

H. Policy 1.03 Reimbursement of Travel and Expenses for Elected and Appointed Officials

Recommendation: Approve the amendments made to City Council Policy 1.03 Reimbursement of Travel and Expenses for Elected and Appointed Officials.



Camarillo City Council

AGENDA REPORT

Date: April 24, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: Greg Ramirez, City Manager

Submitted by: Carmen Nichols, Assistant City Manager

Subject: Policy 1.03 Reimbursement of Travel and Expenses for Elected and Appointed Officials

BACKGROUND

City Council Policy 1.03 outlines the reimbursement of expenses incurred by elected and appointed officials in the performance of City business. The policy identifies eligible activities, authorized expenses, and reporting requirements.

On July 27, 2023, City staff presented this item to the Policy Committee. The committee requested that staff survey neighboring cities and provide sample policies to help guide their recommendations.

On February 1, 2024, staff presented the findings of the research. The committee requested that staff provide draft redline modifications to the existing policy.

On April 3, 2024, staff presented the draft redlines to the committee, who reviewed all changes thoroughly and provided feedback, adding several modifications to the language. The committee requested that the recommendations be forwarded to the City Council for approval.

DISCUSSION

To provide greater clarity on eligible activities and authorized expenses, staff drafted the following amendments to Policy 1.03 based on the committee's feedback:

1. Section (A)(4): include language regarding attendance as an official city representative to various functions, and eligible reimbursement for attendance at these events.
2. Section (A)(6): this section provides guidance on how many events councilmembers may attend per fiscal year.

3. Section (C): provides further clarification to the items that are not eligible for reimbursement, including political contributions, alcohol, the personal portion of any trip, or any expenses disallowed for reimbursement by law.
4. Section (F): outlines the potential outcomes to any violation of this policy or other applicable laws. The section references California Government Code Section 8314, which states that any person who intentionally or negligently violates this section is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each day on which a violation occurs, plus three times the value of the unlawful use of public resources.

The amendments made were thoroughly reviewed by the Policy Committee throughout three different committee meetings. Staff reviewed policies from three different cities (City of Westlake, City of Thousand Oaks, and City of Agoura Hills) to obtain an understanding of the industry standards around travel reimbursement for elected officials.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no budget impact as a result of this action.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the amendments made to City Council Policy 1.03 Reimbursement of Travel and Expenses for Elected and Appointed Officials.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Policy 1.03 Reimbursement of Travel and Expenses for Elected and Appointed Officials (Draft)

REFERENCE MATERIALS – AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT CITY HALL

None



City of Camarillo

CITY COUNCIL POLICY

Section: City Council

Date Adopted: March 22, 1989
Last Amended: ~~July 28, 2010~~

April 24, 2024

Subject: **Reimbursement of Travel and Expenses
for Elected and Appointed Officials**

Number: 1.03

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PURPOSE

To establish a policy for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by elected and appointed officials in the performance of City business. This Policy will be applicable to members of the Camarillo City Council, commissioners of the Camarillo Community Development Commission, directors of the Camarillo Sanitary District, directors of the Camarillo Library Board, the Successor Agency, and commissioners of the Camarillo Planning Commission, and appointed officials (hereafter "officials").

POLICY

It is the policy of the City to reimburse actual and necessary expenses incurred by officials in the performance of City business. Camarillo Planning Commissioners, however, are restricted to reimbursements related to pre-authorized conferences only.

A. Activities Eligible for Expense Reimbursement

Expenses incurred in connection with the following types of activities are eligible for reimbursement:

1. Attendance and participation at meetings of the official's legislative body or at meetings of an advisory body of the legislative body.
2. Attendance and participation at meetings of any body or organization to which the official has been appointed by the official's governing or legislative body or at which the official serves as a designated representative of the City.
3. Communicating with constituents on matters within the jurisdiction of the official's legislative body.
4. Attending community events as a representative of the City. Councilmembers designated to provide official City representation at events such as retirement and separation functions, awards, special ceremonies and similar activities may incur necessary meals and food-related expenses. In such cases, the

individual is acting in their official capacity and the expense of the Councilmember is incurred for the benefit of the City and is reimbursable at full cost, if the City has not already purchased admission for the Councilmember.

4.5. Councilmembers attending non-political fund-raising events from 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations related to the City of Camarillo: the Mayor shall be eligible for reimbursement for attendance at an unlimited number of such events (or, at the Mayor's request, the Vice Mayor or another Councilmember may attend such event); and Councilmembers shall be eligible for attendance at two such events per fiscal year. Reimbursement will only be made for the initial entrance ticket to the event.

5.6. Communicating with representatives of local, regional, state and national government on City matters, policy positions, or legislation that may affect the City.

6.7. Participating in local, regional, state and national organizations and entities whose activities affect the City's interests.

7.8. Attending seminars designed to improve officials' skill and information levels.

Activities not authorized above require prior approval by the City Council or applicable governing legislative body.

B. Expenses Authorized for Reimbursement

1. Transportation. Transportation expenses incurred in connection with activities authorized under Section A of this Policy are subject to the following requirements:

- a. Airlines and Other Commercial Carriers: Travel is generally limited to the most economical and reasonable coach class fare.
- b. Automobile (Personal Vehicle): Travel outside the County of Ventura using personal vehicles will be reimbursed at the IRS established mileage rate in effect at the time.
- c. Car Rental: Rental vehicles may be used if more economical and reasonable than other forms of transportation. Rental is generally limited to the most economical and reasonable mid-sized vehicle.
- d. Taxis/Shuttles: Taxi or shuttle fares, when reasonable and necessary, will be reimbursed, including a 15% gratuity per fare.

2. Lodging. Lodging expenses incurred in connection with activities authorized under Section A of this Policy when travel requires an overnight stay are subject to the following requirements:

- a. Lodging rates should be the most economical and reasonable available.

- b. Lodging expenses will be reimbursed at the single occupancy rate.
 - c. If lodging is in connection with a conference, lodging expenses must not exceed the group rate if such rates are available at the time of booking.
 - d. Officials must consider government rates for lodging.
3. Meals. Meal expenses incurred in connection with activities authorized under Section A of this Policy are subject to the following requirements:
- a. Meal expenses will be reimbursed at the applicable individual or cumulative IRS meal rates in effect at the time.
 - b. In accordance with 85 Op. Cal. Att'y. Gen. 210 (2002), meal expenses for third parties such as constituents, legislators and private business owners shall not be reimbursed.
4. Miscellaneous. Miscellaneous business expenses, as defined by the IRS, that are actual and necessary in connection with activities authorized under Section A of this Policy, may be reimbursed up to an amount not to exceed \$300 per month.

Expenses not authorized above require approval by the City Manager.

C. Unauthorized Expenses

- 1. The personal portion of any trip.
- 2. Political or charitable contributions.
- 3. Entertainment expenses, including theater, movies (either in-room or at the theater), sporting events (including gym, massage and/or golf related expenses), spa treatments, etc.
- 4. Family expenses, including those of a partner when accompanying a Councilmember or appointed official on official business, as well as child or pet-related expenses.
- 5. Non-mileage personal automobile expenses including repairs, traffic citations, or insurance.
- 6. Personal losses incurred while on City business.
- 7. Alcoholic beverages.
- 8. Any expenses disallowed for reimbursement by law.

Any questions regarding the propriety of a particular type of expense should be

discussed with and resolved by the City Manager before the expense is incurred.

DC. Vehicle Allowance

Under Government Code section 1223, commencing July 1, 2010, members of the City Council will receive a monthly vehicle allowance of \$200, in addition to reimbursement authorized by section B.1.b. of this policy.

ED. Reporting

1. Single Activities of \$250 or more. Any single activity eligible for reimbursement under Section A of this Policy, equal to or exceeding \$250 must be submitted on a City travel authorization form and be pre-approved by the City Manager.

Within 15 business days of completion of the activity, a reconciled travel authorization form with all receipts and documentation must be submitted.

Failure to submit a reconciliation within the specified time shall cause the official to be ineligible for advances or pre-payment of expenses for a period of six months.

2. General Reimbursable Expenses. An authorized monthly expense report form with required documentation and receipts should be submitted within 90 days after the end of the month in which the expense was incurred, but not later than 60 days after the end of the fiscal year.

Failure to submit a monthly expense report by the 60th day after the end of the fiscal year may cause the official to be ineligible for reimbursement.

3. Reports to City Council, Board or Commission. At the next regular City Council or applicable Board or Commission meeting, each official must briefly report on meetings subject to the Brown Act that were attended at City expense. If multiple officials attended such a meeting, a joint report may be made.

4. Expense Reports As Public Records. All expense reports of officials and City reimbursement expenditures are public records subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act and other applicable laws. The City will retain such records in accordance with the City's applicable records retention policies.

F. Violation Of This Policy

Use of public resources or falsifying expense reports in violation of this policy may result in any or all of the following.

1. Loss of reimbursement privileges.

2. A demand for restitution to City.

3. City's reporting the expenses as income to the elected official to the state and federal tax authorities.
4. Imposition of civil penalties for misuse of public resources pursuant to Government Code Section 8314.
5. Prosecution for misuse of public resources.