

# CITY OF GUSTAVUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Policy and Procedure for Travel and Attendance at Conference and Training Activities

### **POLICY:**

The City of Gustavus encourages City employees' attendance at professional conferences, conventions, and training which will improve and/or enhance their abilities in their work and enable them to obtain innovative techniques to improve existing and future services, as allowed by the budget.

This includes training required by state and federal grants, professional license requirements, training to pursue state and federal grants, professional personnel development, to further the City's economic development efforts, for on-going staff and council member training and to attend conferences. The city will cover costs for travel related to city business as outlined in the following procedure. If personal travel is associated with city business, then the employee must work with their supervisor to determine when in their itinerary city business is being conducted.

### **PROCEDURE:**

Employees requesting approval for travel and attendance at activities will need to complete a **Travel Authorization Form** to submit to his/her Department Head which shall then be reviewed by the City Administrator and/or Mayor for approval. Once approval is obtained, proceed with the following steps:

1. Submit a Purchase Order (PO) Request for each reservation to the treasurer.
2. The treasurer will advise when Alaska Airlines miles should be used.
3. Once the PO is approved, reservations may be made.
4. Flights - The treasurer or clerk will handle all flight bookings.
  - \* For steps 6-8: *If you have a city credit card make the remaining reservations and send copies of receipts to the city clerk*
  - \* *If you do not have a city credit card, coordinate arrangements with the clerk or treasurer*
5. Hotel - make hotel reservations
6. Ferry – make the reservation
7. Rental Vehicles – Select the best available price to meet the need
8. Send all purchase receipts to the treasurer
9. If booking on someone else's behalf, send all travel confirmation information to the traveler.
10. Meal per diem checks will be issued by the Treasurer prior to departure
11. Upon return, complete the travel expense report, include any travel claims that were not prepaid, and turn it into the city treasurer.
12. Submit a report to your supervisor or include in quarterly report, as applicable
  - If, during your trip, you experience any delays or alterations, contact your department head for guidance on how to handle changing flights, hotel accommodation, etc.*

In the event that more requests for funds are made than we can comfortably approve at one time travel/training funds will be allocated according to the following:

- Mandatory training necessary for an employee to continue in their current position due to changes in certification requirements, processes or procedures
- Training in safe work practices or emergency response
- Training to improve services provided by the City
- Training to improve performance in an employee's current position
- Training to prepare employees for other positions

Mandatory training will be given preference over voluntary training:

Mandatory: you are required to travel or attend a training, either due to certification needs or having been directed by the City Administrator or City Council.

Voluntary: training that will benefit or enhance the employee's performance or department, but is not required

#### **A. Registration Fees**

The City will pay all registration costs, including meal costs that are incorporated into the total. The City, however, will not pay for meal expenses for a one-day training or conference where out of town travel is not necessary for attendance.

#### **B. Lodging**

Hotel accommodations may be made by the Clerk, Treasurer or the employee. If the conference/training is associated with hotel discounts, reservations at these hotels shall be sought first. When necessary, payment of lodging on a City credit card may be authorized, but valid documentation must be submitted with the travel expense report upon completion of travel.

For travelers without a city credit card, request and return the hotel's credit card authorization form. Contact the hotel to have the form sent to the treasurer or clerk. Ensure it is on file several days before travel.

Employees should demonstrate appropriate effort to secure reasonably priced accommodation. The employee must cover the expense of any extra hotel nights needed to accommodate personal travel that is associated with travel for city business.

#### **C. Meal/Per Diem Allowance**

The meal per diem allowance is paid in advance in lieu of reimbursement of actual expenses. There are two meal allowance rates, one for Alaska and the CONUS (Federal) rate for travel outside of Alaska. The allowance is prorated based on the time periods in travel status. Traveler must be in travel status for at least one hour of the period for a specific meal. Any meal expenses beyond the amount allocated by the per diem are the responsibility of the traveler. Per diem does not include meals provided by conference host.

#### ALASKA RATE:

- Breakfast (Midnight to 10 AM) \$30
- Lunch (10 AM to 3 PM) \$34
- Dinner (3 PM to Midnight) \$50
- Total Daily Amount \$114

The CONUS rate can be found here: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

#### **D. Transportation**

All travel arrangements (airfare, hotel, registration) must be purchased by the City and made by the Clerk or Treasurer. Alaska Airlines flights are booked through the City's EasyBiz account. All air travel will be booked for standard coach class seating. No employee will be required to fly on a red-eye flight. Should the employee choose to be seated in business/first class, the difference in price will be paid by the employee. Travel must be by the most direct and efficient means. An employee may request travel by an indirect route for his/her own convenience or request a deviation of travel (choice of a route which includes personal time off during the trip or an indirect route). If there is a price increase due to the deviation, the employee must pay the difference. Travelers may use their personal upgrades if there is no extra cost to the City. Personal excess baggage fees will not be paid by the City.

#### **E. Mileage Reimbursement**

An employee may use a privately owned vehicle and may request reimbursement at the established rate and procedure per City of Gustavus policy.

#### **F. Ground Transportation**

Vehicle rentals are to be requested within the travel authorization form. Should it become necessary to rent a vehicle when it was not previously approved on the travel authorization, it is to be included on the travel expense report after trip completion and approved at that point. City insurance coverage applies only to travel on official business. Hotel courtesy shuttles shall be used whenever possible. Taxis, Uber, Lyft and Turo services may be used when necessary.

#### **G. Other Expenses**

Other allowable expenses include business telephone calls, WiFi, parking, and other expenses necessary to conduct City business. The City does not reimburse for traffic violations, parking fines, lost airline tickets, laundry service, or similar expenses.

#### **I. Travel Claims and Required Documents**

Any travel claims that were not prepaid must be submitted to the Treasurer for approval prior to reimbursement. Travel claims must be submitted within one week following the completion of travel. Copies of the following documents must be attached to the City of Gustavus Travel Expense Report:

- Tickets
- Receipts for other expenses
- Hotel receipts

Attachment if any

- Transportation receipts
- Lodging Receipts
- Copy of approved Travel Authorization Form
- Completed Travel Expense Report

**J. Wages Paid During Travel**

Travel shall be scheduled at the mutual convenience of the City and the employee, reasonably based on the circumstances of travel and the schedule of the employee. The city recognizes that travel may disrupt regular work schedules. When possible, the employee’s work schedule should be adjusted to accommodate the additional time worked without creating overtime liability.

Compensable time:

- a. When participating in training activities, hours worked will coincide with the scheduled hours for the training course. Hours worked may not be equal to the hours an employee would have worked had the employee been at their regular place of work, depending on the schedule of the training.
- b. Time spent traveling to a training or conference are considered hours worked based on scheduled flight times and a reasonable time for transit to and from airports, up to a maximum of 8 hours per trip. Travel between your home and point of departure is not compensable time.
- c. Time during which travel is delayed by weather or other disruptions *may* be considered hours worked, if the employee is actively engaged in work related travel or city business; however, in no instance will hours worked exceed a total of 8 hours of travel time per day because of travel delays.
- d. Overtime pay will be applied when 40 hours of training are exceeded in a work week.
- e. Mandatory training will be fully compensated.
- f. Regular meal periods are not included in compensable time.

The city recognizes that in special circumstances travel arrangements may need to deviate from the procedures outlined here. If necessary, and determined to be in the city’s best interest, deviations may be approved by the employee’s supervisor or the mayor.

If an employee plans to take personal leave immediately following a city-related trip, personal leave begins at the end of the scheduled conference.

City Council travel should adhere to these procedures described above and will be arranged by the City Clerk or Treasurer.

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Sally A. McLaughlin, Mayor

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Date