

Town Employee Conference and Training Policy

Edited: ELK March 24, 2026

The Town of Haymarket is committed to providing our employees and citizens serving on appointed/elected committees the opportunity to seek further training which is beneficial to the Town. In addition, the elected officials, appointed citizens and staff have to represent the Town at functions, on an annual basis. It is the intention of the Town to adequately compensate and reimburse the employees during this travel period based on the following policies.

The Town of Haymarket is committed to investing in the continued education of the Town Staff. It shall be noted that while continued education is desired, Town funding and resources may not support all instances and opportunities for training. The Town Manager shall take into account the following factors when approving travel and training; available funding, Town Hall staffing requirements, scheduled Town Meetings, the employee's current workload and deliverables. Other factors may apply to the consideration and will be discussed with the employee in the event that the training is not approved.

It shall also be noted that Conference and Training Opportunities are not guaranteed for employees. The employees' job duties, workload, deliverables, accountability and professional conduct will be taken into consideration during the approval process.

1) TRAVEL AND TRAINING APPROVAL PROCESS

a) The employee shall complete a Travel and Training Request Form (attached) prior to attending the program. This form should be submitted to the **Town Manager or Chief of Police** for approval as soon as the conference/training opportunity is announced. In no case should the form be submitted later than 10 days before the departure date. In the occurrence that the Town Manager or Chief of Police are unable to provide the review and approval of requested training, the employee may submit the request to the Mayor.

b) All conferences, seminars, courses, meetings, etc. must be directly related to the performance of the employee's assigned duties. When requesting approval of the training or conference, the employee must provide a written statement on the applicability of the training, purpose of the conference and all relative details outlining the linkages to the employee's job requirements and knowledge.

c) The employee shall submit an estimate travel and training cost with the approval request. The estimate shall include the conference or training fees, estimated mileage reimbursement or other travel arrangements, the hotel arrangements as applicable and any other foreseen costs. The requested funding for the expenditure must be approved in the adopted budget prior to attending the program. Failure to obtain prior approval when traveling could result in the employee not being reimbursed for travel expenses. The Town Manager may deny travel and

Commented [EK1]: Need to create the form – form shall include a written section explaining the conference/training being attended and the value for the employee/Town – example, training to fulfill credit hours for certification vs. annual conferences

training expenses even if they are applicable to the employee's position based on the lack of available funding.

d) All hotel reservations, conference registrations and other items should be paid in advance by the Town following approval from the Town Manager or Chief of Police This payment will be made by check or credit card and will be completed prior to your arrival when possible. However, if needed, the employee can check out a Town credit card to cover any expenses through the Town Treasurer. The employee has the option of covering such expenses and obtaining reimbursement once they return from approved Town travel. For reimbursement, all receipts are required and subject to approval. *[Edited for clarity; referenced Purchasing Card Policy implicitly]*

2) MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

a) The funds for meals and incidental expenses (meals tax, tips and other related items) while traveling are provided through a per diem (per day) allowance. **Receipts are required for per diem reimbursement.** The amount of per diem **shall follow the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) max per day per diem rates for reference.**

b) Upon return from travel, the employee shall submit receipts and the itemized reimbursement form for all meal expenses. The Town will reimburse the employee for approved expenditures up to the maximum per diem rate. The approving body shall give consideration during the review of the following; location of travel, dietary restrictions and other extenuating circumstances.

c) In the event that meals are provided as part of the registration or conference program, the employees are not eligible for a full per diem. Employees shall submit receipts and the itemized reimbursement form documenting all meal expenditures that were not covered by the event. Any dietary restrictions shall be noted to the Manager during the approval discussion so that management is informed of possible additional expenses. This applies to conferences such as the VML conferences, where meals are included in your registration. Employee shall note in reimbursement form which conference days did not include all meals, such as Day 1 of the conference or the last day.

d) Prior to travel or training related business meetings, the employee may request permission to expense a business meal. Employees may further request expensing the meals of other guests or individuals. Management shall consider the nature of the meeting, the number of individuals attending the meeting and the requested location of the meeting.

e) At no time shall an employee file a reimbursement for alcohol purchases. The Town of Haymarket does not reimburse employees or other Town members for the expenditure of alcohol.

3) TRANSPORTATION TO CONFERENCES

a) When travel is authorized and performed in a privately owned vehicle, round trip mileage is calculated to and from the Town Hall at a IRS **standard mileage rate**. Road tolls and parking fees are also included as a reimbursable item. Receipts and an itemized reimbursement form shall be submitted for all mileage expenses, road tolls, and parking fees. A map print out with the documented mileage shall be attached to the reimbursement form.

b) If a rental car is needed for the conference travel. The Town will allow with Town Manager or Chief of Police approval for a Standard/Mid-Size (Sedan) or if traveling with more than 2 staff members a Mid-Size SUV category vehicle. If vehicle rental is upgraded to higher class than Standard/Mid-Size (Sedan), the employee would be responsible for the additional cost for upgrade.

4) AIR TRAVEL

a) When Town business requires employees to travel outside of the State for business, air transportation can be approved by the Town **Manager or Chief of Police**. It is important to note that the Town encourages vehicle transportation to any location within 300 miles of the Town Office. In addition, the Town encourages employees to take advantage of the numerous training and conference opportunities that exist within the State rather than travelling outside of the State for opportunities. If air travel is required and approved, this travel is at the coach rate only. If first-class travel is arranged, the employee will pay in advance the difference between the coach rate and first-class travel. Airfare for the employee's spouse or guest must be paid by the employee. When possible, air travel arrangements should be made at least 21 days in advance in order to take advantage of the lowest fares.

b) Expenses to and from airports, such as airport car service (Lyft / Uber), rental car, taxicab or bus transportation are qualified expenses.

5) HOTEL ROOMS

a) The Town pays for the single room rate, unless a room block rate has been offered by Conference hosts. If the double room rate is cheaper than the single room rate, the double room rate may be booked. No room upgrades for traveling spouse, family or guests will be covered by the Town. The Employee shall pay in advance for any room upgrades.

b) If the Town Employee is acting as the host of an event, conference or training, the Town will cover the expenditure of a hotel room for the employee to minimize travel time while performing hosting duties. Approval for the hotel expenditure shall be discussed in advance. An example of such expenditure, the Town of Haymarket is hosting the Small Towns Conference in Haymarket, the Town Manager would be eligible for a hotel room to ensure they are present for all conference activities in a timely manner.

c) Employees should stay at the designated Conference Hotel at the negotiated block rate. If multiple Conference Hotels are offered, employees may choose among them, considering cost and proximity. If no Conference Hotel is provided, select a hotel that meets U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rates, which may require using a government rate. If no hotel is available at the per diem rate, the Town Manager may grant exceptions.

If the Conference Hotel is full, choose a hotel that meets GSA per diem rates or is comparable to the block rate. Employees may select a different hotel than the Conference Hotel, provided it is not more expensive. If the chosen hotel exceeds the Conference Hotel rate, the employee is responsible for the difference in cost.

d) No overnight reimbursements will be paid if the meeting is for the duration of one day and at a location that doesn't exceed 100 miles one way from Haymarket. However, if there are circumstances of an early class/conference, the **Town Manager or Chief of Police** can approve in advance the overnight reimbursement.

6) EXPENSES FOR SPOUSE, FAMILY OR GUEST

a) All expenses incurred by a traveling spouse, family or guest will be paid for by the employee in advance or during the trip with regard to meals and other such expenses. No expenses incurred by the spouse, family or guest shall be reimbursed by the Town of Haymarket.

7) CONFERENCE WORK TIME

a) **The Town Manager or Chief of Police will review the Employees compensable work hours during travel and conference attendance with consideration to travel, conference planned events, unexpected travel delays and other training related occurrences. Examples for compensable work hours are listed below. The list is not exhaustive and other reasonable requests for compensable hours may be reviewed by the Town Manager or Chief of Police.**

During the travel approval process the employee shall discuss the planned conference, work and travel hours with the Town Manager or Chief of Police. When available, a detailed Conference Agenda shall be submitted with the approval request.

Examples of Approval Work Hours:

- Travel time to and from the conference to include weekend travel or early weekday travel for timely arrival. Significant uncontrollable delays such as traffic shall be noted. Consideration of work hours logged, and travel time will be reviewed during timesheet review
- Conference or training hours
- Working/Networking meals at the conferences or training, such as the VML Conference Banquet Dinner

- Networking events coordinated through training or conference function
- Short conference days and travel time shall be discussed with the Manager, in advance, in relation to the employee meeting the required 80 hours per pay period without penalty.

b) Employees shall attend all conference or training related activities focused on the continued education of the employee or networking opportunities. Activities that are not required for the employee to attend would be those offered as physical activity/workout opportunities for the attendees prior to the start of the conference day, (such as morning pilates) or late-night conference hosted entertainment (such as Karaoke). c) Traveling Spouses, Family and Guests shall not interrupt the employee's duty to attend all conference or training related activities. Additional travel days, extensions of travel time and other personal related activities shall NOT be included in compensable hours. Modifications to the travel time and days shall be explicitly noted in the timesheet and reflected in the employee's paid time off.

d) If an employee is uncertain about compensable conference hours, he or she shall discuss in detail the hours in question with the Town Manager or Chief of Police for clarity and direction.

e) The Town Manager or Chief of Police reserves the right to call into question compensable hours and request further information or documentation from the employee regarding those hours in question.

8) Restriction of Conference and Training Opportunities

The Town funds conferences and training opportunities for the Town Employees to work towards certifications, continued education, and networking opportunities. The Town Manager and Chief of Police reserve the right to restrict conference and training opportunities for employees that misstate or falsify compensable hours, misuse Town Funds, conduct themselves in an unprofessional manner or take advantage of offsite training opportunities. This list is not exhaustive and may include other performance actions. The Town Manager and Chief of Police shall take all appropriate actions as stated in the Town of Haymarket Employee Manual to document the actions and provide corrective action.