

Child care expenses to be covered by northwestern B.C. regional district ^[1]

Doing so regarded as removing a barrier to elected office

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EXCERPTS

The Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine is poised to pay for childcare expenses undertaken by board members when they are on official business.

A motion approving the idea in principle was passed by board members Aug. 19 and will be incorporated when the existing bylaw outlining pay and expenses for regional district directors is reviewed next spring.

“The details of what the remuneration for child care still needs to be worked out but once those details have been figured out an amendment to the [remuneration] bylaw will be brought forward to the board,” said regional district chief administrative officer Lina Gasser.

The motion was put forward by Bruce Bidgood, the director for the rural area surrounding Terrace but which excludes Thornhill.

“Very few places do provide childcare expenses,” said Bidgood in adding that provision for expenses might encourage more people to run for a seat on the regional district board.

“In the 14 years or so that I’ve been involved in elected office here I don’t believe I’ve seen one shift worker [on a board or municipal council],” he said.

Bidgood said he’s now in favour of expanding expenses to cover any dependent of a regional district director who needs care.

The motion was seconded by James Cordeiro, a City of Terrace councillor appointed to sit on the regional district board.

He agreed with Bidgood’s position that the need to provide daycare or care for older children with developmental disabilities should not hinder potential candidates.

“Removing barriers for new candidates provides a benefit to not only the candidate themselves but also to community in general by making elections more competitive and giving the voters a larger choice of potential representatives,” said Cordeiro.

In the region, the District of Kitimat in 2020 adopted a policy to reimburse council members as well as those appointed to District of Kitimat committees and board members of the museum in Kitimat and Kitimat library with childcare expenses.

The policy does not apply to a council member’s partner or an immediate family member such as a grandparent or parent.

A reimbursement will be at an hourly rate not exceeding the provincial minimum wage.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

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