

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-08

APPROVAL DATE: January 27, 2025

CAO Signature: 

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The Town of Amherst recognizes that hospitality-related activities are, at times, necessary and legitimate expenses supporting the effective conduct of government business for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy.
2. The offering of hospitality will be done in such a manner so as to reflect the prudent stewardship of public funds. This policy safeguards the appropriate use of public funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting Council members, the Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”) and Town of Amherst employee hospitality claims.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

3. To provide direction and guidance with respect to the appropriate expensing of necessary hospitality expenses that support the Town of Amherst’s objectives.
4. To ensure hospitality is offered in an accountable, economical and consistent manner in the facilitation of government business and/or for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy.
5. To ensure taxpayers’ dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.

HOSPITALITY AND HOSPITALITY EVENTS

6. A hospitality event is a reception, ceremony, conference, or other event that involves hosting individuals from outside the Town of Amherst. Hospitality may be offered under the following circumstances in accordance with this policy:
 - (1) hosting foreign dignitaries;
 - (2) engaging in official public matters with representatives from other governments, business, industry or labour leaders, or other community leaders;
 - (3) sponsoring or hosting conferences;
 - (4) hosting ceremonies / recognition events; and
 - (5) other official functions, as approved by the CAO, their designate or Town of Amherst Council.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-08

SIGNING AUTHORITY

7. The following are the Signing Authority for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering this policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

Position	Signing Authority
Mayor	CAO/Designate
Members of Council & CAO	Mayor/ Designate
Town Employees	CAO/Designate

- 8. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
- 9. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing payment of hospitality expenses incurred on their own behalf.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

- 10. Subject to this policy, all hospitality events require prior authorization.
- 11. A request for prior authorization for hospitality events requires the following information:
 - (a) rationale/purpose of the event;
 - (b) estimated numbers of attendees and their respective affiliations;
 - (c) if alcohol is to be provided at the event, the reasons that the provision of alcohol is appropriate and warranted in the circumstances; and
 - (d) estimated itemized costs including gratuities and supplementary expenses.
- 12. Requests for hospitality events shall be reviewed by the appropriate Signing Authority as set out in paragraph 7 of this policy, who shall consider the value and benefit of the proposed event in relation to its cost in deciding whether to approve the hospitality event.
- 13. In instances where a hospitality event has been held without prior approval, claims for reimbursement must provide the details outlined above and also include a document outlining the reasons prior approval was not possible.

SERVING OF ALCOHOL

- 14. 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 or promotional 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 the appropriate Signing Authority, as set out in paragraph 7 of this policy.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-08

15. The Town of Amherst and its employees and members of Council are expected to act responsibly in the use of public funds and in the care and well-being of themselves, other employees and their respective guests with respect to the serving of alcohol.
16. The Town of Amherst will demonstrate good judgement in the reasonableness of the quantity and expense of alcoholic beverages offered to guests.
17. If alcohol is provided at a hospitality event, food must be served.

GIFTS

18. For reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy, the giving of token gifts to individuals outside of government (value not to exceed \$40.00) is sometimes appropriate. Any giving of gifts requires prior approval by the appropriate Signing Authority as set out in paragraph 7 of this policy.

CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF HOSPITALITY EXPENSES

19. By April 1 of each year any individual claiming reimbursement pursuant to this policy must sign an acknowledgment document certifying that they have reviewed this policy and sought all clarifications necessary for a complete understanding of its provisions and their responsibilities pursuant to it. Failure to sign this acknowledgement document annually will disqualify the individual from claiming expenses for reimbursement under this policy until the document has been signed for that year.
20. Claims for reimbursement of hospitality expenses must be submitted on the form provided from time to time by the Town of Amherst and shall be signed by the Claimant.
21. Hospitality expense claims must include the following:
 - (1) a copy of the signed prior authorization for the hospitality event for which the expense was incurred;
 - (2) the names and positions of the guests at the hospitality event;
 - (3) the business objective for the expense; and
 - (4) a detailed itemized receipt for the expense.
22. In instances where prior approval of the hospitality event was not possible, the hospitality expense claim must also provide the information required in paragraph 11 of this policy and an explanation of why prior approval was not possible.
23. 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.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-08

24. Hospitality expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
25. No hospitality expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by the Signing Authority who has authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a Signing Authority must ensure that:
- (1) the claim is consistent with this policy;
 - (2) the expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
 - (3) appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and that the claim documentation is appropriately filed; and
 - (4) the expenses claimed have appropriate justification.
26. In considering a hospitality expense claim for payment, a Signing Authority may 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.
27. The use of petty cash to pay a hospitality expense claim is prohibited.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

28. Pursuant to s. 65D of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Town of Amherst does the following:
- (1) within ninety (90) days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts a hospitality expense report on the Town of Amherst website that describes all of the hospitality expenses incurred by the Town of Amherst, including purchases of alcohol during the quarter.
 - (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 that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

29. The Town of Amherst Audit Committee shall review the hospitality annual summary report, relevant to section 28, by September 30th of each year.

TITLE: Hospitality Policy
SECTION: Financial Management
POLICY NO: 03000-08

30. By January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy and, following motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title/Role	Responsibilities
Director of Finance	Ensure policy is reviewed by January 31 st following an election year and that annual summary is filed with the Province by September 30 th each year.
Accounts Payable	Ensure all Hospitality expenses are captured and posted on Town website within 90 days of the end of each fiscal quarter.
Council, CAO, Employees, Committee Members	Ensure policy is followed when hospitality-related activities occur.

For Administrative Use Only:

VERSION LOG

Amendment Description	Policy Owner	Approved By	Approval Date
Policy review following municipal election. Minor grammar correction. Addition of Review Requirements section.	Director of Finance	Council	January 27, 2025

Minutes reference date: November 26, 2018 February 24, 2020 January 27, 2025