



**CITY OF WATAUGA – PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	<b>Travel and Reimbursement</b>
<b>INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	<b>January 25, 2016</b>
<b>LAST REVISION DATE</b>	<b>Replaces <i>Section 10.1</i> of the Personnel, Administration and Financial Policies and Procedures Manual approved on February 24, 2014.</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	<b>4.03</b>

**OBJECTIVE** The City of Watauga will pay reasonable expenses, which are incurred in the course of authorized City travel. The City has two objectives when paying travel-related expenses. 1) To provide employees sufficient funds to execute business on behalf of the City and 2) to safeguard City funds by paying only reasonable and necessary expenses.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance to travelers, travel coordinators and approvers regarding the City’s travel procedures and to define their responsibility and accountability for expenses incurred during travel.

**SCOPE** This policy applies to all regular full-time, regular part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees of the City of Watauga. This policy also applies to elected officials, City Council Members, Board Members, and Committee Members (hereinafter “officials”) of the City of Watauga.

**POLICY**

The City of Watauga recognizes the benefits of employees and officials attendance and training at seminar and meetings. All travel paid by the City must be for job related or professional activities. It is the City’s policy to pay for, or reimburse, all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by an employee or official when traveling on City-related business in accordance with this policy.

**A. Request for Advance Funds**

Some employees are provided with a City credit card to pay for expenses associated with City travel. Where a credit card is not made available, an employee or official needing an advance of funds must, except under extenuating circumstances, complete and submit a written request for an advance of funds at least ten (10) business days before the advance is needed. A Travel Request Form is required with receipts documenting expenses. Any unused funds received must be returned to finance with within ten (10) days of returning from the business trip.

## **B. Request for Reimbursement**

When requesting reimbursement, a Travel Request Form and substantiating receipts must be submitted within ten (10) business days after completion of travel.

## **C. Approving Authority**

1. A Travel Request Form must be completed for all out of area travel. Brochures, registration forms, agendas and other descriptive data must accompany the travel request.
2. All travel and meeting documents, requests for advance of funds, and requests for reimbursements (with supporting receipts), must be approved as follows:
  - a. Department Heads shall be responsible for approving their employees' travel. The City Manager is the final approving authority for Department Heads' travel.
  - b. The City Secretary shall be responsible for approving travel for City officials.
3. All spouse and/or family member's travel expenses must be paid by the employee or official. Employees and officials must pay for these expenses personally, or provide the City with a check or cash at the time the expense is incurred.
4. Only the actual cost of reasonable and necessary business related expenses incurred by the employee or official on behalf of the City will be reimbursed. **See Section G. Expenses Not Covered or Reimbursed**

## **D. Transportation**

The City has the option of requiring that employee travel be made in a City-owned vehicle. The use of personal vehicles by employees is discouraged and should only be used when no other option is available. When a City vehicle is not furnished, the City will reimburse at the current allowable IRS reimbursement rate per mile (using the most direct route) or the cost of a round-trip coach airline ticket, whichever is appropriate, plus other stated costs (i.e., parking at airport and ground transportation at destination). A receipt(s) is required for reimbursement.

Reservations for rental cars should be made with a contracted company as determined by the Finance Department unless lower and more favorable rates are available and approved by Finance.

Out-of-state personal vehicle mileage reimbursement will not exceed the best available airfare amount and reasonable alternatives to include applicable ground transportation. Employees or officials will provide airfare costs as applicable to document allowable payment for out-of-state private vehicle use.

Employees or officials will be reimbursed for all vehicle operating expenses such as tolls, parking fees, etc., upon submittal of valid receipts. Traffic fines will not be reimbursed.

**See Vehicle Use Policy**

## **E. Lodging Reimbursement**

Employees or officials will be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging in a hotel/motel that is appropriate for the particular meeting or purpose of the trip. A receipt(s) is required for reimbursement. The room rate must be pre-approved by the employee's Department Head, or in the case of a Department Head, approved by the City Manager.

Overnight stays will only be authorized for travel to destinations in excess of fifty (50) miles from the City, unless otherwise approved in writing by the City Manager. Any overnight expenses will be paid by the employee or official in the case of travel made earlier or extended for more days than required for the conference, seminar, or meeting.

## **F. Meal Reimbursement**

When City business requires travel more than fifty (50) miles from the City, the actual meal expenses will be reimbursed for up to a maximum of \$60.00 per day. Individuals must also be away from the Watauga area before 6:30 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. to receive the respective breakfast or dinner portion of the per-diem. An individual may forgo the per diem and be reimbursed for actual expenses for meals as indicated on receipts. Reasonable tips are also reimbursable.

### **Meal per Diem Allotment**

1. Breakfast \$15.00
2. Lunch \$15.00
3. Dinner \$30.00

The City will not pay for alcoholic beverages. Subject to the above restrictions, Department Heads and other City employees who have a City-issued credit card should charge their meals when traveling to the extent possible. Within ten (10) business days of returning from travel, employees must provide receipts for all charges made to a City issued credit card, or the employee will be held personally liable for the charge(s).

Meals which are paid for in advance (i.e. as part of registration or ticketed separately as a conference event) may not be considered as part of the per diem reimbursement. No per diem shall be claimed for meals purchased by a person other than the City employee.

## **G. Expenses Not Covered or Reimbursed**

1. Expenses which are not covered or reimbursed, include, but are not limited to, the following: alcoholic beverages, club/health club cover charges, entertainment, internet charges/telephone calls (unless business related), laundry/dry cleaning charges, pay-per-view movies, personal items, snacks, theater tickets, and traffic, parking, or other citations.
2. Personal travel expenses in conjunction with City travel due to vacations or personal trips are not reimbursable or covered.

3. A member of a traveler's family may accompany individual while on travel status. However, the employee or official will pay all expenses incurred by the family member.

#### **G. Compliance**

Abuse of this policy, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Submitting false expense reports or false claims could be grounds for immediate dismissal.

#### **H. Special Conditions**

Special conditions and unusual circumstances may merit exceptions to the stated policy on travel. Each request for variances will be considered separately in light of existing needs. Exceptions will not be made without the prior consent of the City Manager or designee.