District of Sooke	**Policy Title: Travel and Expense Policy**	Policy No: **CO-005**
	Authority: Council	Classification: Council
	Date Adopted: December 14, 2020	Motion No: 2020-403

Historical Changes:

- Replaces Travel Related Expenses Policy No. 5.7.
- Amended January 22, 2024 to update meal expense amounts

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for expenditures that support Council members in performing their diverse roles and in representing their constituents. It also applies to District employee approved travel and expenses.

Scope:

This Policy applies to all expenses incurred by council members and employees of the District of Sooke performing their duties and conducting official District business.

Definitions:

Defined word	Definition
Eligible Expenses	Includes: meal expenses, registration fees, Accommodation, Incidentals, transportation, parking fees, wi-fi connection fees (if required to conduct official District business or to complete assignments while in attendance at the Event.)
Event	An event that encompasses District of Sooke or local government business, including meetings, seminars, conferences, conventions, and educational courses for Council members that are approved in advance of the Event.
Incidentals	Includes: dry cleaning, gratuities, telephone calls, and other miscellaneous expenses approved in accordance to this policy.
Ineligible Expenses	Includes: alcohol, costs reimbursed by another organization or source (ie: educational scholarship or meals included as part of the registration fee), parking tickets, traffic fines, spouse or partner expenses, and Personal Expenses excluding *Incidentals*.
Meetings	Excludes District Council and Committee meetings, and Council Liaison appointed meetings where a stipend or travel expenses are provided.
Personal Expenses	Includes: long distance phone calls that are non-work related, Accommodation services such as valet parking, laundering services not covered by the per diem, bath robes, spa services, wi-fi connection fees (if not required in order to conduct official District business or to complete assignments while in attendance at the Event), etc.

Principles:

1) Eligible expenses must be reasonable and reflect what the public expects of a Council Member or a District employee.
2) Reimbursement of an expense should not result in a Council Member or an Employee receiving any product, service or asset for personal use, benefit or gain.

3) Council Members: Except as authorized by this policy, requests for attendance to Events must be prior to the Event, funded in the Financial Plan, and pre-approved by Council resolution where not otherwise authorized by this policy.
   Employees: Except as authorized by this policy, requests for attendance to Events must be submitted before the Event, funded in the Financial Plan, and pre-approved by the department Director. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) requests will be approved by the Mayor.
4) Council members are authorized to attend the following:
   a) The annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities ("UBCM") convention;
   b) The annual Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities ("AVICC") convention;
   c) The annual Federation of Canadian Municipalities ("FCM") convention;
   d) The Annual Rotary Auction Dinner; and
   e) The Local Government Leadership Academy ("LGLA") Leadership Forum.

   The CAO and/or Directors may also attend the above conventions, subject to approval under this policy.
5) A business trip may be combined with personal at the individual's own expense, subject to approval under this policy. The individual will be required to pay any expenses that are not associated with the pre-approved Event.
6) Employees: Other than during regular working hours, wage remuneration and accumulation of flex time/overtime is not applicable during travel time to and from the Event.
7) A Council Member is not authorized to claim expenses, including mileage, for an Event or meeting hosted within District boundaries, unless those expenses are paid by the host.
8) Council: Expenses not included in this policy may be reimbursed, upon approval by Council resolution or pre-approval under this policy.
   Employees: Expenses not included in this policy may be reimbursed, upon approval by the CAO Council resolution or pre-approval under this policy.
9) Council members may make their arrangements for registration, accommodation, and transportation, or they may request Corporate Services make the arrangements on their behalf. Employees are responsible for making their arrangements under the District's Purchasing Policy.
10) A spouse or partner may travel with and attend the Event. All expenses are the responsibility of the Council Member or Employee.

Meal Expenses

11) A Council Member or Employee is eligible for reimbursement of a daily per diem equivalent of the effective Meals and Allowance Rates provided by the Canada Revenue Agency's Directive on Travel for their employees. The per diem is provided in lieu of submitting receipts for meal expenses.
12) Where travel is for a partial day, only meals that apply to that portion of the day spent travelling may be claimed: travel must start before 7:00 am to claim breakfast; before noon to claim lunch, and after 5:00 pm to claim dinner.
13) Incidentals may only be claimed when an overnight stay is required.
14) Meals and Incidentals provided at no extra cost to the attendee (ie: part of the registration fee or accommodation), cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

Registration Fees

15) Event Registration Fees, including tuition and membership fees, will be purchased under the District's Purchasing Policy.
16) Registrations should be completed promptly to take advantage of early registration discounts and to avoid late penalties, whenever possible.

Accommodation

17) Commercial Accommodation must be based on the single standard rate and substantiated by receipts. The most economical room, such as the "Government rate" should be obtained and booked as soon as Accommodation needs are determined, however, the hotel or block rate (for a standard room) negotiated by the Event organizer is acceptable.
18) The District will not pay for room upgrades. Any upgrades will be at the expense of the individual (ie: ocean view).
19) An Attendee who arranges for Private Accommodation will be reimbursed at a rate of $50.00 per night in lieu of Commercial Accommodation expenses.
20) When Commercial Accommodations are fully booked, consideration of a legally registered B&B or Airbnb, based on single occupancy and determined to be within a reasonable expense through pre-approval under this policy, will be reimbursed.

Transportation

21) An Attendee must use the best method of travel to minimize both time away and costs to the District. Cost comparison between vehicle and air travel should be provided before booking and approval (verbal or in writing).
22) Air travel should be booked "Economy Class" and as soon as travel needs are determined to obtain early booking discounts. Trip cancellation insurance shall be considered and the expense of such may be claimed for reimbursement.
23) Where travel by personal vehicle is more economical than air travel, the mileage may be claimed, at the mileage rate set annually by Canada Revenue Agency ("automobile allowance rate").
24) Mileage is calculated from the Attendee's residence or Municipal Hall to and from the Event, whichever is the lesser distance.
25) Transportation by taxi, train, shuttle, bus, ridesharing (ie: Uber), ferry, tolls, and parking expenses may be reimbursed provided they are justified and supported with receipts.
26) Car rental is permitted if essential, or when other transportation is limited. The Attendee is required to book the most economical car rental option possible, or "government rate" when booking.
27) There will be no reimbursement for mileage when a municipal vehicle is available and/or used.
28) Subject to section 23), if the Attendee uses their personal vehicle, reimbursement will be the equivalent of economy air travel or the calculation of the mileage charge, whichever is less.
29) Any theft from a vehicle shall be the responsibility of the Attendee.
30) Carpooling is encouraged when multiple Council Members and/or Employees are travelling to the same Event.

Expense Reimbursement Form

31) To qualify for reimbursement, the District's Expense Reimbursement Form must be completed, signed by the Attendee in addition to referencing the Council resolution number (if applicable)

and/or signed by the authorizing individual. Council Member forms must be signed by the CAO or the Corporate Officer. The CAO's forms must be authorized by the Mayor.

32) Within 30 days of the Event's conclusion, the Attendee is required to submit their authorized Expense Reimbursement Form with receipts and a copy of the Event agenda depicting which meals were provided as part of the registration or accommodation to the Finance Department.

33) Where required, original receipts must be submitted with all claims for travel reimbursement. Where necessary, a written explanation may be submitted in place of a lost or misplaced receipt. Reimbursement for such Expenses are not guaranteed and are at the discretion of the CAO or the Director of Financial Services.

Advancements

34) Upon request, the District may provide a cash advance for travel-related expenses. The Attendee must fill out the Expense Reimbursement Form in the usual manner and marking it "Cash Advance" at the top. The form must be submitted to the CAO or Director of Financial Services at least ten (10) business days before the commencement of travel and must include an attached Event agenda depicting which meals are provided. Up to 75% of the estimated Eligible Expenses may be provided to the Attendee, at the discretion of the CAO or Director of Financial Services.

References:

Policy Number:	CO-005
Policy Owner:	Director of Financial Services
Endorsed by:	Leadership Team
Final Approval:	December 14, 2020
Date Approved:	
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Related Policies:	
Related Publications:	AD-001 Training and Development Policy CO-008 Purchasing Policy

Contact Information:

Position: Director of Financial Services