

Introduced by: Council Member Albertson
Date: May 14, 2019
Action: Not Approved
Vote: 3-4

CITY OF BETHEL, ALASKA

Resolution #19-04

A RESOLUTION BY THE BETHEL CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHING A CITY COUNCIL TRAVEL POLICY

WHEREAS, the Bethel City Council establishes a budget annual to account for many of the known travel and training opportunities provided to the members;

WHEREAS, the establishment of a City Council Travel Policy will provide the public officials a regulation and standard on what is and is not considered reimbursable travel, meal, and lodging expenses;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bethel City Council establishes the following Travel and Training Policy and require any modification to the Policy be provided through resolution.

If any part of this policy becomes in conflict or inconsistent with Municipal, State or Federal laws, the provisions of law shall control.

Should any of the clauses, sentences, paragraphs, section or parts of this Policy be deemed invalid, unconstitutional, or unenforceable by a court of law or administrative agency with jurisdiction over the matter, such action shall not be construed to affect any other valid portion of this policy.

This policy shall be effective immediately upon passage of this resolution.

I Policy Statement

The City hereby expressly acknowledges its responsibility to wisely administer limited public resources and to expend them only when there will be a substantial benefit to the City and its residents. Accordingly, it is the intent of this policy to establish rules and guidelines governing coverage of city council members travel costs for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official duties.

This policy shall be formally adopted by the City Council and any changes thereto shall also be adopted by City Council.

II Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Event means conference, seminar, meeting and other official City of Bethel functions.

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- B. Per Diem means an allowance paid to council members for meal expenses incurred when traveling on City business. This allowance is in lieu of reimbursement of actual expenses.
- C. Reasonable hours of travel means travel by council members between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m.

III Authorized Travel

The City may make payments for airfare, lodging, registration, per diem and incidentals if approved by the Council.

Expenses incurred by city council members participating in the following activities and/or events constitute authorization if funds are available in the city council travel budget and as long as the other requirements of this policy are also met:

- A. Alaska Municipal League Newly Elected Official's Training and the Alaska Municipal Conference held annually in November- applies to council members.
- B. Alaska Conference of Mayor's Conference held in February, August and November- applies to mayor.
- C. Alaska Municipal League Board Meetings-applies to board member. Most travel costs are reimbursed by Alaska Municipal League.
- D. All other travel must be approved in advance by the Council in an open city council meeting, and must include an estimate of the cost of the travel.

IV Unauthorized Expenses

The following expenditures incurred by city council members in the course and scope of their official duties shall not be reimbursed:

- A. The personal portion of any trip.
- B. Political contributions or events sponsored by or affiliated with political parties.
- C. Family or friend expenses, including those of a partner when accompanying Council member on official business, child or pet care.
- D. Entertainment expenses, including theatre, shows, movies, sporting events, golf, spa treatments, etc.
- E. Non-mileage personal automobile expenses including repairs, insurance, gasoline, traffic citations.
- F. Personal losses incurred while on City business.
- G. Reimbursement request in excess of \$20 without a receipt with sufficient information on its face to indicate the nature and date of the charge. All reimbursement receipts must be submitted within sixty days from the date of return.

V Authorized Expenses

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All travel on city business shall be planned to provide for the most economical mode of transportation reasonably available. Transportation costs are provided at the most reasonable means of transport. As an example if a council member chooses to fly first class the City will reimburse the coach rate and the council member will be responsible for the difference.

Travel expenses shall be authorized for days actually spent on city business and travel to and from the event. Travel days may not exceed one day before and/or after the event. Travel days before and after the event are only authorized if the travel schedule prohibits travel at reasonable hours on the beginning and ending days of the event. Travel expenses for more than one day of travel to and from an event must be approved in advance by the City Council. Council members do not need council authorization to add personal travel days on to business travel as long as there are no reimbursable expenses requested during the personal travel.

A. Air Transportation

Allowable costs for air travel shall be calculated by using the coach airfare on the lowest available airfare for a regularly scheduled flight which reasonably accommodates the time of travel requested.

Council members who purchase their own airfare are entitled to reimbursement in the amount equal to the standard established above.

If personal travel is combined with business related travel, the council member shall be responsible for paying the increase in airfare necessary to accommodate the personal part of the flight.

If changes in travel plans occur that are the result of city business requirements, any associated costs shall be paid by the City. However, any increases in the costs of travel due to changes for personal convenience will be borne by the council member.

B. Vehicular Transportation

1. Use of personal vehicle shall be authorized at a rate of .54 per mile. The City's insurance does not cover the use of personal vehicles.
2. Use of rental car shall be authorized only if it is the most economical method to complete business travel requirements. If other vehicular transportation options such as taxi or ride-sharing services are less expensive and are able to reasonably meet the business needs of the traveler, then a rental car shall not be reimbursable. Rental car options such as car insurance, GPS or pre-paid gas are not eligible for reimbursement. The companion's use of the rental car or personal use by a council member is not subject to the City's coverage.
3. Use of taxi and public transportation are authorized to and from the event.

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VI Lodging

Authorized expenses for lodging is for a single room rate and should correspond to the defined reasonable hours of travel. If the conference or meeting concludes later than two hours before a flight within the reasonable hours of travel, the council member shall be entitled to an additional night of lodging.

Lodging shall be arranged at the location of the event. If lodging is not available at the event site, an attempt should be made to arrange lodging within walking distance of the event if a reasonable rate is available.

VII Meals

Council members shall be entitled to payment of advanced meal per diem allowance. The City Clerk's Office will if possible provide council members with meal per diem allowance at the rate provided below in advance of their travel. The amount of per diem advance may not exceed the associated meal per diem allowance. Per Diem allowance rates include gratuity.

1. Breakfast: Per Diem allowance is approved if the council member's travel begins before 10:00a. The per diem allowance for breakfast shall be at a rate of \$12.
2. Lunch: Per Diem allowance is approved if the council member's travel begins after 11:00a and before 2:00p. The per diem allowance for Lunch shall be at a rate of \$16.
3. Dinner: Per Diem allowance is approved if the council member's travel begins after 5:00p and before 9:00p. The per diem allowance for dinner shall be at a rate of \$32.

If meals are available at no cost to the traveler (other than airline meals and snacks), such as meals provided at conferences or by others at meetings, or if meal costs are reimbursed from other sources or reimbursed as representational expenses, the per diem allowance shall be adjusted by reducing the daily per diem associated with each meal provided or reimbursed by other means.

VIII Trip Cancellations

In the event a council member cancels a trip for which the City has already incurred costs, the member is responsible for any charges associated with the cancellation unless the City Council approves otherwise.