

City of Tomball

Administrative Policy: Reimbursement for Elected Council Members

Purpose: The City recognizes that elected officials are expected to represent the municipality in various functions and activities, which may involve expenses incurred by the official. These costs can become burdensome, particularly since elected officials are not provided with a dedicated form of payment for such duties. While elected officials receive a stipend based on the number of council meetings attended, this stipend does not typically account for fees, dues, travel, and other incidental expenses. This policy establishes guidelines for reimbursing elected officials for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while conducting municipal business or representing the City at functions and events.

Policy Guidelines:

1. Budget Allocation:

- Each council member will be allocated a budgeted amount annually for reimbursable expenses.
- Reimbursements are subject to this budgeted amount and must be directly related to municipal business or official representation of the City.
- Reimbursement shall not exceed the budgeted amount.

2. Reimbursable Expenses:

- **Dues and Fees:** Memberships and professional association dues directly related to municipal responsibilities including fees required for attending a qualifying event.
- **Travel Expenses:** Costs for transportation, lodging, and other travel-related expenses necessary for official duties.
- **Meals:** Meals incurred during official functions or travel, subject to per diem rates and provided breaks in the event schedule.
- **Trainings, Conferences, Functions, and Meetings:** Costs for attending training sessions, workshops, and conferences pertinent to municipal governance. Costs for attending or representing the City's interests with regional or state organizations (e.g. Houston-Galveston Area Council) or attending a function or meeting when representing the City in an official capacity.

3. Non-Reimbursable Expenses:

- Alcoholic beverages.
- Entertainment expenses.
- Laundry and dry cleaning.
- Any expenses for relatives or friends accompanying the elected official.

Reimbursement Process:

1. Expense Report Submission:

- An expense report must be completed and submitted within fourteen (14) calendar days of returning from travel.
- The report should include a detailed account of all reimbursable expenses incurred.

2. Documentation Requirements:

- A schedule or agenda from the event must be attached, highlighting breaks for per diem calculation.
- Original receipts are required for all expenses except meals. Receipts must be attached to the report in an organized manner for easy review and approval.
- If an original receipt is lost, a copy of the receipt will be accepted. If no copy can be obtained, the elected official must provide the applicable form explaining the expense, including the name of the business, the cost incurred, and the dollar amount. The form must be signed by the elected official and approved by the City Manager.
- For mileage reimbursements, the council member should provide the address of the event. Mileage will be measured from Tomball City Hall to the event location.

3. Approval Process:

- All expense reports and supporting documentation will be reviewed and approved by the City Manager to ensure compliance with this policy.

Compliance: Elected officials are expected to adhere strictly to this policy. Any expense outside these guidelines or exceeding the allocated budget may not be reimbursed.

Effective Date: This policy is effective as of [insert date] and remains in force until amended or revoked by the City Council.