

ITEM 4.9

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT JULY 11, 2022 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

ITEM: **AMEND THE CITY OF LATHROP'S EMPLOYEE TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt a Resolution Amending the City of Lathrop Employee Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedure**

SUMMARY:

The purpose of the City of Lathrop's Employee Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedure ("Travel Policy") is to establish guidelines for the expenditure of public funds for authorizing attendance, travel, and reimbursement of expenses for City officials and employees attending conferences, training, meetings and other City related business. The last revision to the Travel Policy occurred in March 2000 and established the maximum meal rate of \$ 50 per day including tax and tip for meals not provided as part of registration of conference fees.

Staff is proposing revising the current Travel Policy to align the meals and incidental expenses with the guidelines established by the United States Internal Revenue Service. In addition, clarifying language has been added to the permitted expenses rate section regarding lodging and transportation to encourage employees to utilize the most economical lodging and ground transportation options.

Any out-of-state travel will continue to require approval by the City Council.

The proposed changes reflect practices that are in line with current municipal standards for employee travel.

BACKGROUND:

In September 1992, the City Council approved Resolution 92-223 establishing travel expense procedures for City Officials and Employees. In March 2000, the Travel Expense Policy was revised by Resolution 00-868. Since that time, the Travel Policy has remained unchanged.

The purpose of the Travel Policy is to establish guidelines for the expenditure of public funds for authorizing reimbursement of expenses for City officials and employees attending conferences, training, meetings and other City related business. Contract employees and consultants are not covered under this policy.

The last revision to the Travel Policy was in March 2000 and established the maximum meal rate of \$50 per day. Staff is proposing revisions the Travel Policy to align the meals and incidental expenses with guidelines established by the United States

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Internal Revenue Service. Additionally, clarification language has been added to the permitted expense rates section regarding lodging and transportation to encourage employees to utilize the most economical lodging and ground transportation options.

Any out-of-state travel will continue to require approval by the City Council.

These proposed changes reflect practices that are in line with current municipal standards.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The current Travel Policy was adopted in 2000, and needs to be updated to current industry standards. The proposed update will align the meals and incidental expenses with guidelines established by the United States Internal Revenue Service and update language on permitted expenses.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There will be a minor impact to the budget with the proposed increase in meal reimbursements. All travel expenditures will be subject to budgetary limitations within the Council approved operating budget.

ATTACHMENTS:


- A. Resolution Amending the City of Lathrop Employee Travel/Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedure
- B. Employee Travel/Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedure

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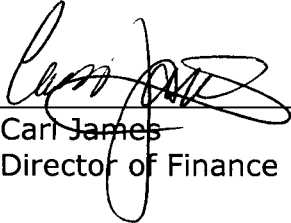
APPROVALS:



Theresa Roland
Director of Human Resources



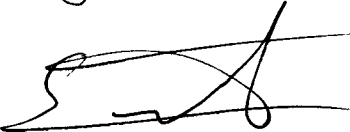
Date



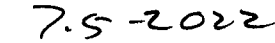
Carl James
Director of Finance




Date




Salvador Navarrete
City Attorney



Date



Stephen J. Salvatore
City Manager



Date

RESOLUTION NO. 22-_____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LATHROP
AMENDING THE CITY OF LATHROP EMPLOYEE TRAVEL EXPENSE
REIMBURSEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

WHEREAS, in September 1992 the City Council approved Resolution 92-223 establishing travel expense procedures for City Officials and Employees; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Travel policy is to establish guidelines for the expenditure of public funds for authorizing reimbursement of expenses for City Officials and employees attending conferences, training meetings and other City related business; and

WHEREAS, in March 2000 the City Council amended the Travel Policy by adoption of Resolution 00-868; and

WHEREAS, the current Travel Policy establishes the maximum meal rate of \$50; and

WHEREAS, staff is proposing revising the current Travel Policy to align the meals and incidental expenses with the guidelines established by the United States Internal Revenue Service; and

WHEREAS, clarifying language has been added to permitted expenses rates section regarding lodging and transportation to encourage employees to utilize the most economical lodging and ground transportation options; and

WHEREAS, any out-of-state travel will continue to require approval by the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council does hereby approve the second amendment to the City of Lathrop Employee Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy and Procedure included as Attachment B in the accompanying staff report.

The foregoing resolution was passed and adopted this 11th day of July 2022, by the following vote of the City Council, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

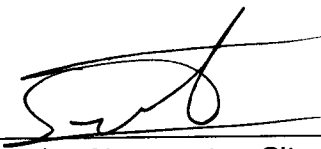
ABSTAIN:

Sonny Dhaliwal, Mayor


ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Teresa Vargas, City Clerk



Salvador Navarrete, City Attorney

	ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION	NUMBER 00-05	PAGE 1 of 6
		REVISION 2	SUPERSEDES 03/07/2000
SUBJECT EMPLOYEE TRAVEL / EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE		APPROVED BY _____ Stephen J. Salvatore City Manager	EFFECTIVE DATE _____, 2022

1. POLICY BACKGROUND:

The City Council adopted Resolution No. 22-____ authorizing the City Manager to approve an Administrative Policy for in-state travel expense reimbursement. The City Council retains authority to approve out-of-state travel. This Administrative Policy meets the requirements of California Government Code 53232 – 53232.4 for the City Council and appointed officials.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for authorizing attendance, travel and reimbursement of expenses for City employees and officials attending conferences, training, meetings and other City related business. Contract employees and consultants are not covered under this policy. This policy supersedes all previous policies.

3. POLICY

It is in the best interest of the City that City Officials and employees remain informed and trained in activities, developments and professional trends affecting the affairs of the City and maintaining licenses or certifications required, or beneficial to their position. As such, attendance at institutes, hearings, meetings, conferences or other gatherings is of value to the City and its citizens.

This policy is intended to provide the resources for the traveler which offers the greatest benefit of the trip at the most economical cost. The policy is not intended to allow travelers to receive financial gain as a result of their travel.

- 3.1. **Pre-Travel Authorization:** City Employees must complete a Training and Travel Approval Form (Attachment A) and secure approval from their Department Director and/or City Manager prior to attendance of any local or non-local conference, seminar or meeting. Travel arrangements should not be made until Department Director and/or City Manager approval has been obtained. “Non-Local” shall be defined as travel requiring an overnight stay.

Requests to attend conferences, workshops, or other training related events not required by the job description must also be reviewed and approved by the Director of Human Resources, or designee, prior to attendance of any local or non-local conference, seminar or meeting.

The Department Director and/or the City Manager has the responsibility to determine the reasonableness of travel requests as justified by the purpose of the travel. The intent is to make travel as economical as possible:

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- a. By examining each trip to determine necessity. Travel is not to be permitted when the same can be achieved by mail, online or telephone.
 - b. By minimizing the number of people who must travel for a single purpose.
 - c. By use of commercial air transportation when it is less costly than the use of private vehicle, unless otherwise approved.
 - d. By requiring the use of City vehicles, unless there is a valid reason for the use of a private vehicle.
 - e. By limiting payment or reimbursement for the expenses related to an authorized traveler only. Any expenses incurred by the authorized traveler for a companion is the responsibility of the traveler.
- 3.2. **Post Travel Reconciliation:** The employee must file a completed Post Travel Expense Reconciliation Report (“Expense Report”) (Attachment B) with the Finance Department within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the trip and attach all necessary receipts to document the travel expenses. Any monies advanced, but not used for authorized expenses, must be returned to the City. Failure of the employee to file an Expense Report or submission of a false Expense Report may be grounds for disciplinary action.
- 3.3. **Post Travel Reporting:** Per California Government Code Section 53232.3: Members of a legislative body (including but not limited too; City Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners, Special Commissions, etc.) shall provide brief reports on meetings attended at the expense of the local agency at the next regular meeting of the legislative body. A copy of any certificates received shall be provide to the Human Resources Department to be placed in their personnel files.
- 3.4. **Permitted Expenses:**
- 3.4.1. **Lodging:** Actual cost for a single occupancy room at a motel or hotel with average quality accommodations. The government and group rates should be requested where available. Lodging will be paid at the Standard Room Rate or Conference Room Rate, whichever is lower, provided that lodging at the group rate is available to the member of a legislative body at the time of booking. If the group rate is not available, the member of a legislative body shall use comparable lodging. Receipts for lodging costs must be attached to the Expense Report. Non-compensable lodging expenses that are not considered a City expense include but are not limited to:
 - a. Late check-out and guarantee charges
 - b. Personal services (i.e. barber/hair salon, shoeshines, health club and/or massage)
 - c. Entertainment, including but not limited to in room movies.
 - d. Pet related expenses

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Pre-destination lodging will be allowed for travel requiring extensive travel time and must be identified on the Travel Request Form, supported by a copy of the event schedule and approved by the Director of Human Resources, or designee, if applicable, and the Department Director and/or City Manager. Starting time is for actual event, not registration or optional tours or sponsored events unless related to professional development as approved by the Director of Human Resources, or designee, if applicable, and the Department Director and/or City Manager.

Lodging will be allowed for travel only if the length of the event is more than one day, extensive travel time is required and/or the distance is more than 75 miles from City Hall or the employee's residence, whichever is greater. Reasonable overnight travel for distances less than 75 miles may be approved by the City Manager on a case-by-case basis.

3.4.2. **Transportation & Mileage:** Travel by private car will be reimbursed at the current rate per mile approved the U.S. Internal Revenue Service for use in connection with City business. When attending conferences or meetings that are of such a distance that it is more economical to take commercial air transportation, and an employee proposes to drive their private car instead, requests for reimbursement will be based on commercial air transportation rates and not based on automobile mileage.

a. **Air Travel:** Employees shall endeavor to book commercial air transportation to take advantage of discounts and non-refundable ticket fares where practical. All flights shall be booked at coach class or equivalent level, unless approved by the City Manager before travel occurs.

Automobile mileage shall be reimbursed when traveling to and from the airport, at the current mileage rate set by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. When available, courtesy shuttle services should be utilized between airports and meeting locations. Airport parking at the economy parking rate is reimbursable with the original receipt.

- b. **Mileage Reimbursement:** No City employee shall be authorized mileage reimbursement for the use of his or her privately owned vehicle in the performance of City business if a City-owned vehicle is available and suitable for such use. Mileage is to be calculated based on navigational information available and attained at <http://www.mapquest.com> or another equivalent internet mapping/navigational guidance source.
- If the distance from the employee's home to the meeting or event site is less than the distance from the work site, use of a private vehicle may be authorized and the employee will be reimbursed as set forth in this Policy.
 - When authorized, private vehicle usage will be reimbursed at the current rate set by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Mileage reimbursement will be based on actual miles traveled for City business, via the most direct route.
 - In cases where more than one employee is attending the same event, employees will normally be expected to travel together when feasible and mileage reimbursement will be for one vehicle only.
 - Employees must adhere to the Vehicle Policy 00-32.
- c. **City Vehicles:** Employees are expected to use a City vehicle, when one is available, unless there is a valid reason for the use of a personal vehicle, (e.g. the travel distance is reasonably less when departing from the employee's residence) or if approved by Department Head.
- d. **Rental Vehicles:** If traveling by commercial air transportation, taxi or shuttle services (but not limited to Uber, Lyft, etc.) should be utilized. Vehicle rentals will be authorized if other means of transportation are not available, or if it is reasonable and more economical to rent a vehicle. When rental vehicles are used, the least expensive vehicle practical will be used. In addition, extended liability and collision insurance shall be purchased.

- 3.4.3. **Meals:** Costs for meals not provided as part of a registration fee will be calculated according to the meals and incidental expenses per diem rate established by the U.S. General Services Administration (www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates). Meals provided by the conference or included in the registration fee will not be eligible for per diem. A continental breakfast is not considered a meal for purposes of calculating meal allowances.

Registration materials indicating which meals are provided as part of the registration must be submitted prior to receipt of per diem.

- 3.4.4. **Compensation for Travel:** When travel time exceeds the employee's normal workweek, the City's rules for overtime apply if the employee is eligible for overtime. In determining overtime compensation, normal commute time should be deducted from the total travel time. Normal commute time is defined as the normal time spent by an employee traveling from home to their assigned work location. Additionally, normal unpaid meal periods are not considered work time when traveling. Overtime eligibility shall be determined according the U.S. Department of Labor Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") guidelines for travel.

- 3.4.5. **Other Expenses:** Actual cost of conference registrations, business related telephone calls and internet connection services, parking and other legitimate expenses shall be allowed.

Employees shall document all allowable travel-related expenditures with itemized receipts or invoices. For missing documents, the employee shall attach a Memorandum signed by the Department Director.

- 3.4.6. **Unauthorized Expenses:** Items of a personal nature are not reimbursable including but not limited to: movies, entertainment, premium television services, alcoholic beverages, dry cleaning, health club and/or massage, barber/hair salon, magazines, shoe shines, travel insurance, fines or traffic violations, excess baggage costs, spouse and/or guest expenses, and other items of a personal nature. Optional tours, banquets or additional costs added to registration are solely at the discretion of the employee and will be considered as a personal expense. The Department Director and/or City Manager shall determine what constitutes professional development.

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If unauthorized expenses have been paid by the City, the employee will be responsible for reimbursement to the City within five business days. Failure of the employee to report unauthorized expenses or falsely submitting unauthorized expenses on the Post Travel Expense Reconciliation Report may be grounds for disciplinary action.

3.4.7. **Travel for Boards and Commissions:** A City employee is not required to submit a Training and Travel Approval Form prior to attendance of any local meetings and/or conferences.

A City employee is required to submit a Training and Travel Request Form for approval prior to attendance of any non-local meeting and/or conference.

A City Employee is not required to submit an Expense Report concluding local or non-local meetings and/or conferences if there is a separate travel policy adopted by the Board or Commission being served from which said Employee is entitled to seek reimbursable travel expenses

3.5. **Out of State Travel:** Travel out of State shall be subject to authorization by the City Council.

4. BUDGETARY PROVISIONS

All anticipated conferences, conventions and professional meetings shall be budgeted for by the respective departments in the current year's operating budget. The Department Director and/or City Manager may substitute one meeting for another to cover unusual or unexpected meetings of an urgent nature.

The City Manager shall review all travel and reimbursement claims for validity. The City Manager's decision shall be final.

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