

Council Business Meeting

March 3, 2020

Agenda Item	Councilor Reimbursement Request for LOC Energy and Environmental Policy Committee Expenses	
From	Kelly Madding	City Administrator
Contact	administration@ashland.or.us ; (541) 488-6002	

SUMMARY

Councilor Graham has been named to the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee with the League of Oregon Cities (LOC). This is a request to reimburse her for travel expenses that she will incur from attending the three meetings held in Salem that has not previously been budgeted.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

C. Utilize City resources as leverage to develop and/or enhance prioritized Value Services (Address Climate Change)

F. Enhance and improve transparency and communication

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

None

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Councilor Graham has requested through the City Administrator a reimbursement for travel to Salem to attend the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee with LOC. There will be three meetings held in Salem this spring each lasting five hours. The Committee is not equipped for video meetings and have requested all members attend in person.

The Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy (#2013-03-01) states that the reimbursement rate for mileage will be the standard Federal IRS mileage reimbursement rate in effect during the time of business travel. If no meal is provided during the meeting, meal costs are reimbursed for the actual cost of meals instead of per diem costs as no overnight stay is needed. Receipts for such meals are required for reimbursement.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The current mileage rate for a non City vehicle is \$0.535 per mile. Roundtrip travel from Ashland to Salem is approximately 482 miles. The approximate reimbursement cost would be \$257.87 per trip; totaling \$773.61 for the three trips.

Meal costs not provided will depend on the actual receipts returned. Per diem rates can be taken into account for estimation purposes. According to the U.S. General Services Administration used in per diem reimbursements current standard rates include \$13 for breakfast, \$14 for lunch, \$23 for dinner, and \$5 for incidental expenses (like parking). Currently, there is enough money in the Mayor and Council training budget to cover these costs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

None

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

I move to approve the expense reimbursement request for Councilor Graham to attend the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee in Salem.

I move to decline the expense reimbursement request for Councilor Graham to attend the Energy and Environmental Policy Committee in Salem.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy (#2013-03-01)

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

LAST MODIFICATION: 2015-06-10

Policy # 2013-03-01

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Administration

SUBJECT: Travel & Expense Reimbursement Policy
(Effective with requests made and/or applicable travel beginning on or after July 1, 2015).

1. PURPOSE:

This sets forth the City's policy as it relates to travel and reimbursement for City employees while on City-related business. This policy applies to all employees, agents, volunteers and elected officials of the City.

2. STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY:

The City of Ashland will pay for all reasonable and necessary expenses for representatives of the City on City business. Travel for City business is to be done in the most cost-effective manner possible and documented sufficiently to meet audit, Internal Revenue Service and open record requirements. All travel, advances and reimbursement requests are subject to approval by the Department Head and/or the City Administrator. Authority to waive or amend the limitations of this policy rests with the City Administrator.

3. CHOOSING AMONG TRAVEL MODES

In the event that a City representative is required to travel outside of the local area to attend a conference or meeting or to conduct other City business and multiple modes of travel are available, the City will reimburse for the least expensive mode of travel, subject to the factors described in 3a d below. (For example, if air travel is less expensive than driving, the City will reimburse at the lower cost of an equivalent flight if the City representative chooses to drive.) However, employees and supervisors should consider the following before submitting a travel request to the department head:

- a. Cost of an employee's time in determining the most appropriate mode of transportation
- b. Airline travel rather than car travel to avoid overnight stays and unnecessary days away
- c. Personal safety in determining the most appropriate form of transportation and lodging
- d. "Last minute" fares are not an appropriate cost comparison and may be discounted by up to 50%

4. TRAVEL/TRAINING AUTHORIZATION

Approval should be obtained prior to incurring costs for business meetings and travel. Use the City's TRAVEL/TRAINING AUTHORIZATION FORM to estimate costs and seek approval. Supervisors approving a travel request are responsible for ensuring efficient use of budgeted funds prior to the trip and for familiarizing those traveling on City business with the City's travel and food policies. Total costs for travel and training may be restricted based on such variables as:

- a. Lack of available, budgeted funding may limit the ability to pay all costs and/or require a shorter attendance sharing of expenses, or not attending.



- b. The U.S. General Service Administration (GSA) website (www.gsa.gov/perdeim) is used to determine expenditure allowances and limitations in high cost areas.

5. ADVANCE OR PREPAYMENT OF CERTAIN EXPENSES:

To lessen personal financial impacts, an advance for appropriate per diem and/or the IRS mileage rate is available prior to travel. The GSA's website is found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. An internet map (MapQuest) can be used to estimate miles to be driven.

A TRAVEL EXPENSE & REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM must be submitted to Finance at least two weeks before expected departure and must be supported by conference registration materials or other travel justification and mileage calculation (if appropriate). Finance will normally issue a check to the City representative the week before the scheduled business travel.

6. REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL, MEALS AND LODGING:

A request for reimbursement must be submitted on a CITY OF ASHLAND EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM. The form must be completed in its entirety, signed by the employee and approved by the employee's department head or the department head's designee.

Requests for reimbursement are to be made within 30 days of the date the expense was incurred. If the reimbursement request is \$10 or less and does not include an advance, lodging, registration or airfare expense, employees may be reimbursed through the department's petty cash fund, if such funds are available and if appropriate documentation is submitted to the department's petty cash custodian.

7. OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

Due to the expense, out-of-state travel should be undertaken only when there is no viable in-state or closer alternative. Except as provided in 7a below, each reimbursement request for any out-of-state travel is to be accompanied by a copy of an approved OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FORM. The form must be completed in its entirety and, except as provided in 7b and c below, signed by the appropriate Department Head and the City Administrator prior to the initiation of any travel arrangements.

- a. Out-of-state travel that is directly work related, benefits the City and requires no expense on the part of the City may be approved by the department head or the City Administrator without submitting an OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FORM.
- b. Travel less than 350 miles (such as to the Sacramento, San Francisco or Vancouver, Washington areas) does not require City Administrator approval.
- c. Out-of-state travel by Ashland Police Department personnel for official law enforcement business such as investigations or witness interviews may be approved by the Chief of Police with no further approval required. APD training travel will conform to the policy.

8. TICKET PURCHASES AND BAGGAGE

Tickets may be purchased through a travel agent, on-line or by direct means. Checked baggage is an acceptable expense. A detailed receipt is required in all cases.

Note:

- a. *Mileage points, discounts, or rebates ("perks") earned for travel on City business are considered employee compensation and the employee is responsible for any tax liability.*
- b. *Decisions on travel and related expenses must not be influenced by the actual or potential of personally earning perks.*

9 AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL



In-state travel generally should be done by automobile. All auto travel on business should be by the most direct and commonly travelled route. Mileage will not be reimbursed when using a City vehicle or for a leased/rented vehicle paid for by the City. Employees should use a City-owned vehicle for such travel, unless the use of a personal vehicle is approved in advance. Only those City vehicles insured for out-of-state travel may be used for such purposes. If no such vehicles are available, employees may use a personal vehicle or a rental vehicle, whichever is less costly. See **Car Rentals and Shuttle Services** for insurance guidelines.

Reimbursement will be as follows:

- a. The reimbursement rate for employees will be the standard Federal IRS mileage reimbursement rate in effect during the time of business travel. Exceptions follow.
- b. If the employee receives a monthly car allowance, the City requires an adjustment to the amount of mileage to be reimbursed. The standard adjustment is to subtract 100 miles from the actual or anticipated total round-trip miles and then apply the rate in 9a.
- c. When a City vehicle is available, and the employee chooses to use his/her own vehicle, the reimbursement rate is half the federal IRS mileage reimbursement rate identified in 9a. Employees' with City-owned, highway-worthy vehicles assigned should use it for travel unless departmental operations will be negatively impacted. Half IRS rate applies for miles driven per 9e.
- d. If a City representative combines personal business or vacation leave with the business travel, the employee must use a personal vehicle. Half IRS rate applies for miles driven per 9e.
- e. Employees using a personal vehicle and receiving reimbursement for mileage are responsible for all costs related to that vehicle. In such instances the reimbursement shall be for point-to-point travel from the employee's workplace to the location at which out-of-town business is conducted and back.

City credit cards may not be used to fuel a personal vehicle nor can personal vehicles be fueled at City-owned pumps.

10. CAR RENTALS AND SHUTTLE SERVICES

When traveling by rail, bus or air, City representatives may rent cars at City expense only if no shuttle or taxi transportation to their destination is available, or the shuttle or taxi is unavailable, or the cost will exceed the car rental.

Note:

- City representatives who find shuttle services (or a provided vehicle) inconvenient may choose to rent a car at their own expense (all costs including gas, insurance, parking, repairs, etc.) and be reimbursed up to documented shuttle rates.
- Whenever car rental for City business purposes is required while traveling out of state, all offered liability insurance must be purchased.
- No added insurance is needed for car rental on City business purposes while traveling in Oregon because the City's ongoing policy provides adequate coverage and protection.

11. LENGTH OF TRIP

No additional days of travel beyond the stated purpose of the travel and the minimal amount of time needed to reach the destination and/or return will be paid by the City. Employees required to stay over a Saturday in order to take advantage of a low-cost airfare will not be charged vacation time and will have expenses paid. Other exceptions must be approved by the City Administrator. Employees who otherwise extend a trip may do so only with the advance approval of their Department Head and at their own expense and time.



12. TRIP CHANGES

Occasionally trip plans will change after the City representative has begun the trip. The City will cover the cost of additional meals, hotels, taxi/shuttles, etc. not paid by others if the charge is the result of canceled or delayed flights, road closures, extreme weather, or other unavoidable delays. Expenses for employees who choose to change plans for any other reason will not be paid by the City, and any additional time off will not be considered work time.

13. REGISTRATION AND COURSE FEES

The City will pay conference, seminar, meeting, training and related course fees in advance to the company or agency providing the service through billing by purchase order & invoice, advanced payment by check request or by City credit card. Department personnel should make every effort to avoid requiring an employee to pay registration fees "up front" with personal funds.

Payment to vendors and associations coordinating meetings and conferences will be made in advance when appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. meeting brochure, invoice, conference registration form) is submitted to the Finance Department at least three weeks prior to the date the payment is required. If payment is originally done by credit card such documentation is to support the credit card statement or reimbursement form.

14. LODGING

The City will pay lodging expenses by payment to the hotel in advance, pursuant to a check request, or by payment through billing to a City credit card, or by reimbursement if paid for by the employee. Every effort should be made to secure safe, reasonably priced accommodations close to the training venue prior to traveling. City representatives should request the "government rate" when securing lodging accommodations. Meals provided by the lodging establishment are considered part of the price and not subject to per diem.

Payment to vendors for lodging and conferences will be made in advance when appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. lodging reservation invoice, conference registration form) attached to an approved Accounts Payable Voucher is submitted to the Finance Department at least three weeks prior to the date the payment is required.

Lodging expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost and generally should not exceed the maximum amounts established by the U.S. General Services Administration ("GSA"). A detailed lodging receipt is required in all cases.

The GSA's website is found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

15. MEAL COSTS

City representatives will be reimbursed on a per diem basis for meals while on overnight employment-related travel outside of Ashland based upon the GSA guidelines. The GSA's website is found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Note:

- Per diem amounts will not be paid for a meal available as part of lodging, training or business.
- Meal receipts for per diem are not required and can be paid as part of an advance.
- Meal costs that exceed the per diem amount are not reimbursable.
- Gratuities, service charges and other costs added to a meal are considered part of per diem and not reimbursable in total or separately.



- Advances or reimbursements for meals cannot be calculated using per diem for one or some meals and actual expenses for others.

16. OTHER MEAL COSTS

City representatives will be reimbursed for actual cost of meals incurred while attending City-related meetings, also referred to as business meetings. Receipts for such meals are required for reimbursement if no overnight stay is involved. In addition to the receipt, the business purpose of the meeting and the names of those attending the meeting should be noted on the reimbursement request. If names of those in attendance at the business meeting are not available, a description of the group and the number of people in the group should be noted.

If an overnight stay is required, follow the per diem policy.

17. INCIDENTAL COSTS:

Incidental costs for parking, transportation to and from the airport, taxi fares, rental car costs (including added insurance), etc. will be reimbursed upon presentation of a detailed receipt. The City will not reimburse expenses for entertainment, purchase of alcoholic beverages or any unnecessary or unreasonable expenses. Some items may be prepaid at a discount with registration or with the purchase of public transportation.

18. RECEIPTS

Applicable detailed receipts for actual expenses must be submitted to Finance within thirty (30) days of the expenditure. Detailed receipts are original receipts or invoices (copies of originals are acceptable if the employee needs to keep their document) with itemized listings of all charges providing sufficient information for auditing (date, time, place, items purchased, taxes, etc.).

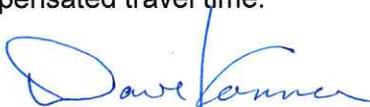
If detailed receipts are not available, other documentation in accordance with IRS guidelines that clearly substantiates the actual expenditure may be accepted when accompanied by a written statement to that effect from the City representative.

19. COMPENSATION

When compensation is due an employee who travels on City related business the following guidelines generally apply:

- Exempt employees will not have their normal compensation altered due to travel time.
- Non-exempt employees will be compensated at their normal rate of pay while travelling and approved travel time will be used in calculating overtime for the workweek. Travel time for non-exempt employees is defined as starting when the employee leaves their home and arrives at their destination (meeting location or hotel) and the reverse when returning.
- The Department Head can require the employee’s workweek to be adjusted to minimize overtime due to compensated travel time.

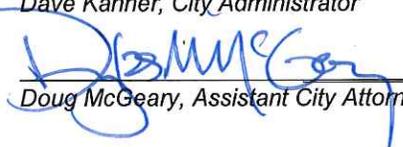
Approved:



 Dave Kanner, City Administrator

Date: 6/23/15

Reviewed as to form:



 Doug McGearry, Assistant City Attorney

Date: 6/24/15

