

CITY OF SULTAN COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 26, 2007

ITEM NO. Action A 2

SUBJECT: Resolution 07-07 - Travel and Training Policy

CONTACT PERSON: Laura Koenig, City Clerk

SUMMARY:

The issue before the Council for consideration is the adoption of a Travel and Training Policy.

The City has a Travel Policy and it was noted during the audit that credit cards were being used for prohibited purchased (specifically meals) under the adopted policy.

In accordance with RCW 42.24.090 City travel policies must be adopted by ordinance or resolution by the council.

The attached policy was adopted in 1997 and the staff has the following recommendations for updating the existing policy:

1. Adding "meals" to travel policy section 5(b)(1) and 5 (b)(2).
2. Providing definitions (i.e. – Travel Liaison)
3. Reviewing the insurance requirement for private vehicles.
4. Allowing the use of the credit card for gas purchases for those employees that do not have a city gas card.
5. Add tips for meals to restricted uses

ANALYSIS

The City's written policies and procedures are not being enforced and this has become a cause for concern by the State Auditor. The City has the authority to determine what travel expenses will be reimbursed and the method of payment that employees and city officials can use.

The issue with the State Auditor is that the practice and policy are not consistent. Their main concern was the payment for meals which is prohibited by the travel policy. If it is the policy of the Council to allow credit card use to pay for meals, then the policy needs to be amended to provide for that method of payment.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Council could continue to use the current out adopted policies. This will likely result in an audit finding.
2. The Council could adopt the recommended policies.
3. The Council could draft a new ordinance and policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the adoption of Resolution 07-07, approving the Travel and Training Policy.

The Finance Committee recommends adoption of Resolution 07-07 approving the Travel and Training Policy.

Attachments: Resolution 07-07 Travel and Training Policy (will be drafted)
 Travel and Training Policy
 Reimbursement Form

CITY OF SULTAN

RESOLUTION 07- 07

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SULTAN WASHINGTON
ESTABLISHING A TRAVEL AND TRAINING POLICIES**

WHEREAS, it is beneficial for the City of Sultan to have written and adopted City travel and training policies; now therefore,

BE IT REOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SULTAN WASHINGTON AS FOLLOWS:

The City Council hereby establishes and adopts the Travel and Training Policy which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by this reference.

Passed by the City Council this 26th day of April, 2007.

Benjamin Tolson, Mayor

Attest:

Laura J. Koenig, City Clerk

**CITY OF SULTAN
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

TITLE: FINANCIAL POLICY

SUBJECT: Travel and Training

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/10/97

ADOPTED DATE: 12/09/07

REVISED:

1.0 PURPOSE:

City Officials and employees may incur travel and/or training expenses while conducting official City business or enhancing professional skills and qualifications through attending schools, training programs, conferences or professional meetings.

The purpose of this policy is to establish fair and consistent application of and use of travel funds and vehicle usage and to provide guidelines for authorization and reimbursement of travel and training expenses.

2.0 DEPARTMENTS EFFECTED:

Mayor, Council, City Administrator, Department Heads and employees

3.0 REFERENCES:

Resolution 07-07 and RCW 42.24.090

4.0 TRAVEL POLICY:

A. Travel Liaison: The City shall appoint a Travel Liaison who shall be responsible for making travel, hotel and conference arrangements.

B. Training and Travel Plan

At budget preparation time, each Department Head shall submit a training and travel plan for the coming year. Department Heads will manage the travel training approved for their department's budget.

C. Training and Travel Categories and Priorities

Budget dollars will be allocated in the following priority order:

1. Official travel necessary to conduct city business.
2. Training legally required by state, federal or equipment use mandates.
3. Training essential to the performance of the employees work assignment
4. Training, seminars, workshops, association meetings or conferences which provide "direct identifiable benefit to the City".

3. Miscellaneous Provisions

- A. No out of state travel will be allowed without the written approval of the Mayor.
- B. Except in case of emergencies or circumstances beyond the person's control, any person who fails to attend or contact the Travel Liaison or the

Department Head to cancel any prearranged accommodations and registrations for any meeting, conference, workshop or seminar shall be responsible for reimbursement to the City.

5.0 TRAVEL PROCEDURES

The following are intended to provide procedures for all employees and officials of the City of Sultan for travel and reimbursement while on official business

A Travel and Training Request form must be submitted to the Department Head by the employee. The form will require the employee's signature affirming compliance with City policy and authorize payroll deductions for any inappropriate charges. All travel and training must receive prior approval from the Mayor, Department Head or City Administrator.

Approved travel or training requests must be submitted to the Travel Liaison to arrange for payment of registration fees, overnight accommodations and transportation.

A. Transportation

Travel will be done by the most cost effective method and mileage will be computed by the shortest direct route to a location.

1. City Vehicles: A city vehicle will be the preferred mode of transportation. Employees that do not have a city gas cards will be reimbursed for actual expenses or may use the city credit card.
2. Personal Vehicles: Use of a personal vehicle for travel on city business will be reimbursed at the current rate allowed by the IRS. ~~Employees using private vehicles for city business will be required to provide proof of insurance before use is allowed.~~ Reimbursement shall not exceed the costs which would have been incurred using an efficient and least costly means of transportation.

When two or more employees are traveling together, reimbursement for mileage will be payable only to the owner of the vehicle used.

3. Air Travel: All air travel shall be by the most economic rates. Airline tickets will be purchased by the city through the Travel Liaison, with payment made directly to the vendor by the purchase order process. If air travel is the most economic method of transportation, employees electing to travel by personal vehicle will be reimbursed at an amount equal to what airfare would have been. The "in-lieu" amount is considered full compensation for all costs while en-route to and from the destination, including transportation, meals and lodging. Travel time in excess of one day each way is considered vacation time and will be charged to the employee's vacation account. In order to have a clear understanding with regard to FLSA, employees will be required to acknowledge in writing that selecting this option was a voluntary personal choice.
4. Rental Vehicles: Rental vehicles will be allowable, but only under exceptional circumstances related to business necessity, not personal convenience. Use of rental vehicles will require prior approval of the Mayor.

B. Meal Expense:

Meal expense will be reimbursed for employees and city officials engaged in official city business or while on approved travel or training or at a work related function. The maximum per diem allowance for meals shall be in accordance with the current rate allowed by the IRS. Whenever possible, prior arrangements for billing meals to the hotel account will be made by the Travel Liaison.

1. Credit Cards: The use of city credit cards will be allowed for meals while attending conferences and training. The use of personal credit cards will require a receipt for reimbursement.
2. Restriction on Credit Card Use: The following restrictions shall apply to meal reimbursements:
 - a. No reimbursement for meals will be made if meals are included as a part of the schooling, conference, workshop or seminar.
 - b. No reimbursement shall be made for alcoholic beverages.
 - c. Employees attending half-day training will not be reimbursed for meals.
 - d. Routine meals with individuals, consultants, employees, service clubs or the way to local meetings will not be allowed.

C. Lodging

Expense will be allowed for lodging that is necessary and appropriate to the purpose of the trip.

1. Reservations: The Travel Liaison shall make lodging arrangement using the lowest rates available and requesting the government discount on all rooms. Payment shall be made by city credit card or by direct billing to the city. Use of the conference hotel is encouraged whenever possible.
3. Restrictions: The following restrictions shall apply to lodging:
 - a. Lodging expenses are generally not allowed within a fifty mile radius of the city limits for conferences, seminars, meetings or workshops with a duration of one day or less. With the approval of the Department Head, lodging will be allowed if it is more cost effective.
 - b. In the event the employee or city official takes his or her family members to a conference, the City will pay only the single room rate. Employees must reimburse the City for any amounts charged to the City for family members.
 - c. Employees choosing to travel to the conference site the day before the conference begins for their convenience will not be reimbursed for travel expense or considered to be on paid time.
 - d. The city will not reimburse the extra travel costs incurred by an individual on authorized travel who extends the trip for personal vacation or other personal reasons.

D. Registration Fees:

The cost of the registration should be included on the Request for Travel/Training form. After authorization from the Department Head is received, a completed registration form should be submitted to the Travel Liaison to make arrangements for payment or direct billing to the City.

E. Miscellaneous Expenses:

The following reasonable travel expenses shall be reimbursed if they are essential to the travel:

- a. Garage and parking fees, receipt required.
- b. Taxi expense, receipt required.
- c. Postage, fax and telephone charges for city business.
- d. Other business related expenses that is documented and approved by the Department Head.

Non-reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to:

- a. Personable entertainment.
- b. Personal phone calls.
- c. Laundry services
- d. Traffic and parking tickets
- e. Theft, loss or damage to personal effects.
- f. Trip insurance policies.
- g. Tips for meals

F. Travel Expense Vouchers:

All employees must use the "Travel Expense Voucher" form to account for travel expenses, including expenses for reimbursement. This form must be submitted to the Finance Department no later than the 10th day following the close of the authorized travel period for which expenses have been incurred.

**CITY OF SULTAN
TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FORM**

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ **TITLE** _____

DEPARTMENT: _____

PURPOSE OF TRIP:

Official or Mandated City Business: _____
Essential Training: _____
Directed Travel: _____

TITLE OF COURSE/SEMINAR: _____ **Credits/CEU's** _____

CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP: _____

Describe the scope and content of the training program and how will this training be utilized in your present position:

DATES OF REQUESTED TRAVEL:

DEPARTURE: _____ **RETURN DATE:** _____

LOCATION (City and Hotel): _____

Mode of Transportation: City Vehicle _____ Private Vehicle: _____
Air Travel: _____ Other: _____

PROJECTED COSTS: Registration _____
Meals _____
Lodging _____
Transportation _____
Miscellaneous _____
TOTAL \$ _____

Employee's signature affirms full understanding and compliance with city travel policies and procedures as adopted or amended by the City Council. Employee acknowledges that they must submit travel vouchers for timely reimbursement in accordance with RCW 42.24.150. Employee further acknowledges payroll deduction liability for inappropriate travel charges.

SIGNATURES: Employee _____

ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED: REGISTRATION FORM
HOTEL INFORMATION SHEET

APPROVED: YES: _____ NO: _____

DEPARTMENT HEAD SIGNATURE: _____

