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Board of Commissioners Policy

Travel Policy

(Adoption Date: April 4, 2001)

(Updated: June 4, 2003)

PURPOSE

It is the intent of this policy to provide Town departments and agencies a comprehensive reference for uniform interpretation of payment or reimbursement for travel expenses pertaining to official travel and subsistence.

All employees and officials of the Town are subject to this policy.

EMPLOYEE & BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITY

An employee or Board Member traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees and Board Members will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. Willful violations of this policy may result in dismissal from Town employment or other disciplinary action.

DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

Authorizing Party

An individual authorized by this policy to approve or disapprove requests for travel, cash advances, travel reimbursements, etc.

Responsible for Update: Deputy Town Manager/ Finance Director

Employee's Duty Station

"Duty Station" is defined as the job location at which the employee spends the majority of his or her working hours. For an employee in travel status, the duty station should be the point where traveling begins the majority of the time (home or office). The designation of an employee's home as the duty station by a department head requires prior approval from the Town Manager.

Non-Town Employees

Non-Town employees traveling on official business whose expenses are paid by the Town are subject to these regulations, including subsistence allowances, to the same extent as Town employees. Travel expenses for members of a non-Town employee's family are not eligible to be paid by the Town. No travel advances will be made to non-Town employees.

Preauthorization

Travel plans and estimated costs should be included on the preauthorization so the individual(s) authorized to approve the request can weigh the estimated costs of the travel against the benefits of the travel. Any significant change (greater than 10%) in the estimated costs should be communicated to the individual(s) approving the travel request.

Registration Fees

The Town allows for registration fees to be reimbursed at the actual amount as shown by a valid receipt or invoice. They may be paid by the employee and then reimbursed or prepaid by the department. These fees are charged to "training expense". The department must require itemization and documentation of expenses.

Reimbursements

All reimbursement requests shall be filed for approval and payment within 10 working days after the travel period ends for which the reimbursement is being requested.

Requesting Party

The person who will be reimbursed for travel costs incurred while conducting Town business.

Subsistence (Meals & Lodging)

Subsistence is an allowance related to lodging, meal costs, and gratuities thereon.

Town Credit Card

Where practical, Town credit cards will be issued to a responsible Town employee as a tool to help minimize the personal financial impact of conducting Town business. Detailed documentation is required of all Town credit card use. Inappropriate, unauthorized or unreported use of Town credit cards will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Transportation

Transportation expenses include personal automobile, taxi, bus, train, airplane, motor pool charges, auto rentals, tolls and parking fees. All travel expenses must be incurred

by and for employees, Board Members, or other eligible travelers while conducting official Town business or visiting for employee interviews in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

Travel

Travel is defined as going to and from the normal job location to a site located more than 35 miles from the normal job location to conduct Town business. Authorization of travel requests will be based upon need and cost/benefit of travel as determined by the authorizing party. The requesting party is also encouraged to share transportation with other employees and officials of the Town and representatives of other government units when possible. The requesting party will be reimbursed for actual costs incurred only, subject to the limitations established in this policy.

1. Out-of-Town Travel

For all out-of-town travel, other than travel by the Town Manager and elected Town officials, the department head is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended appropriation remains in the department travel budget to reimburse all expected costs of travel. A travel preauthorization form will be submitted by the requesting party to the department head for authorization of travel at least five working days prior to the date upon which travel will commence. If the department head is the requesting party, the form should be submitted to the Town Manager or Deputy Town Manager.

2. Travel Advances

Travel advances will be issued at the discretion of the Finance Officer. Advances will be submitted with the travel request to the authorizing party no later than 5 working days prior to the date travel will commence. The amount of the travel advance may not exceed the estimated travel cost. Excess travel advances will be repaid no later than five working days after the completion of the approved travel. The Finance Officer will not issue a travel advance unless it has been approved.

The Finance Officer will receive a copy of each approved travel request. The Finance Officer is responsible for determining that an unencumbered appropriation sufficient to cover the estimated cost of the approved travel remains in the appropriate expenditure item. If a sufficient balance remains in the expenditure item, the estimated travel cost will be encumbered. If the remaining balance in the expenditure item is insufficient to cover the estimated cost of travel and other moneys are not yet available, the authorizing party will be notified by the Finance Officer. The authorizing party should receive a response from the finance Officer before notifying an employee that he/she may travel.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION, SUBSISTENCE, AND OTHER COSTS

Transportation

1. Common Carrier

Actual coach fare (substantiated by receipt) will be reimbursed. First Class travel should be used only in extraordinary circumstances. Penalties and charges resulting

from the cancellation of airline reservations (or other travel reservations) shall be the Town's obligation if the employee's travel has been approved in advance and the cancellation or change is made at the direction of and for the convenience of the Town. If the cancellation or change is made for the personal benefit of the employee, it shall be the employee's obligation to pay the penalties and charges. However, in the event of accidents, serious illness or death within the employee's immediate family, or other critical circumstances beyond the control of the employee, the Town will be obligated to pay the penalties and charges.

Super Saver Rates

When traveling by common carrier to conduct official Town business, employees traveling to their destination earlier than necessary and/or delaying their return in order to avail the Town of reduced transportation rates may be reimbursed subsistence for additional travel days if, in the opinion of the department head, the amount saved in transportation costs due to the early and/or delayed travel is greater than the amount expended in salary and additional subsistence. Prior written approval of the department head is required.

2. Personal Vehicle

A requesting party may use his/her personal vehicle for travel and be reimbursed if no Town vehicle is available or use of a Town vehicle is not practical.

Use of a personal vehicle must be approved in advance. The allowable IRS rate per mile will be paid to an employee who uses his/her personal vehicle.

Actual mileage is reimbursable. Mileage is measured from the closer of the duty station or the point of departure to the destination (and return).

Parking fees, tolls, and storage fees are reimbursable. Receipts are required for fees in excess of \$3.00 per day. Reimbursement of expense for airport parking is limited to ninety-six hours, with a receipt required.

3. Rental Vehicle

A receipt is necessary for reimbursement. Rental vehicles are to be used as a last resort. Use of a rental vehicle must be approved in advance.

4. Commuting

a. No reimbursement shall be made for the use of a personal vehicle in commuting from an employee's home to his/her duty station.

b. Travel to/from airport (at employee's duty station): Reimbursement for travel between the employee's or Board Member's duty station and the nearest airline terminal and for appropriate parking may be made under the following circumstances. For travel by:

- Airport limousine - One round-trip limousine fare;
- Taxi - Limited to reimbursement for actual costs (receipt required);
- Private vehicle - The IRS rate per mile for a maximum of two round trips with parking charges for a maximum of 96 hours. Receipts are required for airport parking claims.

c. Travel to/from airport (at employee's or Board Member's destination) - Reimbursement for travel to and from the airline terminal at the employee's or Board Member's destination may be made where available as listed below (receipts are required):

- Airport limousine - One round-trip limousine fare;
- Bus - One round-trip bus fare;
- Taxi - When limousine service is not available, actual fare to and from airline terminal;
- Rental vehicles - May be used as a last resort.
- Taxis and limousines other than trips to and from the airport - The actual cost of taxi and limousine fares is reimbursable when required for travel on official Town business.

5. Unit Vehicles

Town vehicles may be used for any authorized travel. The requesting party must obey all laws of the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is being operated. The vehicle will be used in conducting Town business only. A *de minimis* amount of personal use, such as driving the vehicle to and from dinner, may be allowed. Non-town employees may accompany Town employees if they have a business interest in the travel.

Subsistence

1. Travel Advance Schedule

The following schedule shall be used for travel advances issued for traveling on official Town business:

Breakfast	\$6.00
Lunch	8.00
Dinner	<u>14.00</u>
<i>Total Daily:</i>	<u>\$28.00</u>

2. Lodging

Authorization

Written approval by a department official designated by the department head must be obtained in order to qualify for reimbursement for overnight stays. Supervisory personnel certifying the reimbursement request as necessary and proper must require documentation from the traveler to substantiate that the overnight lodging was necessary.

Reimbursement

Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement must be filed within 10 working days after the travel period ends for which the reimbursement is being requested. Specific dates of lodging must be listed on the reimbursement request, and substantiated by a receipt from a commercial lodging establishment. Other entertainment expenses, such as the cost of movies, that are included with the bill for lodging will not be reimbursed. A reimbursement request submitted more than 10 working days after the travel period may be denied.

3. Meals

a. Reimbursement

Each employee and Board Member is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. All requests for meals reimbursement must be reasonable and may be disallowed if determined to be otherwise. Filing procedures are the same as for lodging (see: IV, B2b above). Each meal reimbursement must be listed on the reimbursement request. Time of departure and arrival must be listed on the reimbursement request. Use of the travel advance *per diem* rate may be substituted for actual expenditures. The travel advance *per diem* rate includes gratuities.

Daily Travel (Overnight)

Employees and Board Members may receive allowances for meals for partial days of travel when the partial day is the day of departure or the day of return:

Breakfast- Depart duty station prior to 6:00 a.m.

*Lunch- Depart duty station prior to 10:00 a.m. (day of departure).
Return to duty station after 2:00 p.m. (day of return).*

Dinner- Return to duty station after 8:00 p.m. If stopping for dinner would cause the employee to return after 8:00 p.m., when he/she would otherwise have returned before 8:00 p.m., dinner will not be reimbursed.

Daily Travel (not overnight)

Except as listed in "b" below, allowances shall not be paid to employees for lunches if travel does not involve an overnight stay. To be eligible for allowances for the breakfast and evening meals, employees must:

Breakfast- Depart duty station prior to 6:00 a.m. and extend the normal workday by two hours.

Dinner- Return to duty station after 8:00 p.m. and extend the normal workday by three hours.

To be eligible for both meal allowances, the employee must have worked five hours longer than the normal workday.

The travel must involve a travel destination located at least 35 miles from the employee's regularly assigned duty station.

b. Reimbursement for Meals – required employee attendance

A Town employee or Board Member may be reimbursed for meals, including lunches, when the job requires his/her attendance at the meeting of a Board, Commission, Committee, or Council in his/her official capacity and the meal is preplanned as part of the meeting for the entire Board, Commission, Committee or Council.

A Town employee or Board Member may be reimbursed for meals, including lunches, when the meal is included as an integral part of a congress, conference, assembly, convocation, etc. Such congress must involve the active participation of persons other than the employees of the Town; the employee's attendance is required for the performance of his/her duties, but must not be part of the employee's normal day-to-day business activities; the congress must be planned in advance with a formal agenda; and the congress must provide written notice or an invitation to participants.

Other Costs

1. Conventions and Conferences

Limitations: attendance at conventions and conferences will be normally limited to two requesting parties, in addition to any requesting parties involved in the convention or conference program. Management may waive this limit as appropriate.

2. Telephone Calls

Long Distance

One reasonable personal long distance phone call (not to exceed \$5.00) is allowed for every three nights away on business.

Reimbursement

Official phone calls are reimbursable under "other expenses". Individual calls over \$3.00 must be identified as to point of origin and destination.

AUTHORIZATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

Submitting expense reports

A requesting party will complete a reimbursement form, attach receipts for expenses requiring them, and submit it to the authorizing party no later than ten working days after returning from travel. Advances will be deducted from reimbursable costs.

A requesting party submitting a falsified reimbursement form will be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution. An authorizing party or Finance Officer who knowingly approves a falsified reimbursement form will be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution. Violations of the Town's travel policy may result in dismissal from Town employment.

Approval and Processing of Reimbursement Requests

Reimbursement requests will be submitted to the authorizing party for approval. After approval by the authorizing party, the form should be forwarded to the Finance Officer.

The Finance Officer will determine that the reimbursement form has been properly approved, that it is mathematically correct, and that requested reimbursements agree to submitted receipts and are within the limits set by this policy. If an error in the reimbursement request is found, the requesting party will be informed and the error will be corrected before payment is made.

Before the reimbursement is made, the Finance Officer will determine that an amount sufficient to pay the request has been encumbered for payment, or that there is a sufficient unexpended appropriation in the expenditure item. The Finance Officer will immediately inform the authorizing party and requesting party if payment cannot be made. Reimbursement will not be made from petty cash.