



Lake County Forest Preserves

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DATE: November 7, 2024

MEMO TO: Gina Roberts, Chair
Finance Committee

Agenda Item# 10.3

FROM: Stephen Neaman
Director of Finance

Mary E. Kann
Director of Administration

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving amendments to the District's Policy for Reimbursement of Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expenses.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Organizational Sustainability

FINANCIAL DATA: Travel, meal and lodging expenses are budgeted in various accounts in the current and adopted 2025 budget.

BACKGROUND: The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act, 50 ILCS 150/1 *et seq.*, (the "Act") requires local public agencies to establish certain regulations for the reimbursement of travel, meal and lodging expenses, including maximum reimbursement amounts for such expenses. The Act also establishes procedures for the approval of expense reimbursements. Pursuant to the Act, on February 14, 2017 the District adopted a "Policy for Reimbursement of Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expenses" (the "Policy"). The Policy was amended on December 10, 2019.

Staff recommends three categories of amendments as set forth in the attached draft amended Policy, which include:

1. Defining "airfare." Airlines have changed their fare classes with multiple levels of economy class, and the current policy definition, depending on the airline, may not allow for refundable airfare.
2. Increasing maximum reimbursement amounts for certain expense categories. Staff recommends increasing the maximum amounts for: (i) conference registration from \$2,000 to \$2,500 per conference, (ii) meals and beverages from \$75 to \$100 per day, (iii) lodging from \$250 to \$350 per night, (iv) car rental, taxi, car service or ride-share costs from \$160 to \$200 per day, (v) parking from \$50 to \$60 per day, and (vi) airfare from \$500 to \$700 per round trip. Experience over the past several years and inflationary increases have shown that these rates need to be adjusted.
3. Various clarifying language changes.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Deputy Director of Human Resources & Risk, Manager of Board Operations, Corporate Counsel.

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY FOR
REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL, MEAL, AND LODGING EXPENSES**

WHEREAS, the Local Government Travel Expense Control Act, 50 ILCS 150/1 et seq., (the “Act”) requires local public agencies to establish regulations with respect to work-related travel, meal, and lodging expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) has adopted a “Policy for Reimbursement of Travel, Meal and Lodging Expenses,” which has been amended from time to time (the “Policy”); and

WHEREAS, it is in the District’s best interest to approve certain amendments to the Policy in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit A (the “Amended Policy”);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois, **THAT**:

Section 1: Recitals. The recitals set forth above are incorporated as a part of this Ordinance by this reference.

Section 2: Approval of Amended Policy. The Amended Policy, in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby approved. The Executive Director or his designee is hereby authorized and directed to revise and approve the standardized forms referenced in the Amended Policy to the extent necessary to comport with the Amended Policy, and upon such approval such revised forms will be deemed to be part of the Amended Policy.

Section 3: Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this ____ day of _____, 2024

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2024

Angelo D. Kyle, President
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

Julie Gragnani, Board Secretary
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. _____

Lake County Forest Preserve District
Policy For Reimbursement of Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expenses

1. Applicability. This Policy applies to all Commissioners and employees of the District.
2. Definitions. The following terms have the meaning ascribed to them in this Paragraph 2. However, if the Act is amended to change or establish a definition and such changed or established definition conflicts with a definition below, then the definition in the Act shall control.
 - (a) *Air Fare* means ~~“coach” or “economy”~~ the least expensive, refundable air fare and any related baggage charges.
 - (b) *Ancillary* means, with respect to an Approved Activity, an event or place that assists and supports the primary purpose of the Approved Activity, but is clearly subsidiary to such primary purpose.
 - (c) *Approved Activity* means (i) for a Commissioner, an activity undertaken by the Commissioner outside the boundaries of Lake County to carry out the business of the District, which may include without limitation an Approved Commissioner Conference, and (ii) for an employee, (a) a conference, seminar, or similar event relating to the employee’s duties, including events for continuing education or professional development and (b) meetings, events, and other activities related to District business.
 - (d) *Approved Car Rental* means the cost of a rental vehicle and gasoline for the rental vehicle, but only if (i) for a Commissioner, the cost has first been approved by the District President and (ii) for an employee, the cost has first been approved by the Director of Finance and the Executive Director; the President, Executive Director, and Director of Finance shall consider whether (i) the Commissioner or employee has demonstrated a need or savings to the District compared to other methods of transport and (ii) the rental vehicle is the least expensive vehicle necessary for the work related transportation needs ~~will it be reimbursable~~.
 - (e) *Approved Commissioner Conference* means, with respect to a Commissioner, a Conference for which (i) the Commissioner has submitted to the President, in advance of the Conference, the “Commissioner Conference Expense Approval Form” attached as Attachment A to this Policy, and (ii) the President has approved the Commissioner Conference Expense Approval Form.
 - (f) *Approved Registration Fee* means the registration fees for a Commissioner to attend an Approved Commissioner Conference or for an employee to attend a Conference, which fee will be capped at the amount of any early registration fee that is made available to and known in advance by the Commissioner or employee.
 - (g) *Conference* means, with respect to a Commissioner or employee, a conference, program, seminar, symposium, or similar event that would promote continuing education or professional development or that otherwise relates to a Commissioner’s or employee’s duties and for which the Commissioner or employee will be seeking reimbursement for Eligible Travel Expenses.
 - (h) *Eligible Travel Expense* means an expense incurred by a Commissioner or employee for (i) traveling to or from an Approved Activity, or for traveling to events that are Ancillary to the Approved Activity, such as Personal Mileage Expense, airfare, taxi, ride-sharing, Approved Car Rental, tolls, parking, and public transportation costs, (ii) meals and lodging while traveling to or from, or attending, an Approved Activity, (iii) Miscellaneous Charges, and (iv) Approved Registration Fees. Eligible Travel Expenses do not include expenses for Entertainment or expenses for alcoholic beverages.

- (i) *Entertainment* means a show, amusement, theater, circus, sporting event, or any other place or event of public or private entertainment or amusement, that is not Ancillary to an Approved Activity.
- (j) *Meeting Mileage Expense* means any mileage expense incurred by a Commissioner for each mile necessarily traveled by the Commissioner in attending any meeting of (i) the District Board of Commissioners, (ii) the District Committee of the Whole, or (iii) a Committee of the Board of Commissioners, whether or not the Commissioner is a member of that Committee, unless Lake County has already reimbursed, or will reimburse, the Commissioner for his or her attendance at a Lake County Board meeting that occurs on the same date as, and at the same place of, the District Board of Commissioners, Committee of the Whole, or Committee meeting.
- (k) *Miscellaneous Charge* means a reasonable cost for Wi-Fi access, telephone service, photocopying, faxing, document delivery, gratuities (other than gratuities for taxis, ride-sharing, and meals, which are included in Eligible Travel Expenses), and other similar miscellaneous necessary or reasonable day-to-day expenses that are incurred because of a Commissioner's or employee's attendance at an Approved Activity, as determined by (i) the Executive Director (for employees) or (ii) President (for Commissioners), based on the particular Approved Activity.
- (l) *Personal Mileage Expense* means (i) for a Commissioner, a mileage expense incurred from the use of his or her privately owned vehicle to attend an Approved Activity and (ii) for an employee, a mileage expense incurred from the use of his or her privately owned vehicle to attend an Approved Activity, but only if a District-owned vehicle and District-purchased gasoline, when practical, is not available for the employee's use.

3. Expenses Eligible For Reimbursement. Each District Commissioner is eligible to be reimbursed for Eligible Travel Expenses, subject to approval required by Paragraph 4 of this Policy, and Meeting Mileage Expenses. Each District employee is eligible to be reimbursed for Eligible Travel Expenses, subject to approval if required by Paragraph 4 of this Policy.

4. Approvals Required.

- (a) Board of Commissioners Approval Required. The following expenses may be approved, only by an affirmative roll call vote of all Commissioners present at an open meeting of the Board of Commissioners: (i) an Eligible Travel Expense incurred by a Commissioner, even if the Eligible Travel Expense relates to an Approved Commissioner Conference for which the President has approved the Commissioner Conference Expense Approval Form, (ii) a Meeting Mileage Expense incurred by a Commissioner, and (iii) that portion of an Eligible Travel Expense incurred by an employee that exceeds the maximums established in Section 6(a) below.
- (b) Executive Director and Finance Director Approval Required. An Eligible Travel Expense incurred by an employee that does not exceed the maximums established in Section 6(a) below, will be deemed approved only if approved in writing by the Director of Finance and the Executive Director.

5. Expense Reimbursement Requests. Each District Commissioner seeking reimbursement of Mileage Expenses must complete and submit to the Director of Finance the "Commissioner Mileage Expense" form attached to this Policy as Attachment B. Each Commissioner or employee seeking reimbursement of Eligible Travel Expenses must complete and submit to the Director of Finance a form attached to this Policy as Attachment C, with a receipt or other reasonable proof for each Eligible Travel Expense for which the Commissioner or employee seeks reimbursement.

6. Maximum Reimbursements.

A Commissioner or Employee will not be reimbursed for any portion of an Eligible Travel Expense or Meeting Mileage Expense that exceeds the following amounts, unless such excess amount is approved by a roll call vote at an open meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

(a) Eligible Travel Expenses. The maximum amount for an Eligible Travel Expense related to any single Approved Activity is:

- (i) Approved Registration Fee: ~~\$2,000~~2,500 per Conference
- (ii) Meals and beverages, ~~including gratuities~~: ~~\$75~~100 per day plus applicable taxes and gratuities.
- (iii) Lodging for (a) each night required to attend the Approved Activity and (b) if applicable, each extra night that allows the Commissioner or employee to take advantage of lower air fare, resulting in a lower overall cost for the trip: one of the following amounts, to be determined by the Executive Director (for employees) or the President (for Commissioners): (a) ~~\$250~~350 per night plus applicable taxes or (b) the maximum allowed General Services Administration per diem allowance, currently available at www.gsa.gov.
- (iv) Approved Car Rental, taxi, car service, or ride-share: ~~\$160~~200 per day plus applicable taxes and gratuities.
- (v) Public transportation: the rate established by the public transit agency.
- (vi) Personal Mileage Expense: the rate then allowed by the Internal Revenue Service in IRS Publication 463 "Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses" or its replacement Publication or regulation.
- (vii) Tolls: the rate established by the agency imposing the tolls.
- (viii) Parking: ~~\$50~~60 per day plus applicable taxes.
- (ix) Air Fare (round trip total): ~~\$500~~700 plus applicable taxes and fees, plus a baggage charge for a single bag.
- (x) Miscellaneous Charges: \$30 per day.

(b) Meeting Mileage Expenses. The maximum amount for Meeting Mileage Expenses will equal each mile necessarily traveled by the Commissioner in attending a District meeting multiplied by a rate that is the lesser of (i) the rate then allowed by the Internal Revenue Service in IRS Publication 463 "Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses" or its replacement Publication or regulation and (ii) the rate then allowed for members of the Lake County Board.

7. Equal Access to Approved Commissioner Conferences. All Commissioners shall have equal access to Approved Commissioner Conferences, subject to this Policy.

8. Advance Reimbursement of Commissioners and Employees. If the Director of Finance and the Executive Director first approve a Commissioner's or employee's estimate of Eligible Travel Expenses, set forth in a form attached to this Policy as Attachment C, the District may advance reimburse the Commissioner or employee for Eligible Travel Expenses before he or she incurs such Eligible Travel Expenses by paying the estimated amount to the Commissioner or Employee or by directly paying the estimated amount to the

vendor of the Eligible Travel Expenses. After the conclusion of the Approved Activity, the Commissioner or employee must complete and submit the Travel Expense Reimbursement Request for approval in accordance with Paragraph 5 of this Policy and (i) the Commissioner or employee will reimburse any excess Eligible Travel Expenses paid to him or her and (ii) the District will reimburse the Commissioner or employee for any Eligible Travel Expenses related to such Approved Activity that were not previously reimbursed, subject to any approved required pursuant to Paragraph 4. If, after the conclusion of an Approved Activity, a Commissioner or employee does not timely complete and submit the Travel Expense Reimbursement Request, the Executive Director shall cause a Travel Expense Reimbursement Request to be completed and submitted for review and approval as provided in this Policy, including Paragraph 4. If the District advance reimburses a Commissioner or employee for an Eligible Travel Expense, and the Eligible Travel Expense requires approval under Paragraph 4, and is not approved, then the Commissioner or employee shall reimburse the District for the unapproved Eligible Travel Expense.

9. No Reimbursement for Entertainment. The District will not reimburse any expense incurred for Entertainment.
10. District Credit Card Charges to Pay Eligible Travel Expenses. A District employee may use a District credit card to pay for Eligible Travel Expenses, but only to the extent such Eligible Travel Expenses do not exceed the maximums established in Paragraph 6(a) of this Policy.

Approved February 14, 2017
Amended December 10, 2019