



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Toni J. Taber, CMC
City Clerk

SUBJECT: COUNCIL TRAVEL POLICY:
PER DIEM MEAL REIMBURSEMENT

DATE: November 29, 2018

COUNCIL DISTRICT: NA

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction regarding adopting a resolution approving a revised City Council Policy No. 9-5, "Travel by Elected and Appointed City Officials".

OUTCOME

Amending the current Council Travel Policy will align meal reimbursements with the Employee Travel Policy, which provides for per diem reimbursements for meals during travel.

BACKGROUND

The Council Travel Policy allows meals during travel to be purchased using a City Procurement Card, but is inconsistent with the City Procurement Card Policy and Employee Travel Policy which provide that personal meals may not be purchased on a City Procurement Card, and must be reimbursed on a per diem basis.

Council Travel Policy 9-5 provides, in relevant part:

"7. City Procurement Card: When using a City Procurement Card to pay for travel-related expenditures, the Mayor, Councilmembers, Mayor/Council Staff, and Council Appointees must follow City Policy Manual Section 5.1.2 ("City Procurement Cards").

...

G. Procedures for Obtaining Reimbursement and Documenting Expenses

...Reimbursement procedure is subject to current City policy. Receipts for the following expenses must be included:

...

4. Meals, if not already provided as part of event registration, excluding alcoholic beverages."

Employee Travel Policy, City Administrative Policy Manual Section 1.8.2, provides in relevant part:

“5.5.4 Meals -- All meal and incidental expenses are reimbursed on a per diem basis. Per diem meal expenses are determined by the applicable CONUS rates. Traveler must comply with the following restrictions for meal and incidental reimbursement:

*...
5.5.4.4 Personal meals are not to be purchased on a City Procurement card.”*

City Procurement Card Policy, City Administrative Policy Manual Section 5.1.2, provides in relevant part:

“The Procurement Card may be used for travel related expenses in accordance with approved travel pursuant to the Employee Travel Policy, CPM Section 1.8.2.”

ANALYSIS

Following the recent Sister City Official Delegation Travel to Ireland, it came to Finance staff's attention that the Council Travel Policy is not in alignment with the City Procurement Card Policy and the Employee Travel Policy. The Council Travel Policy allows personal meals on travel to be purchased using the City Procurement card as long as receipts for actual expenses are kept. The Employee Travel Policy and City Procurement Card Policy do not allow the City Procurement Card to be used for personal meals on travel, but require reimbursement on a per diem basis.

The Administration changed the Employee Travel Policy from actual receipts and expenses to per diem several years ago in order to put limits on expenses and to make the travel reimbursement process much more efficient and in line with the standard practice for travel expense reimbursement. However, the Council Travel Policy was inadvertently excluded from these updates.

The proposed amendments are administrative cleanups to no longer allow use of the City Procurement Card for personal meals during travel for the Mayor, Councilmembers, Mayor/Council Staff, and Council Appointees, but to provide reimbursement on a per diem basis for personal meals during travel. This would affect those traveling by requiring them to pay for their meals out of pocket and get reimbursed up to the per diem, but not exceeding it. The per diem rates are set by the Federal Government and tailored to specific locations throughout the world.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Council Travel Policy is subject to further review and action by the Council.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the Rules and Open Government Committee Agenda website for the December 5, 2018 ROGC Meeting.

COORDINATION

The Office of the City Clerk has consulted with the City Manager's Office, Finance Department, and the City Attorney's Office in the preparation of this report.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

No City commission action is applicable on this item.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure & Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

/s/
TONI J. TABER
City Clerk

For questions, please contact Toni J. Taber, City Clerk, at (408) 535-1270.