

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY # 53

REVISED JULY 24, 2013

TRAVEL REGULATIONS AND REIMBURSEMENTS

PURPOSE:

All personnel traveling under these procedures are expected to exercise prudent responsibility when committing Town of Seekonk funds.

Travel on business should be conducted at minimum cost for achieving the success of the mission. The traveler is expected to exercise the same care in incurring travel expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling at his/her own expense.

POLICY:

The Town of Seekonk's goals are to allow travel arrangements that (1) conserve public funds, (2) provide equitable treatment of all personnel, and 3) allow travel in a manner that is dignified and reflects credit on the Town of Seekonk.

These recommendations are applicable for all expenses incurred on behalf of the Town of Seekonk by employees, appointed and elected officials. Where these regulations do not adequately cover a travel situation, the Town Administrator may authorize exceptions.

Decisions as to which trips will be authorized are generally made through the annual budget process. In general, no more than one national and one state conference within Massachusetts will be authorized in any fiscal year. Attendance at other meetings may be authorized when the attendee is an active participant in a national and/or state organization. The Town Administrator must approve all travel requests in advance. Attendance at various local professional and technical conferences and meetings will be authorized as funds and time permit. Good judgment and proper regard for economy are expected in incurring travel expenses on behalf of the Town of Seekonk.

There is no objection to a spouse and/or other family members traveling on an official trip, but no expenses attributable to them will be reimbursed by the Town of Seekonk.

CONFERENCE APPROVAL AND REGISTRATION FEES:

Approval for professional conferences or training programs must be submitted to the Town Administrator on a Conference Authorization Form (CAF). A Descriptive brochure outlining the conference starting and finishing times and dates, must be submitted with the CAF. Also required with the CAF is a listing of hotels available and the applicable fee schedules. It is the employee's responsibility to submit the required information to the Town Administrator's office no later than three (3) weeks prior to any early registration deadline. The Town of Seekonk will only pay for registration fees on an early registration discount basis. If the employee does not

file the request on a timely basis; he/she will be responsible for any cost difference in registration fees.

Employees must provide distance report, obtained from the internet on sites such as "MapQuest" or "Google," for the conference destination at the time they give the CAF to the Town Administrator. The employee should provide distance from Town Hall, 100 Peck Street, Seekonk. The Town will only reimburse employees for the distance they have provided in advance.

Employees will carpool as often as possible

Department Heads must budget expenses for conference trips as a separate line item.

Travel expenses shall be reimbursed at the IRS rate

TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

Within five (5) days after returning from the trip, a Travel Expense Report must be forwarded the Finance Department. Required receipts should be attached to the travel expense report. Expenses will be paid as soon as the expense report has been audited for compliance with this policy.

USE OF COMMERCIAL CARRIER:

Commercial carrier fares will be limited to "Coach" or "Economy" fares when such services are available. The employee is responsible for booking commercial carrier reservations immediately following the approval of the CAF. The Town of Seekonk will either reimburse the employee for the cost of the tickets or pay the travel agency directly, based upon receiving the proper invoice for the tickets. Any compensation or free airline tickets received for being "bumped" from a scheduled flight shall be equally shared by the employee and the Town of Seekonk. Travel to and from stations and airports may be by bus, taxi or private vehicle (for which mileage will be paid), whichever is least costly. Receipts for transportation costs are required.

USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLE:

Private vehicles may be used for travel on Town of Seekonk business when authorized by the Town Administrator. Reimbursement will be limited to the lower of:

- a. Current per mile reimbursement rate set by the IRS rate
- b. When two or more travel together, they may travel in the same vehicle whenever practicable. When two or more people travel together in the same private vehicle, reimbursement will be paid to the owner of the vehicle. Mileage reimbursement will be based on the actual number of miles driven while on Town of Seekonk business, as submitted before approval of the CAF by the Town Administrator.

TRAVEL EXCEEDING ONE DAY (8 HOURS)

Employees should not drive to meetings and conferences when the travel time enroute to the destination requires more than one day. In such instance, no reimbursement will be made for any lodging, meals or other expenses incurred enroute, unless prior approval is received from the Town Administrator.

LODGING

Hotel or Motel reservations are expected to be made well in advance to ensure that lodging is secured at moderate rates. The employee is entitled to a hotel allowance equal to the least expensive single room rate at the hotel which is serving as the conference headquarters. If no such designation is made, the allowance will be equal to the single room rate of the hotel closest to the convention center building. Receipts for lodging are required. Reimbursement of lodging will be limited to the minimum number of nights required to conduct Town of Seekonk business.

If a conference, for example, opens on Sunday evening and closes Thursday at noon, reimbursement for Sunday through Wednesday night would be allowed. If an employee chooses to arrive earlier or stay later, the additional lodging and other related to this decision are personal expenses and will not be reimbursed. There may be instance in which significant savings in travel expenses may be achieved by taking advantage of discount fares required in an additional night's stay. Prior authorization by the Town Administrator will be required to utilize this arrangement. Costs of both lodging and travel along with anticipated airfare savings will be provided with authorization required.

No lodging expense will be reimbursed for meetings or conferences held in the Eastern Massachusetts area unless prior approval is obtained from the Town Administrator.

MEALS AND MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES:

The Town of Seekonk shall reimburse on a per diem basis, expenses incurred while on approved travel leave. The per diem rate shall be the GPA per diem rate current the date of the event, any costs in excess of the per diem shall be non-reimbursed, without the express approval of the Town Administrator. The per diem shall be for all out-of-pocket expenses including food, professional association, banquets and gatherings, intraconference transportation, and service gratuities. Per diem reimbursements will be reduced by meals provided through the conference packet.

If the city/area falls under, a greater reimbursement amount as listed in the U.S. Government per Diem Schedule, the higher amounts apply. Receipts for the actual cost of the meal must accompany the request for reimbursement. The Town of Seekonk will pay the actual cost of the meal up to the maximum federal limits. Costs in excess of the stated limits shall be the responsibility of the employee.

Amended: July 24, 3013



Chair, Seekonk Board of Selectmen