

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO

Agenda Item Number: _____

Meeting Type: Regular

Meeting Date: Jul 24, 2014

Action Requested By: Human Resources

Agenda Type: Ordinance

Subject Matter:

Ordinance to amend Section 22.14 of Ordinance 04-315, Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

Exact Wording for the Agenda:

Ordinance to amend Section 22.14 (Conference and Travel) of Ordinance 04-315 (Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual).

Note: If amendment, Please state title and number of the original

Item to be considered for: Action

Unanimous Consent Required: Yes

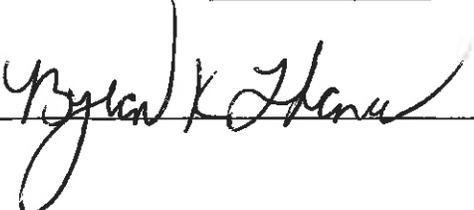
Briefly state why the action is required; why it is recommended; what council action will provide, allow and accomplish and; any other information that might be helpful.

This action is necessary in order to update language in the policy and to be consistent with state and federal laws.

Associated Cost: _____

Budgeted Item: _____

MAYOR RECOMMENDS OR CONCURS: _____

Department Head: 

Date: Jul 21, 2014

ORDINANCE NO. 14 - _____

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, that Section 22.14 of Ordinance No. 04-315 (Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual), as adopted and approved on December 16, 2004, as amended, is hereby further amended as follows:

22.14 CONFERENCE AND TRAVEL (ORD. 09-292)

(A) Purpose

This policy establishes a standard procedure for reimbursing officials and employees of the City of Huntsville for travel expenses incurred while attending conferences, conventions, or training programs, or while undertaking other travel deemed to have a municipal purpose. This policy does not apply to local travel within Madison County.

(B) Number of Participants

The following should be considered in making a determination as to how many or who should travel on behalf of the City:

- (1) Direct operational benefit to the Department and/or the City;
- (2) Employees holding office in the professional organization;
- (3) Cost and proximity of convention site to Huntsville; and,
- (4) The overall participation level that best serves the City's interest.

Multiple representation at a single event should normally be discouraged.

(C) Travel Request

(1) Travel Approval Form. Prior approval for travel involving City business is required. Department Heads will approve travel for his/her departments. The City Administrator will sign approvals for Department Heads and the Mayor. A "Request for Travel and Training" Form must be executed before the travel is made or any prepaid items are requested. A copy of this form must be attached to each statement of expenses submitted for reimbursement.

(2) Prepayment of Expenses. "Prepayment Request" Forms should be submitted to the Finance Department, allowing at least five working days for processing. Prepayment of conference registration, and other non-travel-related costs directly to providers are permitted without prior City Council action.

Subject to City Council approval, the following costs associated with travel and training may be paid prior to the date of travel:

(a) Prepayment to the employee for the costs of meals, where travel requires more than three nights stay away from home;

(b) Prepayment to the employee for lodging costs; and,

(c) Prepayment to the employee, with the approval of the Director of Finance, other costs for purposes other than (a) or (b) above.

(3) Failure to obtain prior approval of a travel request before expenses are incurred is cause for disallowing reimbursement.

(4) A single travel request may authorize more than one employee and prepaid items may cover more than one employee. However, a separate expense report must be submitted for each employee for reimbursement.

(D) Expense Report and Reimbursement

(1) Expense

Within seven (7) workdays after returning from a trip, the expense report must be completed, signed by the employee and Department Head, and submitted to the Finance Department. The City Administrator will sign for Department Heads and the Mayor.

No one is to approve forms for their own reimbursement.

Exceptions to this seven (7) day policy will be made if an employee's approved leave is in conjunction with the travel. In this case, the expense report must be submitted within five (5) workdays of the return to work.

Expense report reimbursements are to be submitted for final approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council, by way of the City Council's approval of disbursements.

(2) Reimbursement criteria

The following criteria are the basis for determining whether a specified travel expense is eligible for reimbursement:

(a) Transportation. The best interest of the City is the consideration when selecting the method of travel, however, the employee is expected to arrange comfortable and convenient transportation commensurate with the length of travel. Employees must explain required changes made after approval in the comment section of the expense report.

(i) Air-coach fair by the route best suited for the interest of the City is allowed. Should employees select a different route for their own benefit, reimbursement is limited to coach fare by the route best suited for the interest of the City. Reimbursement of first class airfare is made only under unusual conditions or when coach accommodations are not available.

(ii) City-owned vehicles. Employees may use a department assigned vehicle or another City-owned vehicle, if available. Receipts for gasoline and parking are required.

(iii) Private vehicles. Use of a private vehicle for travel on City business is reimbursed at a rate established by the Mayor, which cannot exceed the Internal Revenue Service mileage rate. In no way should this exceed the cost of round-trip coach airfare.

If more than one (1) employee shares a personal vehicle on a trip, only one person will receive reimbursement for mileage.

City employees on monthly car allowance must use their personal vehicle for all travel within the limits of Madison County. For travel beyond Madison County, these employees will be reimbursed at the Citywide rate established by the Mayor.

(iv) Taxi, shuttle, airport limo, etc. For each non-driving trip, no receipts are required for taxi, shuttle, airport limo, etc., up to and including \$25.00. Requests for reimbursement over \$25.00 will require receipts. Car rental charges are eligible under unusual or emergency conditions. Circumstances must be explained and receipts attached.

(b) Lodging. Reimbursement is authorized for lodging for single occupancy or occupancy shared with another City employee when practical. Lodging is reimbursed on an actual cost basis and detailed receipts are required for reimbursement. The reimbursement amount, on a daily basis, is limited to 125 percent of the federal per diem lodging rate, as prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service using the "High-Low method" or other IRS-authorized method if the High-Low method" is no longer authorized. This limit is inclusive of all taxes and surcharges.

No reimbursement will be made for lodging when travel is to a City that is less than 30 miles from Huntsville (one-way), without prior approval from the Mayor's Office.

(c) Telephone & fax. Only the cost of business calls and messages are reimbursable. "Collect" calls to the City are acceptable when required for City business. Also, one call of reasonable length (not to exceed \$5.00) will be allowed to inform your family of your arrival at your destination.

(d) Registration fees. Conference, seminar, or meeting fees are reimbursable, with receipts.

(e) Meals & tips. Reimbursement for all food and related expenses on trips that require an overnight stay will be reimbursed at actual cost, but in no event will exceed the "City Limit" as defined herein for a particular day. The City Limit, for purposes of this section, is defined as the lesser of (1) the rate of reimbursement established in the budget ordinance for each fiscal year or (2) the per diem rate as prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service using the "High-Low method" or other IRS-authorized method if the "High-Low method" is no longer authorized. Receipts are not required. The rate of reimbursement will be established in the budget ordinance for each fiscal year and will be adjusted as required such that it does not exceed the IRS permitted amount. The City Limit on a daily basis is reduced by 25% of the rate for each meal that is (1) provided at conferences and meetings paid for by the City and (2) reasonably expected to occur outside the employee's time away from home.

Reimbursement for one meal, up to \$10.00, with receipt, is allowed for trips over eight (8) hours which do not require an overnight stay.

(f) Personal expenses. Personal expenses for items not essential for the performance of City business are not allowed. Personal items include, but are not limited to, alcoholic beverages, entertainment activities, newspapers, and souvenirs.

(i) Reimbursement for valet and laundry service charges, in reasonable amounts, is authorized under unusual circumstances, or when personnel are required to travel for extensive periods of time. Employees must have receipts for these services.

(ii) Textbooks or other conference materials, for which a fee is paid, become the property of the City. Officials approving such reimbursements are responsible for these items being retained by the City.

(g) Miscellaneous expenses. Miscellaneous expenses will be reimbursed up to \$5.00 without receipts per expense type. An explanation of these expenses should be provided on the expense report as backup for this request.

(E) Overtime or Compensatory Time for Overnight Travel

The City of Huntsville will not consider as work time that time spent in overnight travel that occurs outside of regular working hours as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus, or car and where the employee is free to relax. If, however, the overnight travel occurs during normal working hours on nonworking days (i.e., Saturday or Sunday for an employee who works Monday to Friday), the time spent in travel is compensable. Without regard to when travel takes place, any work that an employee is required to perform while traveling must, of course, be counted as hours worked. Therefore, compensation as paid overtime or compensatory time is not authorized for overnight travel during non-working hours, unless work is actually performed.

(F) Exceptions

Any exceptions or unusual expenses not provided in these instructions must have specific approval. A memo justifying the exception must accompany the travel report and include approval of the Mayor.

ADOPTED this the _____ day of _____, 2014.

President of the City Council of
the City of Huntsville, Alabama

APPROVED this the _____ day of _____, 2014.

Mayor of the City of Huntsville,
Alabama