

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

TOPIC:	Municipal Hospitality Policy
POLICY NUMBER:	44
DATE APPROVED:	November 19, 2019 (Min# 2019-148)
DATE REVISED:	December 14, 2020 (Min#2020-174) January 28, 2025 (Min#2025-017)

1. TITLE

1.1 This Policy may be cited as the “Hospitality Policy”

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. The Municipality recognizes that hospitality-related activities are, at times, necessary and legitimate expenses supporting the effective conduct of government business and for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development, or promotion, or advocacy.

2.2. This policy establishes uniform standards and procedures respecting Municipal Council members, the CAO, and municipal employee hospitality claims.

2.3. The object of this policy is to:

2.3.1. Provide direction and guidance with respect to the appropriate reporting of necessary hospitality expenses;

2.3.2. Ensure hospitality is offered in an accountable, economical, and consistent; and,

2.3.3. Ensure public funds are used prudently and transparently.

3. INTERPRETATION

3.1. In this Policy:

3.1.1. “Municipal Council” means the Council of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish;

3.1.2. “Municipality” means the Municipality of the County of Antigonish;

3.1.3. “Municipal” means the business or property of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish;

3.1.4. “Signing Authority” means an individual authorized to sign on behalf of the Municipality.

3.1.5. “Claimant” means the individual submitting the expense claim for the items listed in this policy.

4. HOSPITALITY AND HOSPITALITY EVENTS

4.1. A hospitality event is a reception, ceremony, conference, meal or other event that involves hosting individuals from outside the Municipality. Hospitality may be offered under the following circumstances in accordance with this policy:

4.1.1. Hosting foreign dignitaries;

4.1.2. Engaging in official municipal business matters with representatives from other governments, business, industry or labour leaders, or other municipal or community leaders;

- 4.1.3. Sponsoring or hosting conferences;
- 4.1.4. Hosting ceremonies and/or recognition events; and,
- 4.1.5. Other official functions, as approved by the CAO, their designate, or Municipal Council.

5. SIGNING AUTHORITIES

- 5.1. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing expenses incurred on their own behalf.

6. PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

- 6.1. Subject to this policy, all hospitality events in require prior authorization.
- 6.2. A request for prior authorization for hospitality events requires the following information:
 - 6.2.1. Rationale / purpose of the event;
 - 6.2.2. Estimated numbers of attendees and their respective affiliations;
 - 6.2.3. If alcohol is to be provided at the event, the reasons that the provision of alcohol is appropriate and warranted in the circumstances; and,
 - 6.2.4. Estimated itemized costs including gratuities and supplementary expenses.
- 6.3. Requests for hospitality events shall be reviewed by Municipal Council, which shall consider the value and benefit of the proposed event in relation to its cost in deciding whether to approve the hospitality event.
- 6.4. In instances where a hospitality event has been held without prior approval, claims for reimbursement must provide details outlined above and include a document outlining the reasons prior approval was not possible.

7. SERVING OF ALCOHOL

- 7.1. While the standard for hospitality is the provision of non-alcoholic beverages, the provision of alcohol in the context of hospitality for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development, promotion or advocacy is deemed an acceptable expense in limited circumstances. Any request for approval to serve alcohol at a hospitality event must have prior approval by either the CAO or Designate, or Municipal Council.
- 7.2. The Municipality, its employees, and Members of Council are expected to act responsibly in the use of public funds and in the care of well-being of themselves, other employees, and their respective guests with respect to the serving of alcohol.
- 7.3. The Municipality will demonstrate good judgement in the reasonableness of the quantity and expense of alcoholic beverages offered to guests.
- 7.4. If alcohol is provided at a hospitality event, food must be served.

8. GIFTS

- 8.1. For reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy, the giving of token gifts to individuals outside of government is sometimes appropriate. Any giving of gifts requires prior approval by the CAO if the monetary value does not exceed \$250, or Municipal Council if it does.

9. CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF HOSPITALITY EXPENSES

- 9.1. Claims for reimbursement of hospitality expenses must be submitted on the form provided from time to time by the Municipality and shall be signed by the Claimant.
- 9.2. Hospitality expense claims must include the following:
 - 9.2.1. A copy of the signed prior authorization for the hospitality event for which the expense was incurred;
 - 9.2.2. The names, titles and organizations of the guests at the hospitality event;
 - 9.2.3. The business objective for the expense; and,
 - 9.2.4. A detailed itemized receipt for the expense.
- 9.3. In instances where prior approval of the hospitality event was not possible, the hospitality expense must also include the information required in section 6.4.
- 9.4. If no receipt is available for a hospitality expense, a written attestation signed by the Claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expense must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.
- 9.5. Hospitality expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
- 9.6. No hospitality expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is approved for payment by two Signing Authorities. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that the claim is consistent with this policy.
- 9.7. In considering a hospitality expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may be request additional explanations, documentation, or justification from the claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense that did not have prior authorization and that the Signing Authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this policy. In such an instance the claim may be withdrawn or shall be referred to Municipal Council.
- 9.8. The use of petty cash to pay a hospitality expense claim is prohibited.

10. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 10.1. Pursuant to Section 65A of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Municipality does the following:
 - 10.1.1. Within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts a hospitality report of the Municipal website that describes all the hospitality expenses incurred by the Municipality, including purchases of alcohol, during the quarter.
 - 10.1.2. By September 30th of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the hospitality expense reports for the preceding fiscal year, which is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

11. REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

- 11.1. The Municipal Audit Committee shall review the hospitality annual summary report by October 31st of each year.
- 11.2. By the January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the Municipal Elections Act, Council shall review this policy and, following a motion from Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.