



STAFF REPORT

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL
FROM: JOHN THOMAS, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT: RESEARCH FINDINGS - COUNCIL REMUNERATION REVIEW
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 25, 2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present Council with the findings of the in-house Council remuneration review as directed during the July 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting and subsequently ratified at the July 22, 2025 Regular Council Meeting. This report provides the results of an external compensation scan comparing six municipalities of similar population sizes.

BACKGROUND

At the July 8, 2025, COTW meeting, Council directed staff to conduct an internal review of Council remuneration and to present comparative data from similar municipalities. This direction was formally ratified on July 22, 2025, during the Regular Council Meeting. In response, staff completed a jurisdictional scan of **six (6) comparable municipalities**, including:

- District of Lantzville – population 3817
- District of Invermere – population 3917
- District of Mackenzie – population 3281
- District of Port Hardy – population 3393
- Village of Pemberton – population 3407
- Northern Rockies Regional Municipality – population 3947

The scan included remuneration for the Mayor and Councillors as well as per-diem meal allowances (breakfast, lunch, and dinner).

The municipalities reviewed demonstrate notable variation in compensation levels. The results are summarized in the table below:

Category	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Mayor	\$33,644.26	\$28,850.95	\$44,050.00
Councillor	\$17,512.29	\$12,964.97	\$21,880.00
Breakfast Allowance	\$21.99	\$15.00	\$27.95
Lunch Allowance	\$26.14	\$20.00	\$35.00
Dinner Allowance	\$39.69	\$23.00	\$56.85

In addition to direct remuneration and meal per-diems, many communities provide a range of support tools and benefits intended to allow elected officials to perform their duties effectively. From the six comparator municipalities reviewed:

- **Travel Reimbursement:**
All comparators reimburse travel costs at current CRA mileage rates.
- **Accommodations Support:**
All comparators cover accommodation costs for Council attendees participating in conferences, meetings, and training outside the municipality, at current market rates or based on receipts.
- **Technology & Communications:**
 - 3 municipalities provide a dedicated cellphone to the Mayor.
 - 1 municipality provides a cellphone to all members of Council, including the Mayor.
 - 5 municipalities provide laptops or tablets for Council members to support electronic agendas, communication, and file review.
- **Well-Being Benefits:**
 - 2 municipalities provide mental health and counselling programs accessible to elected officials, typically through an Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP) or equivalent.
- **Professional Development:**
 - 4 municipalities provide professional development and training opportunities for members of Council.
This may include UBCM, LGLA, subject-specific courses, and other governance or leadership training.

The Town of Lake Cowichan currently provides a similar package of remuneration for members of Council. The focus of this review demonstrated that the current rates, which was last updated in 2022 required updating.

Canada Poverty Line

The Poverty Reduction Act was given royal assent on June 21, 2019 with a defined purpose as follows: “continuous effort in, and continuous monitoring of poverty reduction in Canada”. The overall goal is to reduce poverty in Canada and this is highlighted because the compensation for elected officials across local governments have traditionally fell below the poverty line established through the Market Basket Measure (MBM) threshold.

The MBM for a four-person family in areas such as Vancouver is approximately **\$50,000+ CAD** (2020 based – pre-covid) for a modest standard of living.

IMPLICATIONS

a. Financial:

Office	Annual Remuneration	Bi-Weekly Remuneration	CURRENT – ANNUAL
MAYOR	\$33,020	\$1,270	\$29,543.37
ACTING MAYOR	Same as Mayor	Same as Mayor	
COUNCILLOR	\$21,008	\$808	\$17,726.02

b. Policy/Legislation:

The remuneration of Council is established by bylaw which governs the stipends, benefits, and allowances provided to the Mayor and Councillors. Any amendments to Council remuneration must be enacted through a bylaw adopted by Council in accordance with the Community Charter, which requires all such decisions to be transparent, publicly considered, and formally legislated.

Attached is a draft bylaw for Council’s consideration.

c. Strategic Priority:

A review of Council remuneration supports several strategic priorities, including:

- **Good Governance & Accountability:** Ensuring remuneration is transparent, evidence-based, and aligned with comparable municipalities enhances public trust and supports responsible stewardship of public funds.

- **Organizational Stability & Leadership Capacity:** Fair and competitive remuneration contributes to attracting and retaining qualified individuals to serve on Council, supporting effective decision-making and stable governance.
 - **Community Representation & Inclusion:** Ensuring that remuneration does not become a barrier to serving in elected office supports broader participation in civic leadership.
- d. Sustainability:**
Financial Sustainability: Evaluating remuneration within a strategic framework ensures long-term budgeting accuracy and alignment with community expectations and fiscal realities.
- e. Communication:**
Subject to Council’s decision, public communication will be crafted accordingly.
- f. Staffing Implication:**
Staffing implications are minimal and can be managed within existing departmental capacity. The revised bylaw would actually make it easier to administer council remuneration and addresses current challenges with the existing bylaw.

Options:

- 1. Option 1 – Receive the Report and Draft Bylaw; No Further Action**
THAT Council receive this report and the accompanying draft bylaw and take no further action at this time.
- 2. Option 2 – Accept the Report and Proceed with First and Second Readings**
THAT Council receive the report and direct staff to bring forward the draft Council Remuneration Bylaw amendment for First and Second Readings.
- 3. Option 3 – Refer the Matter to an Upcoming Committee of the Whole Meeting**
THAT Council refer the remuneration review and draft bylaw to a future Committee of the Whole meeting for further discussion, refinement, or direction.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending option 2 or 3.

Respectfully submitted,
John Thomas

Chief Administrative Officer

Community	Population	Annual - Mayor	Annual - Councillor	Meal - Breakfast	Meal - Lunch	Meal - Dinner	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rates
Lake Cowichan	3325	\$ 28,850.95	\$ 17,310.57	20.00	30.00	50.00	Other: CRA rates in effect in December for the following year
Lantzville	3817	\$ 29,305.86	\$ 16,072.66	15.00	20.00	35.00	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rates
Invermere	3917	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	25.00	35.00	55.00	Province of BC rates
Mackenzie	3281	\$ 30,588.43	\$ 12,964.97	20.00	25.00	35.00	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rates
Port Hardy	3393	\$ 31,023.60	\$ 15,511.80	27.95	27.00	56.85	Other: 0.60
Pemberton	3407	\$ 41,691.00	\$ 20,846.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rates
Northern Rockies	3947	\$ 44,050.00	\$ 21,880.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) rates

	Mayor	Councillor	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Average	\$ 33,644.26	\$ 17,512.29	21.99	26.14	39.69
Min	28850.95	12964.97	15	20	23
Max	44050	21880	27.95	35	56.85

Accommodation	Cell Phone for Mayor Only	Cell Phone for all Councillors	Laptop Computer or Tablet	Mental Health / Counselling	Professional Development / Training
At actual Cost	Cell Phone for Mayor Only	n/a	n/a	n/a	Professional Development / Training
At actual Cost	n/a	n/a	Laptop Computer or Tablet	n/a	Professional Development / Training
At actual Cost	n/a	n/a	Laptop Computer or Tablet	n/a	Professional Development / Training
At actual Cost	Cell Phone for Mayor Only	n/a	Laptop Computer or Tablet	n/a	Professional Development / Training
At actual Cost	n/a	Cell Phone for all Councillors	Laptop Computer or Tablet	Mental Health / Counselling Programs	n/a
At actual Cost	Cell Phone for Mayor Only	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
At actual Cost	Cell Phone for Mayor Only	n/a	Laptop Computer or Tablet	Mental Health / Counselling Programs	Professional Development / Training