

	POLICY		No.	4.0
	Exempt Staff Compensation Policy		Effective Date	February 10, 2026
			Revision Letter	
			Council Approval	2026-04-07

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Exempt Staff Compensation Policy provides a management and exempt staff compensation structure that is committed to being fiscally responsible while balancing a compensation program which attracts, retains, and engages diverse employees with the necessary qualifications.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to both the **Management Group** and **Exempt Group** employees.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Benchmark Group** means the group of local governments utilized in compensation reviews to determine the salary median for each Management Group position.
- 3.2. **Council** means the Council of the District.
- 3.3. **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer for the District.
- 3.4. **District** means the District of Fort St. James.
- 3.5. **Exempt Group** means all employees of the District who are exempt from the Management Group of employees and are contracted outside of the CUPE Local 4951-02 Collective Agreement as a nature of the position they hold within the District.
- 3.6. **Exempt Staff** means both Exempt Group and Management Group employees.
- 3.7. **Immediate Family** means an employee's spouse, or spousal equivalent, mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandparent, grandchild, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent, stepbrother, stepsister, stepchild, legal guardians, adopted and fostered children.
- 3.8. **Management Group** means all employees of the District who are a department head and hold significant responsibility for formulating policies.
- 3.9. **Market** means the median of the salaries of similar positions within the set Benchmark Group.

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1. It shall be the policy of the **District** to compensate **Management Group** employees within a 10% range of **Market**.
- 4.2. Except for the **CAO** position, it shall be the decision of the **CAO** where **Management Group** salaries are placed within plus or minus 10% of the **Market**. Such decisions shall take into consideration the following factors:
- Level of experience/training relative to the requirements of the position.
 - Responsibility and complexity of decisions.

- Degree to which individual manager meets performance expectations.

- 4.3. Placement of the **CAO** salary will be the sole responsibility of Council.
- 4.4. During non-market review years, the established median will be adjusted annually on January 1 each year to include the cost of living in accordance with the annual British Columbia Consumer Price Index as published by Statistics Canada in Table 18-10-0005-01.
- 4.5. Every four years, during the compensation review, the median for each position will be adjusted to achieve **Market** and ensure ongoing market parity.

Market Review Periods

- 4.6. **Management Group** staff compensation reviews occur in alignment with the general local government election cycles. Review of **Market** would be completed prior to May 15 of an election year to be retroactively effective January 1 of that year. Periodic events may initiate reviews outside of the election cycle as directed by the **CAO**.

Benchmark Group

- 4.7. When conducting compensation reviews, municipalities with a population under 5,000 as reported in the latest Census shall be surveyed.

Exempt Group Wages

- 4.8. The following table establishes the baseline wage scales of **Exempt Group** employees.

Position	Baseline Wage Scales 2025
Deputy Fire Chief	Salary - \$90,000 - \$100,000
Fire Fighter/Bylaw	Hourly - \$34.68
Fire Fighter/FireSmart Coordinator	Hourly - \$31.00
Human Resources/Executive Assistant – Level 1	Hourly - \$38.19
Human Resources/Executive Assistant – Level 2	Hourly - \$41.21

- 4.9. **Exempt Group** baseline wage scales will be adjusted annually in accordance with wage adjustments provided in the CUPE Local 4951-02 Collective Agreement.

Vacation

- 4.10. Vacation time for **Exempt Staff** will be prorated on the year the employee is hired and on the year the employee leaves employment.
- 4.11. Any vacation time that has been used but not earned by **Exempt Staff** will be deducted from the employee's final pay.
- 4.12. All vacation time of **Exempt Staff** will be granted at the discretion of the department head or **CAO**.
- 4.13. **Exempt Staff** may take a maximum of 2 weeks of annual vacation leave at any one time unless approved by the **CAO**.

Vacation Entitlements Management Group

- 4.14. All **Management Group** staff will commence their service with a vacation entitlement of 20 days per year.
- 4.15. Vacation entitlement of **Management Group** employees is increased by one day for each year of service to a maximum of 30 days.

Vacation Entitlements Exempt Group

- 4.16. The table below establishes vacation entitlements for the **Exempt Group** staff with the exception of the Deputy Fire Chief.

Exempt Staff Vacation Schedule:	Annual Accrual
Less than 1 yrs	10 Days
1 but less than 5 yrs	15 Days
5 but less than 9 yrs	20 Days
9 but less than 15 yrs	25 Days
15 but less than 25 yrs	30 Days

- 4.17. The Deputy Fire Chief will commence their service with a vacation entitlement of 15 days and will increase in accordance with the table provided in section 4.16.

Time off in-lieu of Overtime

- 4.18. In recognition of the hours of work required to perform the duties of their position, and to acknowledge that the responsibilities of **Management Group** employees may extend beyond their scheduled hours, all **Management Group** employees will receive 2 additional weeks in lieu of all overtime.
- 4.19. In recognition of the hours of work required to perform their position, the Deputy Fire Chief will receive 2 additional weeks off in-lieu of all overtime.
- 4.20. Any unused time off in-lieu of overtime will not be paid out or carried over to the following year.
- 4.21. When required to perform duties under an authorized Provincial Emergency Program Task Number outside of their normal working hours, **Exempt Staff** members will record any hours worked beyond their normal working hours as overtime as per the Employment Standards Act of BC rules for daily overtime.

Banked Time Exempt Group

- 4.22. An **Exempt Group** staff member who has worked overtime may elect to receive either pay at the appropriate rate or they may bank overtime hours for time off in lieu.
- 4.23. The **Exempt Group's** rate of pay for banked time, whether paid out or taken as time off, will be the employee's rate of pay.
- 4.24. There is no maximum amount of time that may accumulate in an **Exempt Group** employee's overtime bank.
- 4.25. At the beginning of each calendar year, all **Exempt Group** employees' time banks will be reduced to zero by paying out all unused banked time.

Statutory Holidays

4.26. The **District** recognizes Statutory holidays declared by the Federal and Provincial Governments.

Sick Leave

4.27. All **Exempt Staff** shall accrue 1.5 days of sick leave for each month of completed service to take sick leave with pay for their own illness or care of **Immediate Family** up to the total accrued.

4.28. The amount of sick leave allowable in one year shall not exceed 120 days.

4.29. Upon termination or retirement **Exempt Staff** who have a minimum of 5 consecutive years of service shall be entitled to a payout, at their current salary or rate of pay, of 25% of unused sick time to a maximum of 120 days. The maximum payout under this formula is 30 days.

4.30. Notwithstanding Section 4.29, upon termination or retirement **Exempt Staff** who have been employed for 15 years or more shall be entitled to a payout, at their current salary or rate of pay, of 50% of unused sick time to a maximum of 120 days. The maximum payout under this formula is 60 days.

4.31. If an **Exempt Staff** member is absent from work due to a Workers Compensation Board claim and requests that the District continue full payment of wages, the District will initially pay the employee from the employee's unused sick days. When payment is received from the Workers Compensation Board the District will credit back the employee's sick days at 75% of the number of days paid by the Workers Compensation Board.

Health, Dental, and Insurance Benefits

4.32. The following coverage will be provided by the employer by a common carrier to all **Exempt Staff**:

- Employee Life Insurance
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment and Critical Illness
- Dependent Life Insurance
- Long Term Disability
- Extended Health Care
- Dental Care
- Eye Glass Coverage
- Health Spending Account

Pension

4.33. Upon completion of the 3-month probationary period, all **Exempt Staff** must register as a member of the Municipal Pension Plan.

Recognition of Service

4.34. In recognition of long service, **Exempt Staff** will receive Long Service Pay in accordance with the following:

After 5 years of employment \$1,000
After 10 years of employment \$1,800
After 15 years of employment \$2,500
After 20 years of employment \$3,000
After 25 years of employment \$5,000

Bereavement Leave

- 4.35. After completing the probationary period, **Exempt Staff** are eligible for paid bereavement leave at their regular rate of pay following the death of an **Immediate Family** member.
- 4.36. The total bereavement leave available is up to 5 working days which can be taken non-consecutively.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. It is the responsibility of the **CAO** to:
- a) administer this policy;
 - b) ensure that **Exempt Staff** Employment Contracts are inclusive of the clauses of this policy;
 - c) conduct a **Market** review and provide an informational report to Council; and
 - d) at their discretion, conduct reviews of **Exempt Staff** wages.
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of Council to approve this policy.

6.0 DOCUMENT APPROVALS

Role	Position	Name of Approver	Date Approved
Owner	Chief Administrative Officer	Rachelle Willick	February 5, 2026
Reviewer	Corporate Officer	Alexander Bihori	February 6, 2026
Final Approver	Mayor and Council	Martin Elphee	February 10, 2026

7.0 REVISION HISTORY

Effective Date	Rev Letter	Document Author	Description of Change
February 10, 2026		Rachelle Willick	Initial Release