


# CITY COMMISSION POLICY

 <b>GRAND RAPIDS</b>  <b>MICHIGAN</b>	<b>NUMBER:</b> 100-02	<b>HISTORY</b>	
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	<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> EXECUTIVE	21159	04/22/69
		25428	12/05/72
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		29545	10/07/75
		33149	06/27/78
		36342	06/10/80
		49511	02/23/88
		57442	03/15/93
		92491	01/14/25

**SUBJECT:** USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS BY ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR TRAVEL AND OTHER EXPENSES

**PURPOSE:** To formalize the standard procedures for attendance of elected officials at conventions, conferences, regional meetings, training programs, and other official travel in which the cost is borne by the City. This policy also establishes guidelines for payment of local business expenses and use of City-owned vehicles.

**POLICY:**

A. Standards of Travel

1. Elected officials are encouraged to attend and participate in national, state, regional, and local meetings of organizations representing local government, appropriate to the office, including participation in the policy and program committees, e.g. National League of Cities, Michigan Municipal League, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Government Finance Officer's Association. The Mayor and each City Commissioner will normally attend only one national convention/conference a year. Additional travel to conventions/conferences will be considered by the City Commission based on a written request submitted by the elected official. Such request will specify the date(s), location, estimated cost to be incurred, and an explanation of the benefits to be derived by the City of Grand Rapids.
  
2. Authorization to attend any such conferences or meetings shall be formally requested by and granted to a specific elected official by motion at any meeting of the Committee of the Whole some reasonable time prior to the date of the meeting.

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3. No elected official is authorized to attend, at City expense, any conventions/conferences occurring subsequent to an election which certifies a person other than the incumbent. Exceptions to this rule will only be granted by resolution of the City Commission acting on a written request of the elected official.
4. Conduct of Delegates. The conduct of elected officials 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 bearing a major portion of the expense is recognition of the principle that the benefits accrue to the City as well as to the individual. Therefore, elected officials will obtain a maximum amount of beneficial training and information and at all times exhibit conduct that reflects positively on the City.
5. All elected officials are required to provide a report on knowledge acquired or information obtained within thirty (30) days of the trip. The report may be delivered orally or in writing at any City Commission or Committee of the Whole meeting.

## B. Advances, Expenses, and Reimbursements for Official Travel:

1. Advances. In the use of City funds, elected officials are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Elected officials may receive an advance from the City for estimated out-of-pocket expenses. Unexpended advances must be promptly reported to the City Comptroller and deposited with the City Treasurer within ten (10) working days after the return of the official. If statements are not filed, the City Comptroller shall notify the official. If statements are not filed within an additional ten (10) working days, the City Comptroller shall notify the City Commission (Fiscal Committee – “Comptroller Report”). Failure to comply within the time specified may result in the denial of travel advance privileges in the future.
2. Transportation Expenses. The expense of traveling by public carrier 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 and the approval of the City Commission is obtained before leaving on the trip. Transportation to conferences/conventions shall be arranged such that no more than three members of the City Commission travel as a group on a public conveyance. If travel is by private automobile, to a point less than 500 miles, the official shall be paid at the mileage rate authorized in the general City employee bargaining unit contract. For distances in excess of 500 miles, the official shall be paid

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the equivalent of tourist or coach airfare (round trip). City funds shall not be used and officials will not be reimbursed for lodging and meals for the extra travel time required when driving out of state. Parking and local transportation expenses shall also be allowed on the basis of actual cost.

3. Hotel 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 room rate per day. Officials shall seek a cash advance or submit a bill for reimbursement to cover hotel expense. Reimbursement will not be made for personal items such as non-business related long distance telephone calls, valet service, laundry, entertainment, etc.
4. Registration Fees. Registration fees will be on the basis of actual registration charge. When preregistration is required, the fee may be charged to the City providing that approval has been obtained for the trip.
5. Per Diem. Allowances for meals together with all other miscellaneous expenses, including local transportation and parking, are set for 1988 at \$50.00 per day or any fraction of a day exceeding 12 hours. This per diem will be adjusted annually on January 1, based on the latest available 12 month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Per-diem shall be paid on the basis of a statement of time spent out of the City. However, City funds shall not be used, and elected officials shall not be reimbursed for expenses incurred due to the extra time required when exercising the option of using their personal cars.
6. Statement and Evidence of Travel Expense. Within ten (10) working days after the return of the official, all travel expenses shall be itemized on the special form titled: "City of Grand Rapids Expense Account." This form will be filled out completely, in duplicate, and submitted to the City Comptroller's Office for processing. All expense account forms shall be filed on an individual basis only.  
  
Receipts for the hotel bill, registration fee and transportation expense shall also accompany the original of the expense account form. Both copies will be forwarded to the City Comptroller for auditing and payment.
7. Comptroller's Report. At the end of each month, the Comptroller shall file a report with the City Commission, showing the total amount of expenditure for each elected official for that month.

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8. Exceptions. If warranted by unusual circumstances or conditions, exceptions to the foregoing standards and rules may be allowed upon the approval of a majority of the City Commission.

## C. Local Business Expense

1. The Mayor is authorized to incur any legitimate business-related expenses including the expenses of appropriate guests. Expenses requiring reimbursement shall be reported on a regular travel expense account form, together with a notation of the number of persons and the purpose involved, and the appropriate receipts. The completed expense account form must be received by the Comptroller's Office no later than ten working days after the meeting or activity.

## D. Use of City-Owned Cars or Vehicle Allowance

1. The Mayor may for business and personal use be permanently assigned a medium-priced automobile. In lieu of an assigned vehicle, the Mayor may request a vehicle allowance in an amount of \$700 per month. Other elected officials may use City automobiles only for official travel.
2. Other elected officials may use City vehicles for in-state conventions, conferences, seminars, training programs, and other City-related business trips.