

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2025
To: Finance and Labour Relations Sub-committee
From: Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: FIN25-016
Attachments: 1. Flowers and Donation Policy A.1.9 (current); and
2. Expression of Sympathy A.1.9 (revised)

Title: Policy Update – Expressions of Sympathy

Objective: To present proposed amendments to Policy A.1.9, “Flowers and Donations”, including updated language for clarity and consistency; and formatting for accessibility.

Background: The current ‘Flowers and Donations’ policy was adopted in 1997 and has not been updated since that time. This policy outlines who receives flowers or a memorial donation from the City of Stratford as an expression of sympathy upon their death. The policy does not speak to the application or oversight of the policy, who is considered an ‘employee’, or the process for initiating a public statement or book of condolences if required.

Analysis: Although this policy is administratively situated with the CAO’s office, it is administered through the Office of the Mayor and expressions of sympathy are provided on behalf of the Mayor and Council.

While administering this policy over time, questions have arisen as to who constitutes a current or retired City employee. For example, whether the policy applies to members of Stratford Police Services or the Stratford Public Library or their families.

Under the provisions of the amended policy, clarification is provided that a current or retired City of Stratford employee is a member of any internal department reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Stratford.

Should the Office of the Mayor wish to extend an expression of sympathy on behalf of Stratford City Council for an individual that does not fit within the criteria of the policy, arrangements can be made for a card to be sent.

Additional updates to the revised policy include establishing clearer procedures regarding oversight and administration of the memorial donation, as well as communication to Council and the appropriate Director.

The former name of the policy is “Flowers and Donations”. After a review of other local municipal policies with respect to expressions of sympathy, and in consideration that flowers are not always requested, it is determined that it would be more appropriate to name the policy “Expression of Sympathy”.

The review of this policy also identified an opportunity to increase the funds to allow for a more meaningful contribution to a chosen charity or, if requested, a floral arrangement. In 2025, the average cost of a floral donation for a memorial service ranges from \$75.00 - \$95.00 plus taxes.

Staff are recommending the policy limit be increased from \$50.00 to \$100.00.

A review of prior year expenditures shows minor fluctuations each year.

Year	Budget	Actual Spent	Total Donations
2021	\$500.00	\$150.00	3
2022	\$500.00	\$400.00	8
2023	\$500.00	\$785.00	12
2024	\$500.00	\$253.00	5
2025	\$650.00	\$50.00	1 (to date)

The remaining 2025 budget would allow for 6 additional memorial donations. Should additional donations be required above the budgeted amount, the budget would be exceeded, and consultation with the Treasurer on the appropriate course of action would be pursued.

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

None anticipated as the proposed changes are administrative and nominal in nature.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Work Together For Greater Impact

The new policy updates will increase transparency and allow for more consistency. The updates reflect the Corporation’s commitment to compassion for employees, while providing a thoughtful gesture with a memorial donation.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Not applicable: This report does not align with One Planet Principles as it is administrative in nature.

Staff Recommendation: THAT Policy A.1.9 be amended to reflect the proposed changes in Attachment 2 to this Report (FIN25-016).

Prepared by: Lindsay Van Gestel, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
Recommended by: Adam Betteridge, Interim Chief Administrative Officer