), and what documentation is required.

Analysis:

The current Expense Reimbursement Policy (Policy #01-05) was last revised in May 2005. It does not conform to Haldimand County's current policy template, that was adopted earlier this year, nor does it align to current purchasing practices, including the deployment of P-Cards to all eligible Haldimand County staff.

Given the date of the last update and the changes to the purchasing methods, staff have completed a comprehensive review of nine other expense policies within Ontario's municipal sector, which included both single-tier and regional structures. This comprehensive review resulted in the development of two separate eligible expense policies that promote accountability, transparency, value for money, and fairness, regarding how eligible expenses, with respect to business-related event(s) and travel, are managed at Haldimand County.

As part of the comprehensive review, staff identified that some other municipalities in Ontario have a separate policy for members of Council, which includes the Mayor, and Council appointed members of applicable boards and committees. Given the political nature of these roles and the differing scope of work, relative to staff and volunteers, the recommendation is to approve two separate policies, that are aligned in principles, but differ in practice. The following sections will provide an overview of the updates and the rationale for the changes being made, relevant to both policies being recommended (Employee – Eligible Expense Policy and the Members of Council – Eligible Expense Policy).

1. Policy Statement & Purpose

- The core policy statement and purpose of a staff and/or members of Council expense policy, remains the same, but given the change in purchasing practices, due to the organization adoption of purchasing cards, the requirements for reimbursements, are substantially less frequent and are primarily related to mileage claims. The recommended policies incorporate this reality and focus more on providing guidance and direction on eligible business expenses. With the use of purchasing cards now prevalent by Haldimand County staff, the need to provide staff with per diems are no longer warranted. Staff and/or members of Council now have the ability to incur eligible expenses on Haldimand County issued purchasing cards, resulting in a substantial reduction of the need to incur out of pocket expenses. In some circumstances, members of Council will still be required to incur out of pocket expenses, requiring a process for reimbursement, to remain intact.

2. Scope & Authorization

- The scope of the two policies differ, based on the groups that the policy applies to. Given the political nature of members of Council, which includes the Mayor, and Council appointed members of applicable boards and committees and the differing scope of work, a separate policy is being recommended. The authorization of expenses for Haldimand County employees remains at the Manager and/or GM level. Under the Members of Council – Eligible Expense Policy, the recommendation is that now the authorization of these expenses be performed by the Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer, rather than the Mayor or the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). This change aligns with best practice across the municipal sector and the Municipal Act's requirement for the Treasurer to report on an annual basis Haldimand County Council remuneration and expenses in respect of services as Members of Council, local boards, or other bodies for the preceding year, by March 31st.
- Under the Employee – Eligible Expense Policy, all travel outside of Canada requires the approval of the GM and/or the CAO. In the current policy, it states that out of province travel, can only be approved by the CAO.

3. Principals - Eligible Expenses

- The list of eligible expenses have been updated from the current policy, but are nearly identical on the two expense policies being recommended. The newly developed policies aim to be prescriptive on the types and amounts of permitted eligible expenses. The following is a list of changes made to the section on eligible expense:
 - i. Travel Related Reimbursement
 - Provides enhanced clarity and direction on the guidelines when claiming and calculating mileage.
 - Tolls are now listed as eligible expenses, if deemed efficient in the use of business travel.
 - Explicitly states that parking/traffic violations incurred while on Haldimand business are the responsibility of the employee and are not reimbursable.
 - ii. Meals
 - As noted above, references to per diem allowances have been removed.
 - Imposes individual meal limits and a \$75 per day maximum limit (before taxes), which includes gratuities.
 - Explicitly states alcoholic beverages, tobacco and/or consumable cannabis are ineligible expenses.
 - iii. Reward or Loyalty Programs
 - The new policies now state that when incurring a business expense, reward or loyalty programs cannot be used to gain personal benefits.

4. Violations & Administration

- Within the Employee – Eligible Expense Policy, the Treasurer is responsible for the administration and monitoring of the policy. Violations of the policy will be referred to the employee's supervisor and a reimbursement back to Haldimand County, will be required. Violations may also result in disciplinary action(s).
- Under the Members of Council – Eligible Expense Policy, the Treasurer will be responsible for the administration and monitoring of this policy. Violations will be explicitly reported in the annual report to Council.

Financial/Legal Implications:

All eligible expenditures are subject to approved annual operating budget expenditures limits. Finance Staff are planning training sessions for all employees once these policies are approved.

Stakeholder Impacts:

Not applicable.

Report Impacts:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: Yes

References:

1. [Policy No. 01-05 Expense Reimbursement Policy](#)

Attachments:

1. Employee – Eligible Expense Policy
2. Members of Council – Eligible Expense Policy