



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 3/23/2021

ITEM NO: 5

DATE: March 16, 2021
TO: Council Policy Committee
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Review, Discuss, and Recommend that the Town Council Approve the Proposed Travel and Expense Policy for Elected Town Officials

RECOMMENDATION:

Review, discuss, and recommend that the Town Council approve the proposed Travel and Expense Policy for Elected Town Officials.

BACKGROUND:

In early 2020, Town staff revised the Employee Travel and Expense Administrative Procedure in order to clarify and simplify travel and reimbursement guidelines for Town employees. The revised Employee Procedure can be viewed as Attachment 1 to this report.

Following work on the employee guidelines, staff reviewed the Travel and Expense Policy for Town Council members. The current Policy was approved in 2011 and can be found as Attachment 2 to this report.

Similar clarifications to the revised employee procedures may be applicable to the proposed update to the Council Policy. Staff drafted a potential revised Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy which may be found as Attachment 3 to this report. Elected officials are legally considered employees of the Town, so efforts were made to align the guidelines for the two.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed update to the draft Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy is aimed at clarifying and streamlining travel and expense guidelines for the Town Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members. Highlights of the proposed changes are as follows:

PREPARED BY: Holly Zappala
Management Analyst

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

DISCUSSION (continued):

1. Removed the application to Town Board, Commission, and Committee members from the Policy and incorporated them into the Employee Travel and Expense Procedure instead. The revised draft Policy applies to elected officials only.
2. Simplified food and beverage reimbursements for overnight travel to be paid via a per diem allowance at the amount specified by the US General Services Administration as opposed to reimbursement for actual food and beverage expenses. This change saves staff time and streamlines the process.
3. Added instructions for mileage reimbursements. Prior to 2019, the Town Council received a monthly auto allowance which generally covered local mileage costs. Prior to 2019, Council Members were eligible to receive reimbursement for authorized travel in a personal vehicle in excess of a one-way 50-mile radius of Los Gatos. Effective January 1, 2019, Council Members received a salary increase that absorbed the monthly auto allowance. Currently, Council Members are eligible for mileage reimbursements for all business-related travel using a personal vehicle, the same as any Town employee.
4. Added further clarification to transportation options, including rental vehicles, consistent with employee travel procedures.
5. Added examples of miscellaneous expenses that are eligible for reimbursement.
6. Specified who should review and approve mileage reimbursements or claims for reimbursement. Those submitted by Council Members must be signed by the Mayor and the Town Manager. Reimbursements for the Mayor must be signed by the Town Manager and Finance Director.

At times, Council Members may want to attend conferences or other events associated with the other agencies for which they serve as a Board member as appointed by the Town Council (e.g., Silicon Valley Clean Energy Authority). For those activities, the non-Town agency would be responsible for paying those expenses as they are related to its function. The Town will not cover such expenses for other agencies.

CONCLUSION:

Staff looks forward to the Committee's discussion and feedback on the draft Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy. Staff recommends the Committee forward a recommendation to the Town Council to approve the proposed draft policy.

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SUBJECT: Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy

DATE: March 23, 2021

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Town Manager's Office, Town Attorney, Finance Department, and Human Resources Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed changes to the policy should not generate a significant fiscal impact, but should make the guidelines clearer and more streamlined.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachments:

1. Travel and Expense Procedure for Town Employees
2. 2011 Town Council and Board Member Expense Reimbursement Policy
3. Draft Elected Official Travel and Expense Policy