CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER MEMO

Agenda Item Number: _____

Meeting Type: Regular

Meeting Date: Jul 23, 2015

Action Requested By: Human Resources

Agenda Type: Ordinance

Subject Matter:

Ordinance to amend Section 22.14 (Conference and Travel) 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: Introduction

Unanimous Consent Required: No

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 amendment is necessary in order to update language in the policy.

Associated Cost: _____

Budgeted Item: _____

MAYOR RECOMMENDS OR CONCURS: _____

Department Head: _____

Date: Jul 17, 2015

ORDINANCE NO. 15 - _____

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 December 16, 2004, is hereby further amended as follows:

22.14 CONFERENCE AND TRAVEL (ORD. 09-292) (ORD. 14-525)

(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 and/or Training Request

(1) Administrative Approval. Prior approval for travel and/or training involving City business is required, as follows: for employees, by their Department Head; for Department Heads, by their immediate supervisor; and for the Mayor, by the City Administrator.

(2) Finance Department Approval. The following travel and/or training requires advance approval of the Finance Department:

(a) A travel and/or training event occurring on a single day if prepayment of any expenses by City check is required.

Payment of single-day event expenses by City credit card in advance of the event does not required advance approval.

(b) Any travel and/or training event that occurs over more than a single day.

The request shall be on the prescribed form, and should be submitted to the Finance Department, allowing at least five (5) workdays for processing, with accompanying evidence of expense.

(3) City Council Approval. Travel and/or training will require advance approval of the City Council if prepayment of any travel expenses by City check is required.

Advance approval by the City Council is not required for the prepayment of non-travel expenses by City check or for the prepayment of any expenses by City credit card.

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

(5) 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.

The Finance Department will administer the prepayment of travel and/or training expenses subject to the approvals required in this policy, and will prescribe the request forms consistent with this policy.

(D) Expense Report and Reimbursement

(1) Expense

Within seven (7) workdays after returning from a trip, a travel expense report must be completed, signed by the employee and Department Head, and submitted to the Finance Department. Departments Heads' expense reports must be approved by their immediate supervisor, and the City Administrator will approve Mayor's expense reports.

No one is to approve expense reports 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. If more than one employee attends the same event, transportation expenses are limited to the amount necessary to transport employees in groups, as determined by the Mayor's Office or the Finance Department. 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 IRS mileage rate. In no way should this exceed the cost of round-trip coach airfare or rental vehicle plus fuel costs, as determined by the Mayor's Office or the Finance Department.

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

(iv) Rental vehicles. If a city-owned vehicle is not available for use, rental vehicles may be procured if less costly to the City than the use of a private vehicle. Practically, this may limit the amount of reimbursement for use of private vehicles on longer trips.

(v) 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.

(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 is generally limited to the federal per diem lodging rate, or as otherwise limited by the Mayor or City Administrator.

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. Costs are subject to the approval of the Finance Department.

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

(e) Meals & tips. Reimbursement for all food and related expenses, not including the cost of alcoholic beverages, 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 City Limit 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 City Limit for each meal that is (1) provided at events 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.

The Finance Department will prescribe the travel expense report form and administer the reimbursement of expenses consistent with this policy.

(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 expense report and include approval of the Mayor or City Administrator.

ADOPTED this the ____ day of _____, 2015.

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

APPROVED this the ____ day of _____, 2015.

_____
Mayor of the City of Huntsville,
Alabama