

## **Article XIII. TRAVEL**

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## SECTION I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the authorization to travel by Village of Bald Head Island employees, elected officials, appointed officials, and volunteer organization members for the purpose of conducting Village business, and to establish procedures for reimbursement of the cost of authorized travel.

All employees, officials, and volunteers of the Village are subject to this policy.

## DEFINITIONS

Authorizing Party – individual authorized by this policy to approve or disapprove travel requests, travel advance requests and travel expense reimbursement requests.

Requesting Party – Village employee, official, or volunteer requesting reimbursement for travel costs incurred while conducting Village business.

Travel – going to and from the travel/training location or site which is more than 10 miles away from the normal job location to conduct Village business.

Travel Advances – the payment of public funds to a requesting party for travel costs that have not yet been incurred. Travel advances enable individuals to conduct Village business without having to endure financial hardships.

## SECTION II. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

- A. A Request for Leave form denoting training with the associated information attached must be completed for administrative scheduling concerns for all Village employees.
- B. A Travel Advance Request form must be completed which denotes all expected costs associated with the travel. The amount requested for advance can not exceed this total. If no advance monies are needed, the total check request amount should be completed as \$0.00.
- C. All Request for Leave and Travel Advance Request forms must first be approved by the appropriate Department Head. Both forms should be forwarded to the Finance Director to determine if sufficient funds are available. Upon approval by the Finance Director, it is forwarded to the Village Manager for final approval.
- D. Authorization of a Travel Advance Request will be based upon need and cost/benefit of travel as determined by authorizing party.

- E. Request for Leave submissions will be approved at the discretion of the Village Manager based on current scheduling needs and/or conflicts. All Request for Leave for training should be submitted to the Village Manager for final approval no later than fifteen (15) working days prior to date(s) of training.
- F. Travel advances will be issued at the discretion of the Village Manager and Finance Director. Travel Advance Request should be submitted to the authorizing party no later than ten (10) working days prior to the date upon which travel will commence. The amount of the travel advance may not exceed the estimated travel cost.
- G. It is the policy of the Village not to issue travel advances to volunteers and appointed officials. As they are not on payroll, there is no means of collecting monies owed the Village due to unexpended funds from a travel advance.

### **SECTION III. TRANSPORTATION**

- A. Any necessary bus, train, and air transportation must be obtained at the most economical rate available. Reimbursements will be made for actual costs that are incurred and receipt supported. When a reservation is made, the name of the airline and the cost must be included in the Travel Advance Request. Airline passenger receipts (indicating total expenses and class of service used) must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report. If a flight reservation is changed or cancelled and results in an additional fee, a reason must be provided. For all out-of-state travel, prior approval must be obtained from the Village Manager. The cost of travel to and from Indigo Plantation or the personal residence of the requesting party to the point of departure/arrival is a reimbursable cost.
- B. Parking fees, tolls, taxi charges, car rentals, and expenses of similar nature, when appropriate to the travel, are reimbursable upon submission of appropriate documentation of the same
- C. A requesting party may use his/her personal automobile for travel and be reimbursed at the rate prescribed by the IRS on a per mile basis. Reimbursement will not be based on receipts for fuel.
- D. Local transportation while on out-of-town business will be reimbursable. The most economical and reasonable form of transportation will be used. Receipts must be obtained and submitted with travel reimbursement requests. The IRS rate for use of personal automobile will apply.
- E. Individuals attending the same event must arrange carpools whenever possible. In the event of carpooling to an event, only one reimbursement for mileage will occur. In the event that an employee does not want to carpool due to the use of tobacco products, the non-smoker will be accommodated. All other exceptions must be approved by the Village Manager.

## SECTION IV. LODGING

- A. The Village will pay in advance for hotel rooms or other accommodations if approved by Finance Director and Village Manager on a Travel Advance Request form. The requesting party is responsible for arranging all overnight accommodations. Should said party be unable to keep reservations, he/she will be responsible for cancellation. A cancellation verification number must be recorded by the requesting party and provided to the Finance Director.
- B. Lodging cost will be reimbursed at the actual amount incurred. The lodging rate is limited to the single room rate when an employee/representative for the Village is traveling with his/her spouse and/or children. Receipts for lodging costs must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report form for reimbursement.
- C. Should the Village become liable for unused reservations or registration fees, the requesting party may be required to reimburse the Village.

## SECTION V. MEALS

- A. Any requesting party on overnight out-of-town travel may receive thirty-six dollars (\$36.00) per day for meals with no receipt required. Actual cost will be reimbursed up to fifty dollars (\$50.00) when supported by receipts in lieu of the per diem rate. Meals will be reimbursed at actual cost for breakfast, lunch and dinner only. Tips/gratuities reimbursement will be limited to 15% and is included in the per diem rate of \$36. Any additional amounts over those prescribed must be approved by the Village Manager prior to the scheduled travel/training.
- B. Meals will not be reimbursed for spouse or children.
- C. Meals served as part of a convention or conference will be reimbursed at actual cost. Documentation of actual cost must be attached when reimbursement is requested. If the cost of a meal served as part of a convention or conference is included in the registration fee, it would not be prudent use of public funds to reimburse the employee or official for that part of the registration fee if the employee or official chooses to eat elsewhere. It would be a prudent use of public funds to reimburse an employee or official for the cost of a convention meal that exceeds the reimbursement rates if the Village would benefit from the individual attending the meal, or it would be impractical for the individual to eat a meal elsewhere.
- D. A requesting party who is not out-of-town overnight will not be reimbursed for meal costs unless required by his/her approved Request for Leave and Travel Advance Request forms or unless the requesting party was required to depart prior to 7:00am, and/or return from travel later than 7:00pm. Under these circumstances, the cost of the morning and/or evening meal will be reimbursed provided the travel destination is at least 35 miles from the employee's normal job location. Receipt shall be required for any reimbursed meal costs without overnight stay.

## SECTION VI. OTHER COSTS

- A. Phone calls for official Village business are reimbursable expenses. Personal long distance phone calls will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$4.00 per night in travel status. Telephone charges must be specifically accounted for on the Travel Expense Report and are reimbursable by receipt (hotel invoice) only.
- B. Entertainment and other events not included in the base registration fee will be at the expense of the traveler. Tips, vending machines, and snacks are included in the per diem meal allowance rate and not reimbursable.
- C. Hotel room movies and other forms of entertainment not associated with a conference or school are not reimbursable expenses.
- D. Costs incurred by a spouse or children are not reimbursable expenses.
- E. Personal items such as T-shirts, cups, drink holders, soap, etc., are not reimbursable expenses.
- F. The Village does not pay for alcoholic beverages.
- G. Charges up to \$15 for laundry and dry cleaning are reimbursable only if the period of travel exceeds five (5) days. Receipts must be submitted with Travel Expense Report for reimbursement.
- H. Registration fees, which have been approved on the Travel Advance Request form, may be paid in advance by the Village and should be noted as such on the Travel Expense Report.
- I. All other expenses incurred must be paid out of pocket. When proper receipts are submitted with an Expense Report Request, out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

## SECTION VII. REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

- A. Submitting a Travel Expense Report
  - 1. A requesting party shall complete an Travel Expense Report, attaching all receipts and a copy of the approved Request for Leave and submit it to his/her Department Head for approval no later than two (2) working days after returning from travel status.

2. A requesting party submitting a falsified Travel Expense Report will be subject to disciplinary action. An authorizing party who approves an Travel Expense Report which he/she knows to be false will be subject to disciplinary action

B. Approval and processing of reimbursement requests

1. The Travel Expense Report will be submitted to the Department Head for approval. After approval by the Department Head, the Travel Expense Report and all previously listed documentation shall be submitted to the Finance Director on the next working day.
2. The Finance Director will determine that the Travel Expense Report form has been properly approved, that it is mathematically correct, and that requested reimbursements agree with submitted receipts and are within the limits set by this policy. If an error in the expense report is found, the requesting party will be informed and the error will be corrected before payment is made. Pre-issued travel advance amounts will be deducted from the total reimbursable cost and the balance determined shall be refunded to either the Village or paid to the requesting party.
3. Payment to requesting party will be made after the Finance Director and the Village Manager have approved and signed the Travel Expense Report. Before the reimbursement is made, the Finance Director will determine that there is a sufficient unexpended appropriation in the expenditure line to pay the request.
4. If settlement is due the Village and has not been made within fifteen (15) working days after notification by the Finance Director, the amount of the balance shall be deducted from the next paycheck of the requesting party.

## **SECTION VIII. EXEMPTIONS**

- A. The Mayor, Village Council Members, and Village Manager, may be exempted from certain parts of this policy due to the uniqueness of the travel required by their positions.
- B. Special exemptions for employees and volunteers may be made on a case-by-case basis due to the location and uniqueness of the travel/training. Justification for the request for such exemption must be recommended by the employee's Department Head and approved by the Village Manager prior to the scheduled travel/training.