

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HENRY
CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE

RESOLUTION R15-651

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO THE TRAVEL POLICY OF THE CITY; AUTHORIZING THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST SIGNATURES AND AFFIX THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE CITY, AS NECESSARY; REPEALING INCONSISTENT RESOLUTIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City of Stockbridge ("City") is a municipal corporation located within Henry County, Georgia duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Georgia and is charged with providing public services to residents located within the corporate limits of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City finds it necessary to amend certain provisions in the Travel Policy of the City in order to provide for the enhanced protection of confidential information to include criminal background information and fingerprinting information.

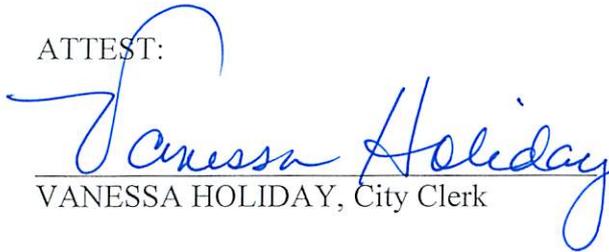
THEREFORE, IT IS NOW RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Approval of Execution.** The City hereby approves the amendments to the Travel Policy attached hereto as Exhibit A. All other policies and regulations of the City previously in existence which relate to the Travel Policy shall remain in full force and effect.
2. **Documents.** The City Clerk is authorized to execute, attest to, and seal any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the amendment, subject to approval as to form by the City Attorney.
3. **Severability.** To the extent any portion of this Resolution is declared to be invalid, unenforceable or non-binding, that shall not affect the remaining portions of this Resolution.
4. **Repeal of Conflicting Provisions.** All City resolutions are hereby repealed to the extent they are inconsistent with this Resolution.
5. **Effective Date.** This Resolution shall be effective on the date of its approval by the City Council and Mayor as provided in the City Charter.

SO BE IT RESOLVED this 8th day of June 2015.


TIMOTHY L. THOMPSON, Mayor

ATTEST:

 (SEAL)
VANESSA HOLIDAY, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

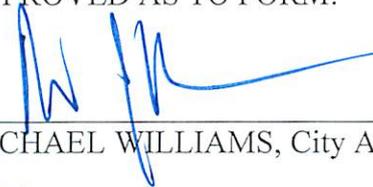

MICHAEL WILLIAMS, City Attorney



EXHIBIT A

AMENDMENTS TO TRAVEL POLICY

CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Section: Employee Manual

Sub-section: Travel Policy Section

Effective Date: 7/1/2015

City Travel Regulations

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INTRODUCTION:

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for payment of travel expenses in an efficient, cost effective manner, and to enable travelers to successfully execute their travel requirements at the lowest reasonable costs, resulting in the best value for the City. Teleconferencing instead of travel should be considered when possible. Each department is charged with the responsibility for determining the necessity, available resources and justification for the need and the method of travel.

The Policy is based on travel industry best practices and with total cost management in mind. As such, it is important for Elected Officials and employees to understand the intent of the Policy and work with their management on managing work related travel, accordingly.

The travel regulations outlined in this document are effective on July 1, 2015.

All departments are required to follow the minimum guidelines outlined in the City Travel Regulations. Departments are not authorized to set more lenient policies than the City Travel Regulations; however, departments may establish policies that further restrict an employee's

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travel if the department determines that stricter policies are necessary; except that a mileage rate that is different than the rates established in accordance with OCGA 50-19-7 may not be adopted. Departments are encouraged to utilize teleconferencing to minimize overall travel costs whenever possible. For personnel with disabilities, the City has authority to provide reasonable accommodations during travel on official city business.

Elected Officials and employees with questions concerning the travel regulations should first contact the Finance Department. Any unresolved questions should be forwarded to Finance at 678-833-3302.

AUTHORITY:

The City Manager and the Treasurer/Finance Director are authorized to adopt rules and regulations governing in state and out-of-state travel and travel reimbursement that promote economy and efficiency in city government and which treat elected officials and employees fairly and equitably.

DEFINITIONS:

A. ACCOUNTABILITY means that elected officials and employees are responsible for accounting for their travel expenses accurately. All staff will ensure travel is conducted in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

B. COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION means any entity that offers transportation of people or goods to the public for pay.

C. COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL EXCISE TAX means the local taxes charged by hotel/motels for lodging, also referred to as “hotel/motel” or “occupancy” tax. This tax is separate from the state sales tax.

D. EMPLOYEE TRAVEL EXPENSE STATEMENT means the accounting document used as the basis to reimburse a city employee for travel expenses incurred while on official business.

E. FEDERAL PER DIEM RATE means the maximum allowance for expenses of federal elected officials and employees who are on travel status. The available rates only include locations within the continental United States. Separate per diem limits have been established for non-contiguous U.S. and foreign travel.

F. HIGH COST AREA means any area within Georgia within which meal expenses may be reimbursed at a higher amount than the limits that otherwise apply to travel within Georgia. High cost areas are those counties which are assigned higher than the standard “CONUS” ranges for meals and incidental expenses (M& IE) by the U.S. General Services Administration.

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G. LODGING means a hotel, motel, inn, apartment, or similar entity that furnished lodging to the public for pay.

H. MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSE means a necessary and reasonable expense incurred by a city employee while traveling on official business. This term does not apply to meals, lodging, mileage or transportation costs.

I. MOTOR POOL VEHICLES means the fleet that is operated on behalf of the City of Stockbridge.

J. NORMAL COMMUTING MILES means the miles traveled on a regular (usually daily) basis from an employee's residence to the location most frequently associated with work performed outside of that residence (generally, office). This should be a standard distance that does not change from one reimbursement request to the next.

K. OFFICIAL STATION means the physical work location where an employee is permanently assigned.

L. OUT OF STATE TRAVEL means when an employee travels from a point of origin within Georgia to a point of destination within another state and return. Out-of-state travel rates are used for all travel with a destination outside the state of Georgia.

M. PERSONAL MOTOR VEHICLE means a motor vehicle that is owned or leased for personal use by an employee. Personal motor vehicles include automobiles, aircraft, and motorcycles.

N. PER DIEM ALLOWANCE refers to the maximum food allowance for which Elected Officials and employees can be reimbursed per day. The amount is not a reimbursement of actual expenses incurred. Receipts are not required for meal per diem amounts.

O. POINT OF DEPARTURE means the beginning location used to calculate city-used miles traveled in a personal motor vehicle.

P. TRAVEL ADVANCE means any payment to an employee for travel expenses that will be incurred for a scheduled, future trip.

Q. TRAVEL ADVANCE AUTHORIZATION FORM means the form used to document approval of cash advances by a department head or designee and to document receipt of the cash advance by the employee.

R. TRAVEL EXCEPTION means written authorization for travel reimbursement of expenses generally not allowable under the Citywide Travel Regulations.

S. TRAVEL EXPENSES means meal, lodging, mileage, transportation, parking, and miscellaneous expenses.

AUTHORIZATION FOR TRAVEL:

Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for reasonable travel-related expenses incurred while on official business for the City. Subject to the provisions outlined in these travel regulations, the Finance Department has authorized reimbursement for the following expenses associated with employee travel:

- Meals associated with overnight travel and in certain circumstances where there is no overnight lodging;
- Lodging expenses;
- Mileage for use of a personal motor vehicle;
- Transportation expenses;
- Certain miscellaneous expenses associated with travel, such as parking and toll fees. The specific policies regarding the reimbursement of travel expenses, as well as expense limits and required documentation are outlined in the following sections.

Authorization for Employee Travel

Elected Officials and employees who are required to travel for their job and are eligible for travel reimbursement should receive authorization from their department head or other designated official prior to performing the travel.

Departments should establish a written policy designating persons/positions that may authorize and approve travel. Departments may utilize blanket travel authorization/travel request form for in-state travel. However, department heads or their designees should specifically authorize out-of-state travel prior to each trip. Signature of the approving official on the travel expense form constitutes authorization of employee travel. Each department should provide Finance with a list of all persons/positions authorized to approve travel expense statements. This information is necessary for fiscal office personnel to issue reimbursement travel payments.

Travel to Conferences for Certification Purposes

Department heads, Elected Officials and employees traveling to or for certification purposes should limit their travel to these conferences and prohibit “discretionary” travel. If travel for certification is necessary then efforts should be made to seek a location within the State of Georgia or closer to Georgia. Elected Officials and employees shall consider sharing lodging as an option, if members of the same sex have to travel. If several elected officials and employees are traveling to the same in-state conference then traveling together is required.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

Required Documentation of Travel Expenses

Elected Officials and employees requesting reimbursement for travel expenses are required to submit their claim to authorized personnel on the employee travel expense statement. A copy of

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the standard travel expense statement may be accessed on City of Stockbridge "H" drive; see also **Appendix A**.

Requests for reimbursement should include the following information:

- Itemized expenses for authorized lodging, mileage, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. The types of expenses which are authorized and the allowable limits are discussed in subsequent sections;
- Explanation of any expenses which exceed the established limits and of any unusual expenses;
- Explanation of the purpose for the trip; and
- Description of the type(s) of transportation used.

Elected Officials and employees are required to sign their travel expense statement, attesting that the information presented on the form is accurate. Elected Officials and employees who provide false information are subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension or termination.

Elected Officials and employees are required to submit receipts for the following expenses:

- Meals purchased in lieu of those provided at conference/training
- Lodging
- Airline or Railroad fares,
- Rental of motor vehicles,
- Registration Fees,
- Visa/Passport fees, and
- Any other valid expense over \$ 25.00

Receipts for the following expenses are required if amounts are more than the **\$25.00 threshold**:

- Gasoline purchased for rental vehicles,
- Parking,
- Tollway,
- Mass transit,
- Taxi, and
- Airport vans.

If the above items are over \$25 and a receipt is not available, Elected Officials and employees are required to include an explanation of the expense on the travel expense statement. Receipt for meals on Per Diem are not required, except as noted above. Credit card receipts are valid provided they contain complete details of the purchase. Other receipt requirements apply to the following items:

SUPPLIES – a receipt regardless of the amount must accompany any expenses claimed by the employee for purchases (i.e. supplies) on the travel claim form. Department Heads, elected officials and employees are encouraged to become familiar with price agreements and not purchase supplies that are available on price agreement.

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PHONE – Receipts are required for all phone reimbursements. Official local or long distance business phone calls are reimbursable expenses up to \$50.00. Any associated hotel access charges are also reimbursable. Receipts should show the date of the phone call, minutes used, and cost.

PERSONAL CELL PHONE – Reimbursement for personal cell phones for official business use while on travel status is permitted with documentation showing date and minutes of business call and appropriate computation of the cost per minute calculated by any method that results in the lower cost per minute to the City.

BAGGAGE AND LUGGAGE FEES – Baggage and luggage fees are a reimbursable expense. All travelers should consider the extra fees charged by the airlines prior to making their travel arrangements and plan accordingly. When combining personal travel and City business travel, baggage and luggage fees should be allocated accordingly and reasonable under the circumstances.

PER DIEM ALLOWANCES FOR MEALS:

Meals Associated with Overnight Travel in Georgia

Elected Officials and employees traveling overnight will be paid a Per Diem amount designed to cover the cost of meals (including taxes and tips), based on the number of meals per day for which the employee and/or elected official is eligible.

Elected Officials and employees traveling overnight are generally eligible for Per Diem amounts designed to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day for all days on travel status *other than* the day of departure and the day of return. There are specific instances in which an employee *may be* eligible for the three-meal Per Diem rate on departure/return days (see discussion below).

There are also instances in which an employee or elected officials may not receive Per Diem for the normally eligible number of meals: If any meal is included as a part of the cost of conference registration, etc., such meal(s) should not be considered eligible in the calculation of Per Diem. For example, if conference registration includes breakfast and lunch, the employee and/or elected official will only receive Per Diem for the dinner meal (\$23; \$29 for high cost areas. Because most conferences, etc., accommodate a variety of dietary needs/restrictions, Elected Officials and employees are expected to participate in such meals. In rare circumstances, an employee or elected official may be unable to participate in a conference meal. In such a case, the employee or elected official may request the Per Diem amount associated with the meal purchased in lieu of that provided. If requesting such reimbursement, a receipt documenting the meal purchase must be attached to the travel expense statement; also, justification for the meal purchase must be indicated on the statement.

Day of Departure

Elected Officials and employees may only receive Per Diem for meals occurring while officially on travel status.

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For example, if an employee departs at 3:00p.m., the employee is not eligible for breakfast or lunch Per Diem amounts for the day of departure.

If an employee departs on an overnight trip prior to 6:30 a.m., the employee is eligible for Per Diem for breakfast on the day of departure.

If an employee departs on an overnight trip prior to 10:59 a.m., the employee is eligible for Per Diem for lunch on the day of departure.

If an employee departs on an overnight trip prior to 5:30 p.m., the employee is eligible for Per Diem for dinner on the day of departure.

Day of Return

Elected Officials and employees may only receive Per Diem for meals occurring while officially on travel status. For example, if an employee returns at 10:59 a.m., the employee is not eligible for Per Diem for lunch on the day of return.

If an employee returns from an overnight trip prior to 6:30 a.m., the employee is eligible for Per Diem for breakfast on the day of departure.

If an employee returns from an overnight trip prior to 1:30 p.m., the employee is eligible for Per Diem for lunch on the day of departure.

If an employee returns from an overnight trip prior to 7:30 p.m., the employee is eligible for Per Diem for dinner on the day of departure.

❖ What are the Per Diem rates? (State Per Diem)

Eligible Meals	Per Diem Amount
Breakfast	\$7.00
Lunch	\$11.00
Dinner	\$23.00

High Cost Areas: Elected Officials and employees are considered traveling in high cost areas of Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at a location designated as a high cost area or lodging is obtained in a location designated as a high cost area.

For travel on or after March 1, 2015, high cost areas in Georgia are limited to the following counties: Chatham, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, Glynn, Gwinnett, and Richmond counties.

Per Diem rates applicable to high cost areas are outlined below:

Eligible Meals	Per Diem Amount
Breakfast	\$9.00
Lunch	\$13.00
Dinner	\$29.00

Meals Associated with Overnight Travel Outside of Georgia

Elected Officials and employees are considered traveling outside of Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at an out-of-state-location. Elected Officials and employees traveling outside of Georgia may receive meal Per Diem amounts up to the federal Per Diem rates. The federal Per Diem rates (for locations within the continental United States) a breakdown for federal Per Diem amounts may be found at the following address: <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>.

High cost areas within Georgia are changed only upon notification from the Department of Finance via revisions to this policy.

Meals Not Associated With Overnight Travel

Elected Officials and employees who are required to travel for their job and do not stay overnight may receive Per Diem meals under the following situations:

- Elected Officials and employees acting as the official representative for their department may receive Per Diem for meals that are an integral part of a scheduled, official meeting. Per Diem is only authorized, however, if the meeting is with persons outside the employee's department and if the meeting continues during the meal.
- Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for noon meals that are part of a required registration fee paid by the employee. Note: In this instance, a Per Diem is not authorized; the registration fee is the basis for reimbursement.

Elected Officials and employees on City business who travel more than 50 miles from home or from the City of Stockbridge on a work assignment, and are away for more than thirteen (13) hours may receive Per Diem for the noon meal, even when there is not overnight lodging. In addition to the noon meal:

- Elected Officials and employees who depart prior to 6:30 A.M. are entitled to Per Diem for breakfast.
- Elected Officials and employees who return later than 7:30 P.M. are entitled to Per Diem for dinner.
- Elected Officials and employees must meet the eligibility requirements outlined above for Per Diem related to the noon meal before Per Diem for breakfast and/or dinner will be considered.

It should be noted that the City of Stockbridge Travel Regulations **does not** authorize Elected Officials and employees to receive Per Diem for a "lunch meeting" in which the meal and meeting are the same.

Meals while Taking Leave

Employees who take leave while on travel status are **not** authorized to receive Per Diem for any meal during the period of leave. Documentation relating to meal receipts are not required for

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meals, if claiming a Per Diem, except as discussed in the section labeled “Meals Associated with Overnight Travel in Georgia”. Time of departure (for the day of departure) and return (for the day of return) should be noted on the travel expense statement to substantiate meals eligible for payment of Per Diem. All meals included as a part of conference registration fees, etc., should be noted on travel form. Meal expenses incurred that exceed the authorized Per Diem amounts due to travel in high cost areas or out-of-state should be itemized separately and explained on the travel expense statement, and are eligible for reimbursement as determined by the approving official.

LODGING EXPENSES:

Elected Officials and employees who travel more than 50 miles from their office and/or residence, may be reimbursed for lodging expenses associated with approved overnight travel.

Elected Officials and employees will be reimbursed for the actual lodging expenses, providing the expenses are reasonable.

Responsibilities of Employee

Elected Officials and employees traveling overnight are responsible for ensuring the most reasonable lodging rates are obtained. To accomplish this, the employee should:

- Provide human resources with information about hotel accommodations,
- Utilize minimum rate accommodations,
- Avoid the “deluxe” hotels and motels, and
- Obtain city/government rates, whenever possible.

Reimbursement of Lodging Expenses for Overnight Travel Outside of Georgia

Lodging expenses for hotels/motels outside Georgia may exceed the maximum reasonable rates set by the City. Elected Officials and employees traveling out-of-state should refer to the federal Per Diem rates to identify high cost areas of the United States, and to determine whether higher expenses are justified. The rates published by the federal government, however, should only be used as a guide. Lodging expenses associated with the travel to high cost areas should be approved by the department head or other designated official prior to the trip.

The federal Per Diem rates (for locations within the continental United States) can be accessed at the following address: <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>.

Lodging Associated with a Meeting or Seminar

Elected Officials and employees who stay at a hotel/motel that is holding a scheduled meeting or seminar may incur lodging expenses that exceed the per diem rates are generally considered reasonable. The higher cost may be justified in order to avoid excessive transportation costs between a lower cost hotel/motel and the location of the meeting.

Taxes Associated with Lodging Expenses

Elected Officials and employees should review hotel/motel receipts to ensure that taxes have not been applied to their lodging expenses in accordance with the state tax laws and regulations.

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Elected Officials and employees should attempt to resolve any problems with the billing prior to checkout.

- ❖ Lodging paid directly by employee (personal credit card, personal check, or cash).
- ❖ Lodging paid directly by the City (direct bill, city credit card, or government check).
The hotel/motel should not collect any taxes associated with the lodging expenses.

Local government officials and Elected Officials and employees traveling within the state for official business are exempt from paying the *county or municipal excise tax* on lodging (“hotel/motel” or “occupancy” tax). [OCGA 48- 13-51 (H) (3)], regardless of the payment method being used. Elected Officials and employees are **required to pay** any state/local sales use taxes. The exemption when paying by personal credit card, check or cash applies **only** to the hotel/motel tax.

Elected Officials and employees are required to submit a copy of the hotel/motel tax-exemption form when they register at a hotel/motel. A copy of this form is provided in **Appendix A** or can be obtained from the Finance Department. This exemption does not apply to Elected Officials and employees staying at an out of state hotel/motel. Elected Officials and employees should be able to provide proper identification to document their employment as a City/local government employee or official.

Lodging Expenses Incurred while Taking Leave employees who take annual/vacation leave while on travel status will not be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred during the period of leave.

Cancellation

Travelers should not book nonrefundable rates or rates that require a deposit unless required by conference lodging. It is the traveler’s or arranger’s responsibility to understand the cancellation rules of the room confirmed. No-show charges and penalties will not be reimbursed when the traveler does not cancel reservations within the allotted time. Nonrefundable rates cannot be changed or cancelled; therefore, the traveler is accepting the risk of a non-reimbursable cancellation fee. All expenses must be reimbursed to the City when cancellations/no shows occur and the city has paid for those expenses.

In a case where all efforts have been taken, and a fee is still charged, an explanation must be provided when submitting the traveler’s expense report in order for the fee to be reimbursed.

TRAVEL BY CITY OWNED or PERSONAL VEHICLES:

Mileage rates are based on the federal per diem rates in effect and based on a determination of the most advantageous form of travel. Advantageous use may be determined based on energy conservation, total cost to the City (including costs of overtime, lost work time, and actual transportation costs), total distance traveled, number of points visited, and number of travelers. Documentation of the determination of “advantageous use” should be retained for audit purposes.

Determination of Business Miles Traveled

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Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred from the point of departure to the travel destination. If you depart from the City, mileage is calculated from the City to the destination point. If you depart from your residence, mileage is calculated from the residence to the destination point, with a **reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles. For the return trip, if an employee returns to the City, mileage is calculated based on the distance to the City. If an employee returns to his/her residence, mileage is calculated based on the distance to the residence, with a reduction for normal one-way commuting miles. In addition, **normal commuting miles must be deducted when calculating total mileage reimbursement**. Mileage travelled by City travelers between their Residence and Primary Work Station is considered “commuting miles”.

The mileage reimbursement encompasses all expenses associated with the operation of a personal motor vehicle, with the exception of tolls and parking expenses, which are reimbursed separately.

Mileage rates are changed only upon notification from the Finance Department via revisions to this policy; new rates should be applied based solely on federal per diem rates.

Any reimbursement of mileage claims paid to an employee in excess of rates stipulated in this policy must be refunded to the City or characterized as taxable compensation to the employee.

Required Transportation Documentation – All travel by rented or public transportation must be reported on the travel expense statement. Elected Officials and employees requesting reimbursement must submit receipts for travel by commercial air carrier or railroad and for the cost of rented vehicles, including the cost of gasoline purchased when the amount is over \$10.00. All transportation expenses should be itemized on the travel expense statement.

Privately owned vehicles – A traveler may use a privately owned vehicle such as auto or government owned, when it is in the best interest of the City. The approving official shall be responsible for substantiating that use of a privately owned vehicle is in the City’s best interest. Mileage rates are based on the federal per diem rate in effect and the most advantageous form of travel. The traveler shall receive a mileage reimbursement equal to the established rates. If the use of a personal vehicle is the most advantageous, the following conditions have to be met:

- No suitable City vehicle is available.
- Traveling outside the city, but within 300 mile radius of the city.
- The requesting party has a physical handicap which requires the use of a specially equipped vehicle.
- An employee’s family member(s) will accompany the employee on the trip.
- In Georgia, state statute specifies that Automobile Insurance follows the vehicle. If a personal auto is being used, the personal auto policy covering that vehicle would be responsible for any loss.

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- City owned vehicles are covered under GIRMA (the City's liability carrier).

Exceptions:

- If travel occurs on a weekend or holiday outside of the normal work schedule, mileage is calculated from the point of departure with no reduction for normal commuting miles.

Prohibited Mileage Reimbursement – Elected Officials and employees are not entitled to mileage reimbursement for travel between their place of residence and their official headquarters, or personal mileage incurred while on travel status.

Parking Fees and Tolls – Finance may reimburse elected officials and employees who incur parking and toll expenses while on official business for the City. Elected Officials and employees that attend offsite meetings or training sessions may also be reimbursed for parking expenses. These expenses are reimbursable for travel in both city-owned and personal vehicles. Elected Officials and employees are expected to obtain receipts for these expenses even if not over the \$25 threshold. If it is not possible to obtain a receipt, then a written explanation should be included on the expense statement.

Travel Expenses and Required Receipts/Documentation – All requests for reimbursement of mileage, parking, and toll charges must be documented on the travel expense statement and a receipt must accompany the documentation. Employee should claim mileage based on the most direct route from the point of departure to the destination.

TRAVEL BY COMMERCIAL or PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

When commercial transportation is necessary, elected officials and employees may be reimbursed for the expenses incurred. Elected Officials and employees will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred, provided the appropriate steps were taken to obtain the lowest possible fare or cost.

Authorized department personnel must approve travel by commercial or public transportation prior to the date of travel. When considering such a request, designated personnel should consider the distance to be traveled, the travel time and the cost.

Commercial Air Transportation

Elected Officials and employees should utilize commercial air transportation when it is more cost effective and efficient to travel by air than by vehicle. Elected Officials and employees who choose to travel by personal vehicle when air travel is more cost effective should only be reimbursed for the cost of the lowest available airfare to the specified destination. In some instances, a higher airfare may be appropriate to reduce or eliminate for multiple stops and extended travel time.

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Under such circumstances, the City of Stockbridge may reimburse elected officials and employees for expenses incurred for air travel, provided these expenses were approved prior to the date of travel. Additionally, the City may reimburse elected officials and employees for reasonable expenses associated with selecting seats or checking bags. These expenses should be included in the total cost of the airline ticket.

Elected Officials and employees who require air travel should obtain the lowest available airfare to the specified destination by comparing rates as follows:

- Utilize the Internet (i.e. Priceline.com, Expedia.com, Travelocity.com)
- Contact carriers directly

Tickets may be purchased using a city issued city charge card, personal credit card (on an as-needed basis with prior approval of the Finance Dept.).

In general, it will be the City's policy that the Mayor and Council Members or Elected Officials and employees traveling by commercial air carrier travel in the most cost-effective manner and utilize the lowest possible coach fares. City Officials or Elected Officials and employees traveling by commercial air carrier will not be reimbursed for the portion of non-coach (first class, business class, etc.) airfare that exceeds the cost of the lowest, available fare on the same flight unless:

- There is no other space available on the needed flight.
- A licensed medical practitioner certifies that because of a person's mental or physical condition, specific air travel arrangements are required; or
- The City Manager certifies that specific air travel arrangements are necessary for security reasons.

It is the responsibility of department heads, to obtain necessary medical certifications for any employee that requires special air travel arrangements due to a medical condition. Department Heads should also obtain information specifying the expected length of time such condition would have an impact on travel needs. The Finance Department should maintain such information in a manner that would enable the auditors to determine who is subject to these special travel provisions.

Upgrades to Non-Coach Travel

City Officials or Elected Officials and employees may, at any time use personal frequent flyer miles or similar programs to upgrade to non-coach travel. In addition, nothing in this policy shall preclude a city official or employee from personally paying for an upgrade to non-coach travel.

For purposes of conducting official city business, city officials or Elected Officials and employees may negotiate or arrange for upgrades to non-coach travel with individual commercial carriers if:

- The flight is international and over five hours in duration; and
- The carrier agrees not to charge any additional cost to the city.

Indemnification Received Due to Travel Inconveniences Imposed by Airlines

Occasions may arise when airlines overbook, change, delay or cancel flights, thereby imposing travel inconveniences on their passengers. In these instances, airlines often offer the affected passenger's indemnification for these inconveniences. Examples of indemnification that may be offered by an airline include vouchers for meals or lodging, upgrades to non-coach travel, and credits toward future flight costs. City Elected Officials and employees are authorized to accept such indemnification if the travel inconvenience was imposed by the airline and there is no additional cost to the City.

If travel transportation cost was reimbursed to Elected Officials and employees and travel was cancelled and not rescheduled, the employee maybe required to reimburse the City. Elected Officials and employees shall inform Finance, in writing, when travel is cancelled. They shall also include statements regarding rescheduled travel if applicable.

Travel by Mass Transportation, Taxi or Airport Vans

Elected Officials and employees officially on travel status may be reimbursed for necessary costs of transportation by bus, taxi, or airport vans for the following situations:

- Between the individual's departure point and the common carrier's departure point;
- Between the common carrier's arrival point and the individual's lodging or meeting place; and
- Between the lodging and meeting places if at different locations.
- Elected Officials and employees will be reimbursed for economy parking only.

It is expected that airport vans will be utilized when available and practical, and when they are the lowest cost alternative.

Required Documentation of Expenses (see also Reimbursement Procedures)

All travel by rented or public transportation must be reported on the employee travel expense statement. Elected Officials and employees requesting reimbursement must submit receipts for travel by commercial air carrier or railroad and for the cost of rented vehicles, including the cost of gasoline purchased when the amount is over \$10.00. Although receipts are not needed for expenses under \$10.00, Elected Officials and employees must include a point-to-point explanation for each item reimbursed. All transportation expenses should be itemized on the travel expense statement. Employee shall attach the boarding pass to travel expense for all travel on commercial air or rail transportation.

Expense Reimbursement Timing

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Travelers should submit all expenses for reimbursement and reconciliation within 10 days of the completion of the event or trip but **no later than 45 calendar days**. However, a reimbursement request will preferably be held until an amount of at least \$10 is due.

IRS regulations state the traveler must adequately account to the employer and submit travel expense reimbursement requests within 60 days of the end of the trip. Such expenses, if reimbursed after 60 days, become taxable income to the traveler.

All expense reimbursement requests must be submitted as soon as possible, in conjunction with an employee's last day of employment, when applicable, but no later than 45 calendar days after the last day of employment. Outstanding requests not submitted after this time period will not subsequently be reimbursed.

Internal Revenue Service Requirements

In order for travel advances and reimbursements of travel expenses to be excluded from a traveler's taxable income, the City's travel policies must meet the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements for an "Accountable Plan". In general, the Citywide Travel Policy has been developed with the IRS Regulations as its primary payment framework. Accordingly:

- Advances and reimbursements must be reasonable in amount, must be made for travel only, must be in line with actual costs incurred and must be within Policy limitations. Expenses that do not comply with Policy guidelines will be the obligation of the individual that incurred the expense.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES

Telephone/Telegraph/FAX Expenses

Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for expenses, up to \$50, incurred for work-related telephone, telegraph, and FAX messages. Elected Officials and employees must document these claims on the travel expense statement, and indicate the location from which each call was made, the person contacted, and the reason for the communication.

Internet Usage Charges

Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for work-related internet usage charges. These charges should be separately identified on the itemized hotel/motel bill, but should not be listed on the travel reimbursement request as "lodging;" rather, these charges should be included in the "voice/data communications" section of the travel expense form.

Stationary/Supplies/Postage Expenses

Reimbursement for stationary, supplies, stenographic, or duplicating services may be reimbursed, provided the expense is directly associated with a work-related project and the cost is reasonable. In addition, work related postage expenses may be reimbursed. Elected Officials and employees requesting reimbursement for these expenses must document actual expenses on the travel statement and explain the purpose for these expenses. Receipts/invoices should accompany the travel expense statement.

Baggage Handling Services

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Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses associated with baggage handling services (portage) when an expense is actually incurred in moving luggage into or out of lodging places, common carriers, and/or airports.

Registration Fees

Registration fees required for participation in workshops, seminars, or conferences that an employee is directed and/or authorized to attend will be allowed when supported by a paid receipt or a copy of the check showing payment. Any part of a registration fee applicable to meals will be reported as a meal expense, and not as a registration fee, if the costs can be separately identified.

Unallowable Expenses

The following expenses are not reimbursable unless specific legal authority has been established:

- Laundry (allowable when overnight travel exceeds seven (7) consecutive days)
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available
- Tipping for maid services
- Theatre
- Entertainment
- Alcoholic beverages
- Bank charges for ATM withdrawals
- Clothing or toiletry items
- Commuting between Residence and Primary Work Station
- Country Club dues
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry, cleaning, pressing costs for trips of less than seven days
- Loss or theft of cash advance, money or airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases
- Medical expenses while traveling (*Exceptions may be made to accommodate ADA compliance*)
- Mini-bar charges
- Movies
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related)
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Personal vehicle maintenance
- Personal entertainment
- Personal Pet care

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- Recreational expenses
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe Shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available, unless there are valid security reasons

CITY CHARGE CARDS AND TRAVEL ADVANCES

Purpose of Travel Advances

The purpose of travel advances is to minimize the financial burden on Elected Officials and employees while traveling on behalf of the State. This objective can be accomplished either by the issuance of city charge cards or by cash advances to the Elected Officials and employees.

City Charge Cards

The City Manager or his/her designee may issue city charge cards to eligible Elected Officials and employees upon approval. City charge cards are beneficial because they:

- Reduce the employee's and the city's cash flow by minimizing the need for cash advances;
- Reduce the frequency of reimbursements for travel expenses;
- Require no annual membership fee or finance charges if paid within the terms of the agreement;
- Provide emergency cash to the employee;
- Eliminate the need for the City to directly pay airline tickets and car rental agencies;
- Provide guarantee for hotel rooms and other services requiring a deposit; and
- Provide the city with various financial reports regarding employee travel expenses.

City charge cards are issued only to the City Clerk, Treasurer and City Manager to charge travel for hotel.

Elected Officials and employees who are issued city charge cards are authorized to use the charge cards for business purposes only.

Authority to Advance Cash for Travel

Since city charge cards are not available to Elected Officials and employees, departments should request the use of cash advances. However, department personnel should consider issuing cash advances for the following circumstances:

- For justifiable reason(s), the employee has not received a city charge card;
- For Elected Officials and employees who generally do not travel and are making a one-time trip; or
- For special exceptions approved by the department head.
- Per Diem for meals.

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- Transportation for travel by automobile to cover gas charges.

The Finance Director and the City Manager are authorized to advance City funds to Elected Officials and employees traveling on behalf of the City. Funds may be advanced for anticipated subsistence (meals and lodging), as well as mileage and other transportation costs which are reimbursable under these travel regulations. Travel advances are not required by State law or by these regulations, but are left to the discretion of the City Manager.

Approval of Cash Advance for Travel

The Finance Director and the City Manager are required to authorize cash advances made to an employee. The written authorization for a cash advance should be included on the travel advance authorization form. This form should also be signed by the employee to document that the cash advance was received.

Amount of Cash Advance

The Finance Department will establish the policy regarding cash advance limits. Departments should consider the nature and probable duration of the travel when determining cash advance limits. The amount of a cash advance shall be related to the estimated cost of travel, as outlined on the travel authorization form, but shall be held to a minimum and allowed only when the department head determines that an advance is warranted.

Employee and Department Accountability of Funds Advanced

Each employee receiving a cash advance shall sign and date the travel advance authorization for acknowledging receipt of the funds. All Elected Officials and employees are fully responsible for funds advanced to them and shall account for the funds in accordance with the Citywide Travel Regulations. Elected Officials and employees are liable for any advanced funds that are lost or stolen.

Neither state law nor these regulations, however, in any way relieve the department head from the responsibility of accounting for all funds expended for travel purposes.

Recovery of Cash Advances Made for Specific Trips

When the actual travel expenditures reported on the travel expense statement exceed the amount of the cash advance, the employee shall be reimbursed for the additional travel costs incurred. The employee must submit request for reimbursement no later than 10 business days after travel is completed. If request is not received timely, the employee will not be reimbursed for additional travel cost.

Cash advances for specific trips shall be recovered under the following circumstances:

When the actual travel expenditures reported on the travel expense statement are less than the amount of the cash advance, the employee shall reimburse the City for the difference. This reimbursement shall be made at the same time that the travel expense statement is submitted, within 10 business days after the completion of travel. If the travel expenditures report is not complete with 10 business days, the total travel cost may be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.

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- In the event of cancellation or indefinite postponement of authorized travel, any cash advances which were made shall be refunded immediately; and
- Outstanding travel advances should be recovered from terminating Elected Officials and employees. The City Clerk shall establish procedures to ensure that terminating Elected Officials do not have outstanding cash advances and have turned in their city charge cards, if applicable. The department head shall recover all travel cash advances if not paid, prior to termination of an employee or notify the Finance Department immediately.

Cancellations

It is the traveler's responsibility to closely examine the cancellation/exchange rules and fees before purchasing a ticket. If a trip is cancelled after a ticket has been issued, the airline reservation must be cancelled at least one hour prior to the scheduled flight. If the ticket is refundable, the traveler should request a refund.

Exchanges

Unused tickets that are not used prior to their expiration lose their value. It is the traveler's responsibility to use airline credits prior to expiration. Credits for cancelled tickets should be used as soon as possible. Most airlines require tickets to be exchanged and used within one year from original purchase. Credits shall be used for the traveler's next trip if the airline serves the destination.

Baggage Charges

Most airlines are now charging for checked luggage and for curbside check-in. In the event there is a charge for checking the traveler's first piece of luggage, the City will reimburse for that charge. If there is no charge for the first piece of luggage, the City will not reimburse for additional pieces of checked luggage unless an appropriate business purpose explanation is provided.

Baggage charges incurred for excess weight will not be reimbursed, unless an appropriate business purpose explanation is provided.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A includes a copy of all standard forms associated with City Travel. The forms included in this appendix are the:

- Request for Training Form (Travel Authorization Form)
- Employee Travel Expense Statement
- Exemption form for Local Motel/Hotel Excise Tax (will be provided when hotel arrangements are made)

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