



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

NUMBER: 69-03	DATE: 07/01/69
REVISIONS: 7/14/88; 9/2/97; 11/19/02; 8/8/06; 4/24/09; 12/19/17; 2/7/18; 7/7/19	
ISSUED BY: City Manager	<i>Mark A. Ullrich</i>

**SUBJECT: TRAVEL/MEMBERSHIPS/LOCALBUSINESS EXPENSES/MILEAGE**

**PURPOSE:** To establish standard procedures

- (1) for attendance of appointed City officials, employees and authorized delegates at conventions, conferences, training programs, and other official travel for which the cost is borne by the City;
- (2) To establish a uniform policy for the authorization of individual and/or City memberships in various professional organizations;
- (3) To establish guidelines for incurring local business expenses and hosting visiting guests; and
- (4) To establish a policy for reimbursement of personal vehicle mileage pursuant to City Code Sec. 1.151 (Ord. 69-32, 4-15-69).

**POLICY:**

**A. DEFINITIONS**

1. **Applicable Published Rates.** The published rate schedule shall be determined by the Comptroller's office in accordance with IRS guidelines and published on the Comptroller's intranet site for reference.
2. **Per Diem.** A flat rate paid in lieu of travel reimbursements for people on overnight stays only.
3. **Reasonable period of time.** Actions that take place within the times specified in the following list will be treated as taking place within a reasonable period of time. (a) You receive an advance within 30 days of the time you have an expense. (b) You adequately account for expenses within 30 days after they were paid or incurred.

4. **Travel Status.** Appointed City officials, employees and authorized delegates must travel “away from home” in the pursuit of City business on a temporary basis. “Away from home” requires travel overnight or long enough to require substantial “sleep or rest.”

## **B STANDARDS FOR ATTENDANCE.**

**Attendance.** This policy shall apply to all appointed City officials and employees (permanent and seasonal). It shall also apply to persons not employed by the City who may be authorized by the City Manager or designee to attend training programs, conventions or conferences, including members of official City Boards and Commissions, and professionals or technicians who can provide expert advice deemed necessary for fact-finding or decision-making purposes. Persons who are not City employees will be hereinafter referred to as “authorized delegates”. All authorized delegates must be accompanied by a City employee to the conference, convention, training program, seminar, or other official business trip.

All travel where three (3) or more City employees are “away from home” requiring an overnight stay for the same convention, conference, training program or other official travel must be approved by the City Manager in advance.

### **1. Budget Provision.**

- A. For all petty cash expenses related to incidental department expenses, approved per City policies, limited to \$100, the signature of approval for requested reimbursement by the Department Director and/or their designee, shall be allowed as final approval and submitted to the Comptroller for payment reimbursement.
- B. For all travel/training expenses related to any convention, conference, seminar, class, or training program less than or equal to approval limit (as per Administrative Policy 73-09), budgeted and approved, non-inclusive of employee time/benefit compensation; the Officer, employee or authorized delegate may be authorized to attend at City expense with employee’s department Director or Managing Director written approval. Below is a list of approval limits per Administrative Policy 73-09.
  - a. The City Manager, Chief Financial Officer, Deputy City Manager, Managing Directors, City Attorney and Purchasing Agent may approve amounts up to \$10,000.
  - b. Department Directors may approve amounts up to \$5,000.

Travel authorization requests for authorized delegates (non-permanent employees) must explain in writing the necessity requiring such delegates to attend the proposed conference or training program.

2. **Conduct.** The conduct of appointed City officials and employees, and authorized delegates attending conferences, training programs, etc., or conducting official business out-of-town is a reflection of the standard of City government in Grand Rapids. The fact that the City is responsible for the expense of the travel is recognition of the principle that the benefits accrue to the City as well as to the individual. Therefore, appointed city officials, employees and authorized delegates will obtain a maximum amount of beneficial training and information and at all times exhibit conduct that reflects positively on the City.

3. **Time Limitation.** The time allowed for attendance at any single event (conventions, seminars, conferences) including travel time, will not exceed five (5) working days. If additional time is required, the City Manager and/or designee must grant permission. In the event the employee desires to use more time than herein allotted, the extra time shall be charged to vacation leave or leave without pay. No authorized delegate of the City shall exceed five (5) working days for travel purposes.
4. **Use of City-owned cars.** City-owned cars may be used for in-state conventions, conferences, seminars, training programs, and business trips. With the exception of Chicago, Illinois, City-owned cars shall not be used for trips out-of-state unless prior approval is obtained from the City Manager and/or designee for such use. Only City employees may operate City-owned vehicles.
5. **Travel Status.** Advances, expenses and reimbursements may be authorized when an appointed City official, employee or authorized delegate is on travel status.

An appointed City official, employee or authorized delegate is not eligible for reimbursement of meal or lodging costs that are:

- Purchased within the official workstation.
- Purchased within the employee or authorized delegate's city of residence.
- Furnished without charge.
- Included in the conference registration fee.
- Purchased for guests, unless incurred as a Local Business Expense by the City Manager as hereinafter provided or by contract.

### **C. ADVANCES, EXPENSES, AND REIMBURSEMENTS**

1. **Advances.** All appointed City officials and employees traveling on official business are expected to incur expenses in a prudent manner. Appointed City officials and employees may receive an advance from the City for estimated out-of-pocket expenses on an exception basis if requested within a reasonable time in writing in the form prescribed by the City Comptroller. Unexpended advances must be promptly reported to the City Comptroller and deposited with the City Treasurer within ten (10) days after the return of the official or employee. Failure to comply within the time specified will result in the denial of travel advance privileges in the future. No advances will be given to persons who are not employed by the City of Grand Rapids. Authorized delegates will be reimbursed reasonable travel expenses in the same manner as City employees as outlined below. Failure to comply within the time specified will result in the denial of travel advance in the future.
2. **Transportation Expenses.** The expense of traveling by public carrier (rail, bus, airplane, or boat) will be allowed on the basis of actual cost. However, transportation expense in excess of the cost of tourist or coach airfare (round trip) will not be allowed unless justification is given in writing and the approval of the City Manager or designee is obtained before leaving on the trip. If travel is by private automobile, the appointed City official or employee shall be paid at the mileage rate as defined in G. PERSONAL VEHICLE MILEAGE. Personal mileage and parking charges shall not exceed the cost of tourist or coach airfare (round trip) and required transportation. City funds shall not be used and employees will not be reimbursed for lodging and meals for the extra travel time required when driving out-of- state.

- a. Air Travel – The use of commercial airlines is permitted when it is to the advantage of the City, measured by both comparative travel costs and the time of the traveler. All travelers should purchase the least expensive accommodations available on any one flight. Persons choosing to purchase airfare at any rate other than economy/coach class must reimburse the City for the additional cost within a reasonable time.
- b. Rental Cars – The use of rental cars is not permitted unless other reasonable transportation between airports or train stations and lodging is unavailable. Rental cars may be permitted, with the prior authorization of the City Manager or designee, for site visits or other purposes of benefit to the City.
- c. Non-reimbursable Transportation Expenses
  - Charges for gasoline, lubrication, repairs, antifreeze, towage, and other similar expenses will not be allowed as reimbursable items when privately owned vehicles are used for official City travel.
  - Parking fines, speeding tickets or other operator violations are not reimbursable.
  - Private auto policy collision insurance and deductibles are not to be paid by the City, nor are they reimbursable.
3. Lodging Expenses, Only hotel or motel expenses in the convention or conference city metropolitan area will be allowed. The maximum expense for lodging will be the single occupancy standard room rate per day. Only the actual lodging expenses paid are allowable with a receipt.
4. Telephone Calls Charged to Hotel Rooms, Telephone calls charged to hotel rooms are reimbursable only if the phone call is for business purposes and substantiated in writing.
5. Meal Reimbursements and Per Diems, The applicable published rate schedule, as defined herein, represents the maximum approved reimbursement rates for authorized travel. The City will reimburse the employee a daily per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses including taxes and gratuity. The rate will be adjusted down for partial days of travel and for meals included in conference registration fees. Reimbursement for the actual cost of meals cannot exceed the applicable maximum published rate, including tax and gratuities, except for conference attendance when supported by program literature and a receipt.

Personal expenses, including alcoholic beverages, are not reimbursable. The per diem allowance will be held to include all charges for meals and incidental expenses

When the duration of travel includes a partial day, the following schedule determines eligibility for meal reimbursements.

<u>Reimbursable Meal</u>	<u>Travel begins before</u>	<u>Travel extends past</u>
<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>6:00 a.m.</u>	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>
<u>Lunch</u>	<u>11:30 a.m.</u>	<u>2:00 p.m.</u>
<u>Dinner</u>	<u>5:30 p.m.</u>	<u>7:00 p.m.</u>

If an appointed City official, employee or authorized delegate is eligible for reimbursement of more than one meal in a day, the amount expended for particular meals in the day is left to the appointed City official, employee or authorized delegate's discretion. Reimbursement is limited to the combined total of the applicable published meal rates of the eligible meals.

6. **Registration Fees.** Registration fees will be on the basis of actual registration charge, including meals and special events. When pre-registration is required, the fee may be charged to the City providing that approval has been obtained in writing for the trip.
7. **Statement and Evidence of Travel Expenses.** Within thirty (30) days after the return of the employee, all travel expenses shall be itemized on a Travel Authorization/Expense Accounting Form and signed. The Comptroller's Office will review and approve on behalf of the City Manager. Failure to submit a "final" request for reimbursement within thirty (30) days from the date the employee returns from travel shall require the approval of the City Manager. Failure to comply with this policy may delay or curtail future requests for travel and/or travel advances. In all cases, expenses incurred during the fiscal year shall be submitted for reimbursement during that fiscal year and not held over for reimbursement during the subsequent fiscal year. When Receipts and per diems are not provided or reimbursements are not requested within a reasonable period, it may result in not being reimbursed or may be denied.

Receipts for all items incurred during travel status shall accompany the original Travel Authorization/Expense Accounting Form. The document will be forwarded to the City Comptroller for approval and payment. All receipts supporting reimbursable travel expenses must have the following elements clearly printed to be acceptable:

- Date expense incurred
- Amounts
- Vendor name and city
- Itemized purchases (credit card receipt is not enough)
- General description of the items.

#### **D. INDIVIDUAL AND/OR CITY MEMBERSHIPS**

1. **Budget Provisions.** Appointed City official and employee participation through membership in various professional organizations shall be limited to those that can be provided for from existing budgetary appropriations.

2. **Persons Authorized.** Department Directors are authorized to incur expenses toward memberships of employees and/or the city in various professional organizations. It will be the responsibility of the Department Director to identify the purpose of and benefit to be derived from "membership" in such organizations during the budget process. Any membership fee(s) that require a group payment or organization-wide membership in excess of \$5,000 per annum shall require the approval of City Manager or Managing Director.
3. **Evidence of Expense.** The invoice submitted for processing and issuance of a City check shall contain the complete name of the organization, the time period covered by payment of the fee and the specifically named individual and/or organizational title to whom membership will be granted.

#### **E. LOCAL BUSINESS EXPENSES**

1. **Persons Authorized.** With the prior approval of the department director, employees are authorized to incur expenses for boards, commissions, themselves, and others. No food should be provided during regular work hours at City expense for employee only meetings, unless it is for special recognition, City or Department supported program meeting, "retirement coffee", or employee awards (\$75 guideline). Eligible expenses include coffee, refreshments, and the use of a restaurant/catering service. The cost of any food or refreshments for an appropriate business-related meeting that includes an outside organization or is during non-working hours, i.e., before or after work, or during the lunch period, is permitted as long as appointed City officials or employees are not compensated for the meeting. In addition to these expenses, the City Manager and/or Deputy City Manager may incur any other legitimate local business expense reasonably related to the discharge of duties as the City's Chief Executive Officer, including expenses for alcoholic beverages and other social expenses that are business-related, but not for employee only meetings.
2. **Evidence of Expense.** Expenses requiring reimbursement shall be reported on the Expense Reimbursement Form or the Petty Cash form, together with a notation of the names of persons and the purpose involved, and the appropriate receipts. A vendor invoice will be required from the restaurant/catering service to be eligible for direct payment by the City to the vendor. The Comptroller's Department must receive the completed Travel Authorization/Expense Accounting Form no later than thirty (30) days after the meeting or activity.

#### **F. VISITING GUESTS**

1. **Persons Authorized.** With the proper approval of the City Manager, employees are authorized to incur expenses for visiting dignitaries and guests, including the spouses of visitors, for the conduct of official City business. Expenses may include lodging expenses at the single occupancy standard room rate (double if accompanied by a spouse), meal expenses and appropriate social expenses that are business-related. Local and non-local transportation costs may be permitted with prior approval of the City Manager. All City-owned and operated cultural and entertainment facilities shall be permitted to waive fees if approved in advance by the City Manager and if guests are accompanied by the City employee(s) approved to host the event or occasion. Expenses incurred for personal business, comfort, or convenience shall not be reimbursed.

2. **Evidence of Expense.** Itemized receipts for hosting visiting guests will be required to be eligible for reimbursement. The completed Travel Authorization/Expense Accounting Form must be received by the Comptroller's Department no later than thirty (30) days after the visit or activity.

#### **G. PERSONAL VEHICLE MILEAGE**

1. **Positions that require a personal vehicle for work related use.** Mileage for local travel of a personal vehicle that is a condition of employment shall be reimbursed based on the current Internal Revenue Service Standard Mileage Rates. A Monthly Mileage Reimbursement Request should be completed and submitted to the Comptroller's Department on a monthly basis. Reimbursement requests shall be made no later than one month following the end of each calendar year quarter, i.e., April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31, for personal vehicle use in the prior quarter.
2. **Personal use of vehicle.** When choosing to use a personal vehicle instead of a City vehicle for business travel, the mileage reimbursement will be paid at the current Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate unless other contractual arrangements exist. A Monthly Mileage Reimbursement Request should be completed and submitted to the Comptroller's Department on a monthly basis. Reimbursement requests shall be made no later than one month following the end of each calendar year quarter, i.e., April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31, for personal vehicle use in the prior quarter. The above does not apply to individuals with car allowance or use of a City vehicle.

#### **H. EXCEPTIONS**

1. If warranted by unusual circumstances or conditions, exceptions to the foregoing standards and rules may be allowed upon the approval of the City Manager. More restrictive standards and rules may be imposed by the City Manager, on a temporary basis, in response to fiscal circumstances. During such periods, the Manager's instructions shall supersede any conflicting standards and rules in this policy.