

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk
Meeting Date: September 14, 2026
Report Code: CR-26-079
Subject: Committee of Adjustment Member Remuneration Review

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-26-079 respecting a review of the remuneration for Committee of Adjustment members, City Council:

1. Approves an increase to the remuneration paid to appointed members of the Committee of Adjustment from \$30 per meeting attended to \$100 per meeting attended, effective January 1, 2027;
2. Directs staff to include \$5,000 in the 2027 Operating Budget for Committee of Adjustment member remuneration; and
3. Directs staff to bring forward a by-law to amend Committee of Adjustment By-law No. 2022-074 to:
 - a. Reflect the updated remuneration, effective January 1, 2027; and
 - b. Add to Section 10 that the members serve as the Court of Revision under the *Drainage Act*.

Highlights:

- The Committee of Adjustment (CofA) performs an important quasi-judicial function under the *Planning Act* and other provincial and municipal legislation.
- In addition to hearing applications for minor variances and consents, the CofA serves in several additional statutory and appeal capacities.

- The current remuneration of \$30 per meeting has remained unchanged since 1996 and does not reflect the time commitment, responsibilities, and complexity associated with the role.
- Increasing remuneration to \$100 per meeting is intended to recognize the responsibilities of CofA members and support the recruitment and retention of qualified and diverse applicants for the next four-year term.

Vision 2050 - Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: The recommendation contributes to core service delivery or a corporate initiative that enables service delivery for one or more strategic priorities.

Previous Report/Authority:

Committee of Adjustment By-law No. 2022-074 (attached)

[Board and Committee By-law](#)

Background:

The CofA is a statutory committee established by Council under the *Planning Act*. The CofA conducts public hearings and makes decisions on applications for minor variances and consents. Members are required to consider applicable legislation, policies and by-laws, staff reports, public input, and evidence presented at hearings before making fair and impartial decisions.

In addition to its responsibilities under the *Planning Act*, the CofA also serves as the City's:

- Fence Viewers under the *Line Fences Act*;
- Court of Revision under the *Drainage Act*;
- Property Standards Hearing Committee under the *Building Code Act*;
- Appeal Board regarding the Regulation and Control of Dogs under the City's Dog By-law; and
- Short-Term Rental Appeals Committee regarding the City's Short-Term Rental By-law.

These responsibilities require members to become familiar with a range of municipal by-laws, provincial legislation, and quasi-judicial procedures.

Members are also encouraged to conduct site visits before hearings to better understand the physical characteristics of properties and their surrounding context. Members are not currently reimbursed separately for travel associated with these visits.

CofA members are appointed by Council for a four-year term, corresponding with the term of the Council that appointed them. Staff are preparing for the recruitment of members for the next four-year term following the upcoming municipal election.

By-law No. 1996-040 established the current remuneration rate of \$30 per meeting attended. Remuneration is paid annually in one installment.

Section 44(9) of the *Planning Act* provides that members of a CofA are to be compensated for their services; however, the legislation does not prescribe a specific rate of remuneration.

Analysis and Options:

Proposed Remuneration

The current remuneration of \$30 per meeting has remained unchanged for 30 years. During that time, the responsibilities of the CofA and the complexity of planning matters considered by the CofA have increased.

Although remuneration is calculated on a per-meeting basis, the role involves significant preparation and responsibilities outside of meeting attendance, including:

- reviewing agenda packages, planning reports, drawings, surveys, and supporting documentation;
- becoming familiar with applicable planning legislation, policies, and municipal by-laws; and
- conducting site visits where appropriate.

In addition to this preparation and related work, meetings include public hearings, consideration of evidence presented by applicants, staff, and members of the public, as well as orientation and training related to planning legislation and administrative law.

These additional responsibilities can require, on average, two (2) hours of preparation and related work per meeting, in addition to the approximately one (1) hour spent attending the meeting itself.

The proposed increase to \$100 per meeting recognizes this broader time commitment and the level of responsibility associated with making decisions that can directly affect property rights and development within the City. With an estimated total time commitment of approximately three (3) hours per meeting, the proposed \$100 remuneration equates to approximately \$33 per hour. This is a modest amount given the time involved and the responsibilities of the role. It also provides some recognition of the additional time and costs associated with site visits, which are not separately reimbursed.

Recruitment and Retention

The City is preparing to recruit members for the next four-year term. Attracting qualified and diverse members is important to maintaining an effective and knowledgeable CofA.

CofA members exercise significant decision-making authority and benefit from knowledge or experience in areas such as planning, engineering, law, construction, public administration, or related fields. While professional experience is not a requirement for appointment, competitive remuneration can help reduce financial barriers to participation and support the recruitment and retention of qualified applicants.

Approving the proposed rate in advance of recruitment will allow the \$100 per meeting remuneration to be communicated in recruitment materials and public advertisements.

Comparison with Neighbouring and Comparator Municipalities

The following table summarizes the current remuneration provided to CofA members in neighbouring and comparator municipalities:

Municipality	Current Remuneration
Neighbouring Municipalities	
Township of Chatsworth	Council is appointed as CofA – no additional remuneration
Township of Georgian Bluffs	\$1,550 per year
Municipality of Grey Highlands	\$160 per meeting attended plus mileage

Municipality	Current Remuneration
Town of Hanover	\$0 – members receive \$25 Hanover Chamber of Commerce dollars annually at Christmas
Municipality of Meaford	\$162.43 per meeting attended
Township of Southgate	\$80 per meeting attended, inclusive of mileage if the member wishes to drive and view the property
Town of The Blue Mountains	\$150 for scheduled meetings; \$75 half-day per diem for meeting preparation; mileage for site visits (\$225 per meeting)
Municipality of West Grey	Council is appointed as CofA – no additional remuneration
Comparator Municipalities	
City of Brockville	Members receive a semi-annual payment; however, the amount cannot be disclosed
Town of Cobourg	Members receive \$500 annually and Chair receives \$550 annually
Town of Collingwood	Members receive \$60 per meeting attended and Chair receives \$70 per meeting attended
Town of Orangeville	No remuneration provided
City of Stratford	Members receive \$41.67 per meeting attended and Chair receives \$50 per meeting attended

The proposed \$100 per meeting rate would position Owen Sound within the range of per-meeting remuneration provided by neighbouring municipalities and is higher than comparator municipalities.

Financial Impact

In 2025, \$1,050 in remuneration was paid to the five (5) CofA members against a budget of \$1,800. Nine (9) meetings were held, with the November and December meetings cancelled due to a lack of applications.

The 2026 remuneration budget is \$1,800. As of the date of this report, \$750 in remuneration has been incurred for meetings held in 2026. A portion of the remuneration costs associated with the CofA is recovered through application and appeal fees, which helps offset the overall cost to the City.

The proposed remuneration will require an annual budget of \$5,000 based on ten (10) scheduled meetings, five (5) members, and a remuneration rate of \$100 per member per meeting. Council approval of the \$5,000 funding requirement will allow the amount to be included in the 2027 Operating Budget. Approval of the revised remuneration rate will also allow the \$100 per meeting rate to be communicated as part of the upcoming recruitment process. Actual expenditures may be lower if meetings are cancelled or members do not attend. The net cost to the City may also be reduced through the recovery of a portion of remuneration costs from application and appeal fees.

Fees and Charges

Minor Variance and Consent to Sever application fees are scheduled to be reviewed as part of the City's Fees and Charges By-law review in 2027. As part of that review, staff could consider adjustments to these application fees to help offset the increased remuneration costs associated with the CofA.

The appeal fees for a Property Standards Order and a Muzzle/Leash Order or Dangerous Dog Order are currently \$200 per order and are scheduled to be reviewed in 2028. Staff could consider bringing these fees forward for review as part of the 2027 Fees and Charges By-law review and increasing them to \$500, consistent with the current Short-Term Rental Licensing appeal fee. This would better reflect the costs associated with processing appeals and provide greater consistency among appeal fees.

Court of Revision

The CofA serves as the Court of Revision under the *Drainage Act*, in accordance with the Board and Committee By-law. However, Committee of Adjustment By-law No. 2022-074 does not currently identify the Court of Revision under Section 10. This was an administrative error that occurred when Committee of Adjustment By-law No. 2022-074 was passed and enacted and Committee of Adjustment By-law No. 2001-102 was repealed. By-law No. 2001-102 had included provisions relating to the Court of Revision.

A recommendation has been included to amend the CofA By-law to formally include the Court of Revision. This will ensure that the CofA is authorized to consider any appeals that may be submitted under the *Drainage Act*.

Resource Alignment:

Financial Resources

Should Council approve the recommendation, the 2027 Operating Budget will include \$5,000 for CofA member remuneration, representing an increase of \$3,200 over the current annual budget of \$1,800.

Human Resources

No additional staffing resources are required. The revised remuneration is expected to support recruitment by making service on the CofA more attractive to qualified applicants with relevant professional or community experience.

Time and Scheduling

Should Council approve the recommendation, the revised remuneration will take effect January 1, 2027, and will be included in recruitment materials for the next four-year term.

Technology and Infrastructure

N/A.

Climate and Environmental Impacts:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Communication and Engagement:

This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the meeting.

Should Council approve the recommendation, the revised remuneration will be reflected in the City's recruitment materials, website, and public advertisements for Board and Committee appointments.

Report Developed in Consultation With:

Planning and Heritage Division staff.

Attachments:

Committee of Adjustment By-law No. 2022-074

Reviewed by:

Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk at slandry@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1235.