



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Melissa Ryan, CPA, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Date: Wednesday, September 17, 2025

Subject: Room Booking Policy and User Fee Amendments

Report #: 2025-0917-FIN-R25-MR

Purpose

To seek Council approval to amend the 2025 User Fee Schedule to reflect new meeting room availability and updated booking restrictions, in line with the development of a new Administrative Policy regarding room bookings.

Background

The County of Essex provides meeting room facilities within its Administrative building for use by County departments, partner agencies, and local municipal partners. Prior to COVID-19, public bookings were already limited, and the pandemic further reduced external use.

With the addition of several new meeting rooms following the approval of the 2025 User Fee Schedule in February 2025, there is an opportunity to update the County's approach to managing bookings. A review by the Facilities group identified that formalizing procedures would support consistent scheduling, clarify responsibilities, and ensure rooms are available for operational needs.

To address this, Administration has developed an Administrative Policy regarding the booking of meeting rooms that establishes clear procedures for booking, priority of use, responsibilities, and terms and conditions. While the policy itself does not require Council approval, Council's authorization is needed to remove fees associated with room bookings from the County user fee schedule.

Discussion

The current 2025 User Fee Schedule includes a full page dedicated to rental rates for County Administration Meeting Rooms including Council Chambers. To ensure consistency and alignment with the new Administrative Policy, it is necessary to update the fee schedule.

Under the proposed amendments, meeting room use will be restricted to eligible users as defined in the policy, County departments, tenants, and local municipal partners. Local municipal partners will be able to use the rooms at no cost, provided the spaces are not required for County business or tenant needs. External public bookings will no longer be permitted, simplifying scheduling and ensuring rooms are available when needed for operational priorities.

Council approval of this user fee amendment will ensure that the User Fee Schedule remains current, reflects operational requirements, and supports efficient, fair use of County facilities.

Financial Implications

Over the last several years, following the pandemic, the rental of meeting rooms at the County Administration Building has become a rare occurrence. As a result, no revenue from meeting room bookings was included in the approved 2025 Budget. The proposed amendments to the User Fee Schedule to remove fees for meeting rooms located in the County Administration Building will have no impact on the 2025 Budget.

By providing free access for local municipal partners when rooms are available, the County is fostering collaboration, supporting regional partnerships, and creating a flexible and transparent system that maximizes the use of County facilities while benefiting both County operations and municipal partners.

Consultations

- County Facilities Team

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact <input type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council approve report number 2025-0917-FIN-R25-MR, Room Booking Policy and User Fee Amendments; and
 That Essex County Council approve the By-law 2025-38, at the appropriate time.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Ryan

Melissa Ryan, CPA, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Concurred With,

CAO Signature

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
A	2025 User Fee Schedule-Updated