

**CITY OF LYNNWOOD  
RESOLUTION NO. 2023-09**

**A RESOLUTION REPLACING RESOLUTION 2023-01 AND ESTABLISHING, REVISING AND UPDATING CITY POLICIES REGARDING: TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION, REIMBURSEMENT, EXPENDITURES, ADVANCES, AND RELATED PROCEDURES; AND REIMBURSEMENT OR DIRECT PAYMENT OF OTHER TYPES EXPENSES; AND MAKING THESE POLICIES APPLICABLE TO CITY ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS, EMPLOYEES, MEMBERS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, VOLUNTEERS, MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, AND OTHER NON-EMPLOYEES.**

WHEREAS, RCW Chapter 35A.11 authorizes the City Council to organize and regulate internal city operations and processes, and to define the functions, duties and authority of city staff and elected officials; and

WHEREAS, city elected or appointed officials, employees, volunteers, board members, commissioners, and other non-employees from time to time incur proper, reasonable and necessary expenses, in the normal conduct of city business, including travel, education and training expenses; and

WHEREAS, various proper, reasonable, and necessary expenses are incurred in regard to members of the public in the normal conduct of city business; and

WHEREAS, legal requirements, good accounting practices, and the orderly administration of the city, require the establishment of procedures, limitations, safeguards, and guidelines for the reimbursement of, or direct payment of, proper, reasonable and necessary expenses; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate to periodically review, revise and update, existing city policies;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

**Section 1. Adoption of Travel Policies and Repeal of Prior Resolutions.** The Lynnwood City Council does hereby adopt the following policies regarding both: (a) travel authorization, reimbursement, expenditures, advances, and related procedures; and (b) the reimbursement, or direct payment, of other proper, reasonable, and necessary expenses in the normal conduct of city business, and related procedures. Any employee or elected official who expends City funds outside of the parameters of this policy will be required to reimburse the City. This resolution is effective January 1, 2024 and voids and supersedes Lynnwood City Council Resolutions Nos. 2023-01.

**Section 2. Authorization for Travel, Education, Training, and Acquisition of Certain Materials and Services – All Elected Officials.**

- A. All travel, education, or training expenditures by City Councilmembers shall be at their individual discretion, provided, however, that each councilmember shall not exceed 50% of the amount allocated per council position number in the biennial budget for councilmember travel, education and training in the first year of the biennium. Any amount not expended per council position number in the first year may be spent in the second year of the biennium. The Mayor shall not exceed the amount for travel, education and training set forth in such biennial budget for the Executive Department.
  
- B. Councilmembers and the Mayor shall provide necessary information for travel and training to their respective Department Assistant to complete authorization forms referenced in Section 3 to ensure budget is available and allow for direct payment of expenses. All transportation and accommodation reservations shall be made at the lowest rate available, such as coach fare for air transportation, use of special discounts or conference rates, and single occupancy government rates for lodging. If reservations are not obtained through the City and expenses exceed those obtainable by the City, that portion in excess will not be reimbursed unless approved by a simple majority of the Council.
  
- C. Any Councilmember who utilizes travel funds must prepare a post-travel report for the City Council that summarizes the accomplishments of the trip.
  
- D. Councilmembers and the Mayor shall follow the procedures set forth in Section 4 regarding guidelines and standards for the payment of travel reimbursement claims, for travel advances, or for the direct payment of any other education or training expense.

**Section 3. Authorization for Travel, Education, Training, and Acquisition of Certain Materials and Services – City Employees, Members of Boards and Commissions, Volunteers, Members of the Public, and Other Non-Employees.**

- A. A Request for Training and Travel form which includes the purpose of the trip and a detailed estimate of costs shall be submitted and approved by the Department Director or designee, in advance of the departure date. Any out of state travel must also be approved by the Mayor.
  
- B. Travel Transportation, Accommodations, Registration, and Reservations

1. Transportation, lodging and conference registration should be arranged in advance by a designated staff member and billed directly to the City.
2. Accommodations shall be made at the coach fare for air transportation, use of special discounts or conference rates where applicable, and single occupancy government rates for lodging. If the government rate is not available at the lodging facility, Department Head approval is required for the non-government rate.

C. Procedures for Reimbursement of Travel, Education and Training Expenses and Requests for Travel Advances

1. Travel Expense Reimbursement: The procedures, standards, and guidelines in Section 4 shall apply to the payment of travel reimbursement claims, for travel advance payments, or for the direct payment any other education or training expense.
2. Travel Advances: An “Advance Travel Fund” is established by Chapter 3.44 of the Lynnwood Municipal Code. All requests for travel advances must be submitted on Request for Training and Travel form. When advance travel funds are authorized, a fully itemized post-travel expense form, accompanied by any unexpended portion of the advance, must be submitted *within 15 days* from the end of the travel period. Travel advance reimbursements submitted after 15 calendar days will be assessed ten percent (10%) interest on the full amount of the advance pursuant to RCW 42.24.140.

**Section 4. Procedures and Standards for Travel Reimbursement Requests and for Travel Advances – Applies to All Elected Officials, Employees, Volunteers and other Non-Employees.**

This section applies to all elected city officials, employees, members of boards and commissions, volunteer members of the public, and other non-employees. The processing, approval, and payment of each expense in a travel reimbursement claim, or a travel advance request, shall be done in compliance with this section. In order to qualify for reimbursement, each expense must be reasonable and prudent under the circumstances and directly related to the conduct of city business, or a service or substantial benefit provided for the City. Care must be taken to avoid unnecessary or excessive expenses.

It shall be the responsibility of the Finance Director to ensure that these policies are uniformly applied, and to provide the forms, instructions, and training, necessary for implementation.

Exceptions to this section may be made only for unusual or extenuating circumstances and upon the written approval of the Mayor that:

- (a) The expenses to be reimbursed are reasonable under the circumstances that occurred; and
- (b) That such expenses reasonably relate to the conduct of city business, or provide a service or substantial benefit received by the City; and

(c) That compliance with this section was not feasible.

A. Documentation for All Claims. Claims for reimbursement shall be paid if accompanied by a bona fide vendor's receipt and consistent with the following policies. Such receipts must show the date, a description of the purchase, vendor identification, and amount paid. Credit card receipts are acceptable if they meet the information requirements above. Other specific rules for the documentation of a reimbursement are included below.

B. Meals – Travel Related - Per Diem Rate. Meals that are not provided as part of a conference agenda shall be reimbursed at the per diem rate for Seattle per the US General Services Administration (GSA) in effect during the date(s) of travel. The per diem rate includes the costs of tax and gratuity. No travel meals may be purchased on City purchasing cards. No receipts are required for daily meal per diem.

C. Meals – Not Travel Related – Reimbursement or Direct Payment for Actual Meal Costs, or Direct payment for the Provision of Food on Certain Occasions.

Reimbursement, or direct payment, for meals, or direct payment for the provision of food on certain occasions, for City Councilmembers, board members, commissioners, volunteers, members of the public, non-employees, and staff conducting formal city business at meetings, events, or other activities, during mealtimes is specifically authorized if the following requirements are met:

1. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct official city business or to provide training to city employees or city officials; AND
2. The meals are an integral part of the business meeting or training session. AND
3. The meeting or training is a special situation or occasion outside of the normal daily business of city employees. City funds may not be used to provide meals for staff parties, routine staff meetings, routine departmental meetings, or any event deemed to be social in nature.
4. An agenda for the meeting and list of attendees must be provided along with receipts for meeting meal expenses; the amount per person, including any taxes and gratuities, may not exceed the per diem amount for Seattle GSA for the specific meal period that occurred during the meeting.

Expenses for meals or food where city business is conducted and that could otherwise reasonably occur during non-meal periods are not eligible for reimbursement. Meal reimbursement, not related to travel or otherwise authorized in a Collective Bargaining Agreement, for city staff must be approved in advance by the Department Director in accordance with this policy.

Under no circumstances may alcohol be provided at city expense.

D. Whenever a situation arises under subsections B or C above, where a meal(s) is

included in a registration or conference fee, or where direct payment from the city or any third party is used for food during the conduct of city business, and the person requesting reimbursement or submitting a travel advance claim actually attends that meal, then the per diem rate for that day shall be reduced to reflect such a meal(s). The per diem rate shall follow the GSA per diem rate for Seattle in effect at the time of travel.

- E. Travel Related Expenses Authorized. Reimbursement for the reasonable costs of business travel is acceptable. In determining the “reasonableness” of an expense the following general guidelines shall apply:
1. City Vehicle. Out of the area costs of vehicle operation are acceptable, such as gas. Any other vehicle-related expenditures such as oil, tires or other repairs must be preapproved by the Department Director.
  2. Personal Vehicle Mileage Expense and Limitation.
    - a. Mileage expenses shall be reimbursed for travel within a 300-mile radius of the City, at the current mileage rate per GSA in effect at the time of travel. The point of origin shall be city hall (or other place of city employment) or home, whichever is shorter under the circumstances. Mileage will be paid only for such point to point travel **and** only for necessary travel between city business activities, and not for personal local trips, at the travel destination.
    - b. Trips beyond a 300-mile radius shall be reimbursed in an amount equal to the appropriate round trip coach air fare to the destination (plus travel to/from airport, parking fees and other necessary expenses associated with air travel), based upon the date and approximate time of departure.
    - c. The Finance Director shall approve computations necessary to comply with this section.
  3. Rental Vehicle. The cost of vehicle rental will be handled on an exception basis and must be approved in advance by the Mayor. Only business miles are reimbursable. If the vehicle was used for non-business purposes, the cost of the rental shall be pro-rated accordingly.
  4. Air Travel. Advance tickets should be purchased using City of Lynnwood Purchasing Cards. Where it is not feasible to follow that procedure, direct reimbursement of incurred expenses is authorized.
  5. Airport Delivery/Pick-up Mileage or Parking Expenses. Round trip mileage to the airport will be reimbursed provided the cost of mileage based on the current GSA rate is less expense than parking or alternate transportation.
  6. Other Travel Expenses. Miscellaneous travel expenses such as bus, taxi, bridge or other tolls, parking, ferry, rail or ride share will only be authorized if necessary

and are included on the Request for Travel and Training form.

F. Accommodations and Lodging. Hotel/motel accommodations will be reimbursed or paid at a maximum of the single room rate. A vendor's receipt for this category is required for all claims.

G. Incidental Travel Expenses – Reasonable and Necessary. Reasonable and necessary incidental travel expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Allowable Incidental Expenses.
  - a. Baggage check fees.
2. Non-Allowable Incidental Expenses. **Non-allowable** incidental travel expenses, include but are not limited to:
  - a. Personal entertainment.
  - b. Room Service.
  - c. Theft, loss or damage to personal property.
  - d. Expenses of a spouse, family or other person not authorized to receive reimbursement under this policy.
  - e. Airline or other trip insurance.
  - f. Personal postage, reading material, personal telephone calls.
  - g. Personal toiletries .
  - h. Liquor.
  - i. Laundry or dry-cleaning.
  - j. Cash advances.
  - k. Fines or traffic tickets.
  - l. Personal health expenses

H. Reimbursement Claims and Advance Travel

1. All claims for reimbursement and travel advances shall be submitted on forms supplied by the Finance Department. If Advance Travel funds were used, an accounting and, if applicable, a reimbursement claim must be submitted within fifteen (15) days from the end of the travel period. Except for claims for mileage and incidental expenses only, all other claims for reimbursement should be submitted for payment within ninety (90) days from the completion of the travel.
2. Reimbursement claims for which special approval of the Mayor, or designee, is required must include such written approval.
3. Reimbursement claims submitted by the Mayor and/or Department Directors **may include** the otherwise reimbursable travel or business-related expenses of

other City of Lynnwood elected or appointed officials, or employees, who would be entitled in their own right to make a claim for reimbursement of such travel or city business- related expenses. The Mayor, or designee, is authorized to charge such travel or city business related expenses on a city credit card.

- 4. All reimbursement claims or travel advances by the Mayor shall be reviewed and approved by the Finance Director.

**Volunteers, Members of Boards and Commissions, Members of the Public, and Other Non-Employees – Substantial Benefit Requirement for Reimbursement of Travel, Education, Training, or Other Expenses Under This Resolution.**

The expenses of persons who are neither City employees nor officials may be reimbursed where such payment can be reasonably construed to be in consideration for a service performed or other substantial benefit received by the City of commensurate value. This type of reimbursement requires written documentation of the substantial benefit expected in return for the expenses to be paid, except that either: (a) a board member or commissioner in the reasonable exercise of their duties or responsibilities by virtue of their appointment; or (b) a volunteer, member of the public, or non-employee, verifiably participates in a bona fide city activity along with city officials, shall be sufficient to show a substantial benefit to the city and shall not require written documentation thereof. This section may also apply to applicants for city employment when specifically approved by the Mayor or designee. This section does not apply to vendors who are paid for the services they provide to the City. The Mayor (subject to appeal to the City Council) shall resolve disputes as to what constitutes a bona fide city activity.

**Section 5. Effective Date.** This resolution shall take effect on January 1, 2024. However, claims for reimbursement, or travel advances, or the direct payment of an expense, for an event or travel activity which has already occurred prior to January 1, 2024 shall be governed and paid according to Resolution 2023-01.

**PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, the 11<sup>th</sup> day of December 2023.**

APPROVED:

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*Christine Frizzell* 12/12/2023  
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Christine Frizzell, Mayor

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:

DocuSigned by:  
*Luke Lonie*  
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Luke Lonie, City Clerk