

CITY OF CHIPLEY



Travel Procedures and Expense Reimbursement Policy

**Adopted by
Resolution No. 26-28**

Effective: May 12, 2026

Travel Procedures and Expense Reimbursement Procedures

1. **Purpose:** This policy guide provides written guidelines for office travel and expense reimbursement for employees, elected officials and citizen board members of the City of Chipley, Florida.
2. **Authority:** Florida Statutes, City Code, and City Personnel Manual.
3. **Definitions:** For the purpose of this policy, the following words shall have the meanings indicated:
 - a. **Employee** – An individual, whether commissioned or not, other than an officer or authorized person as defined herein, who is filling an authorized manning classification position.
 - b. **Officer or public officer** – An individual who in the performance of his or her official duties is vested by law, by sovereign powers of government and who is elected by the people.
 - c. **Authorized person** – A person other than a public officer or employee as defined herein whether elected or commissioned or not, who is authorized by the City of Chipley to incur travel expenses in the performance of official duties; a person who is called upon by an agency to contribute time and services as consultant or adviser; and a person who is candidate for an executive or professional position.
 - d. **Traveler** – A public officer, employee or authorized person of the City of Chipley who is performing authorized travel.
 - e. **Travel Day** – A period of 24 hours consisting of four quarters of 6 hours each beginning at midnight.
 - f. **Travel Expense** – Necessary expenses incurred while traveling. The usual ordinary and incidental expenditures necessarily incurred by a traveler.
 - g. **Travel Period** – The period of time between the time of departure and the time of return from travel.
 - h. **Class A Travel** – Continuous travel of 24 hours or more away from official headquarters.
 - i. **Class B Travel** – Continuous travel of less than 24 hours which involves overnight absence from official headquarters.
 - j. **Class C Travel** – Travel for short or day trips where the traveler is not away from his or her official headquarters overnight.

k. **Voucher for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses (Form CHTR01)** - A voucher form which must be completed and submitted to the Finance Office to obtain reimbursement for any expenses incurred during official travel. The traveler should use the travel voucher form to record all travel permitted and to account for all travel expenses.

l. **Authorization to Incur Travel and Travel Advance Request (Form CHTR02)**
- This form must be completed before "traveling" occurs. For employees and authorized individuals, this form must be approved by their supervisor and/or the city administrator and reviewed by the Finance Director. City council members and the city administrator will prepare this form and submit it to the mayor for approval. This form can be used to request an advance for 80% of projected, reimbursable travel expenditures not to include prepayments to hotels/motels, registration fees, etc. Exceptions may be made to the 80% restriction if approved by the City Administrator.

4. **General:** City employees, elected officials and authorized individuals shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred while performing travel in the conduct of official city business. Expenses are reimbursed based on information submitted on a Voucher for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses (CHTR01) form. The Voucher for Reimbursement form should be submitted to the Finance Office within ten (10) working days after the end of travel. The following general information applies:

- a. Employees traveling on official business for the city are expected to use reasonably priced lodging accommodations. Meals, tips, and lodging must be reasonable in relation to the area visited. Reimbursement will be limited to a reasonable allowance.
- b. Plan in advance to obtain registration discount rates, travel method and route. When possible, minimize the number of staff who will travel to enhance cost control.
- c. All travel, regardless of mode, shall be by the most direct, practicable route. A person who travels by an indirect route for personal convenience shall bear extra costs incurred.

5. **Travel Authorization:** All employee travel at the city's expense shall be **pre-approved** by the city administrator. The mayor approves travel for elected officials and the city administrator.

6. **General Guidelines:** The following general travel conditions are addressed by this policy: Travel must be:

- a. To attend training directly related to the individual job classification.

- b. Required to maintain professional certification or license.
- c. To attend board or committee meetings, seminars or workshops. (Meetings should be directly related and enhance the function of the department requesting attendance).
- d. Other travel for official city business as approved by the mayor or city administrator.

7. Pre-Travel and Reimbursement Arrangements:

- a. Although travel costs have been projected in the city budget, advance authorization is required from the city administrator before making any commitment whereby travel expenses will occur. Each official, employee, or authorized individual shall first prepare an "**Authorization to Incur Travel Expenses and Travel Advance Request (Form CHTR02)**" form for individual expenses and submit to the city administrator or mayor for approval. Travel arrangements must be made no later than five (5) working days prior to projected departure to allow the accounting office adequate time for processing and funds obligation.
- b. When the "**Authorization to Incur Travel Expenses and Travel Advance Request**" form has been approved and funds certified as available, the official or employee is authorized to travel during the period specified, to incur expense, and to be reimbursed. If the employee requires a travel advance, the traveler should complete the appropriate section of the form. Also, the form can be used to request payment in advance for room deposits, registration or registration fees, tuition fees, and tickets on common carriers. Vendor checks will be processed to the hotel, organization, airlines, etc. when possible. Amounts paid by invoice (directly to the vendor) shall be deducted from the amount authorized for travel before applying for a travel advance. An approved advance will be made to the traveler for up to 80% of approved expenditures. Exceptions may be made to the 80% restriction if approved by the City Administrator. Advance travel payments may not be provided more than five (5) days prior to the effective date of travel, but vendor payments will be processed upon receipt.
- c. The "**Voucher for Reimbursement**" form should be used to record all travel information. Destination, date, purpose of travel, and hours of departure, arrival at destination and return should be recorded as they occur. Irregularities or unusual lapses in travel times must be fully explained. Additionally, the voucher should be utilized to account for all expenses. A section entitled "Other Expenses" is included on the form for this purpose. Receipts for all expenses, where feasible or possible to obtain receipts, shall be attached to the completed "**Voucher for Reimbursement**" form. Receipts for hotels (must include detailed charges), public transportation, convention registration, car

rental, tolls, taxi fare, valet parking and similar items must be attached. All items for which a receipt cannot or was not obtained must be explained in writing. Tips paid to taxi drivers must not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the taxi fare. Tips paid for mandatory valet parking must not exceed \$1 per incident. Portage paid shall not exceed \$1 per bag not to exceed \$5 per incident. All items of a miscellaneous nature must be itemized. The completed "**Voucher for Reimbursement**" form must be submitted to the Finance Office for payment within ten (10) working days following completion of travel. If costs incurred exceed the amount of expense authorized and the employee requests reimbursement for the additional amount, a complete explanation and justification must be provided to the city administrator for his/her approval. All unused funds provided advance to the traveler shall be repaid immediately upon return to work.

- d. The Finance Director shall review the expenses to make certain that all items of expense are properly charged and are not otherwise questionable. If additional information is needed for approval, it shall be requested in writing from the traveler. (The Finance Director must initial the "Voucher for Reimbursement" forms before the traveler is reimbursed.)

8. **Expense Reimbursement Guidelines:** If traveling on class A or class B travel, the traveler may elect the following: (1) seventy-five (\$75) per day per diem; or (2) actual expenses for lodging and miscellaneous expenses plus the meal allowance rates listed under 8. c. The basis upon which reimbursement of all expenses will be approved is as follows:

a. Transportation

(1) Privately-Owned Vehicles. Travelers are expected to use the mode of travel which is most advantageous to the city. The use of a privately owned vehicle for official travel in lieu of publicly-owned vehicles or common carriers may be authorized by the department head. Whenever travel is by a privately-owned vehicle, the traveler shall be entitled to a mileage allowance at a fixed rate not to exceed the IRS Rate per mile or the carrier rate for such travel, whichever is lower. Where two or more authorized persons travel in one private vehicle, only the person supplying the vehicle shall receive transportation reimbursement at the approved rate. Employees deviating from the most direct route shall bear the extra costs incurred.

(2) City Vehicles. All fuel or other auto-related expense receipts must be submitted for reimbursement.

(3) Car Rentals. Prior approval must be received from the city administrator if the traveler must rent a car. Evidence must be presented to show the car rental as the most advantageous means of travel.

(4) Airline Travel. Airline reservations may be acquired when travel requiring such reservations has been approved in advance by the appropriate authority. The traveler may purchase the tickets and request reimbursement.

b . Lodging

(1) Expenses may vary dependent upon the area traveled, however, all expenditures must be reasonable. Excessive charges for lodging must be fully explained in a written form by the traveler. The city will pay the single occupancy rate.

(2). When traveling in the State of Florida, lodging payment shall be made payable to the hotel, motel, etc., to ensure exemption of sales tax. When payment of the hotel lodging is paid in advance, the City will include the Tax Exempt Number on the check stub. If the hotel does not honor the tax exempt number, a statement shall be entered on the "**Voucher for Reimbursement**" form that the information was presented but denied by the hotel.

c. Meals and Tips

(1) Reimbursement for meals and tips is based on the following per diem amounts:

Breakfast: \$15.00 which includes tip and tax
Lunch: \$20.00 which includes tip and tax
Dinner: \$25.00 which includes tip and tax
A maximum of \$60.00 per day.

(0) Same-day travel by elected officials or employees allows reimbursement for reasonable meal expenses. In cases where the traveler did not find it necessary to remain out of town over night, but was unable to return by 8:00 p.m. reimbursement will be allowed for the evening meal. (Travel must have started before 6:00 p.m.) Similarly, when the traveler finds it necessary to leave home before 6:00 a.m. and travel extends beyond 8:00 a.m., the employee will be reimbursed for breakfast. If travel begins before 12:00 noon and extends beyond 2:00 p.m., the traveler will be entitled to lunch. Employees engaged in a constant daily travel routine are not reimbursed for meals. (Travel must be away from the

employee's headquarters and not within the vicinity of the employee's headquarters.)

(3) Meals provided as a part of a registration or other means shall be reported on the travel voucher as "meals furnished."

(4) If the employee travels to a conference, etc. he/she must provide a copy of the agenda/schedule.

d. Other Expenses

(1) Registration fees for functions related to City business may be reimbursed when an employee is expected to attend due to the nature of the position. The traveler will submit a copy of the workshop, conference, etc. schedule with the "**Voucher for Reimbursement**".

(2) Telephone calls made on official business and paid for by the traveler may be claimed on the travel voucher. The traveler must explain toll calls shown on the hotel bill including the location, parties, and purpose. If out-of-town travel extends to three (3) or more days, one three (3) minute personal call home is allowable for reimbursement. No other personal calls are reimbursable.

(3) Entertainment on behalf of the city must clearly meet a public purpose. Entertainment is subject to planning and preparation by the traveler and approval by appropriate individuals. It is a specific policy of the city to require approval by the city council of the nature, purpose, and anticipated cost of entertainment before it is undertaken with public funds. When prior approval is obtained, it is specifically required that the nature of the entertainment, those present, and a brief summary of the business discussed be provided for inclusion in the city's financial records. The following are exceptions/classifications to this policy:

(a) When the city agrees to reimburse a job applicant for expenses to come to an interview (airfare, motel and meals), the meal allowances applied will be consistent with the existing policy stated herein.

(b) When the city acknowledges that attendance and participation in professional association meetings constitutes a public purpose in relation to the training and education of its professionals, the city will reimburse the cost of meals and attendance to such meetings only if it is established that the meeting has a professional and not social purpose, and the fee for the meal is at a standard rate per attendee.

(c) In recognition of the members of the city council, mayor and city administrator's entertainment commitments while traveling, the city will reimburse reasonable costs. These expenses should not include alcoholic

beverages . Upon submitting receipts for entertainment, justification should be submitted in writing to the Finance Director. Judgment should be used in determining the public purpose and city benefit.