MOTION ON NOTICE

5.   Increasing Support for Councillors for Constituency Work and Responding to Public Concerns

Submitted by: Mayor Stewart

WHEREAS

1.   Vancouver City Councillors receive high volumes of communications from the public, including emails, phone calls, requests to meet and requests for help on constituency issues, regularly numbering in the hundreds per week;

2.   Recognizing the need to provide Councillors with support outside the scope of the duties performed by administrative assistants, a staff report of June 1, 2016, recommended that Councillors receive a discretionary fund of $6,000 per Councillor per year to carry out constituency activities which may include communication expenses, fees for consulting or other contracted services, cost of research and information gathering, and costs of community outreach and events;

3.   Under the by-law, Councillors may jointly incur discretionary expenses. All Councillors' discretionary expenses are publicly reported quarterly;

4.   The $6,000 that Vancouver provides each Councillor for their constituency work is greatly exceeded in other large Canadian cities: for example Toronto, due to the decrease in number of Councillors from 44 to 25, just increased the budget for each Councillor from $241,000 to $482,000 for their constituency work;

5.   Communications from the public, including requests for help on issues, have increased with the election of the new City Council in October of 2018;

6.   The discretionary fund of $6,000 per Councillor per year is insufficient to contract the services needed to meet constituency needs and ensure timely response to public communications and requests for help.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT to better serve public needs, each Councillor's discretionary fund be immediately increased from $6,000 to $30,000 per year;

FURTHER THAT the source of funds for Councillors' discretionary expenses in 2019 shall be the budgeted contingency fund;

AND FURTHER THAT this increase be reviewed during the next budgeting process.

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