

Lea Alvarez
Jeff Drobney
Bill McNair
Brian Acker
Kamil McElwee
Adam Hainline



Ricky Stewart
Jennifer Gordy
Luke Howe
Nikki McGraw
Joshua Guerrero
Dave Simpson

**Benefits Committee
Meeting Agenda
July 21, 2025 11:00 AM
City Hall Training Room
2529 J.O. Stephenson Ave., Kennesaw, GA 30144**

- 1. Call to Order / Roll Call**
- 2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**
 - A. Minutes: June 25, 2025 Benefits Committee Meeting**
Approval of the June 25, 2025, Benefits Committee Meeting minutes
- 3. Old Business**
 - A. Update to Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual**
Revisions to Section 15.5 Training, Conference, and Meeting Attendance
Travel Policy
- 4. New Business**
- 5. Public Comments**
- 6. Staff Comment**
- 7. Adjourn**

**MINUTES OF BENEFITS COMMITTEE MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
City Hall Training Room
June 25, 2025
3:30 PM**

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

City Manager Jeff Drobney called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Staff present: Jeff Drobney, City Manager; Adam Hainline, Police; Ricky Stewart, Public Works; Bill McNair, Parks and Recreation; Brian Acker, Human Resources; Dave Simpson, Smith-Gilbert Gardens; Kamil McElwee, Southern Museum; Jennifer Gordy, Finance; Meredith Staton, Finance; Lea Alvarez, City Clerk; and Anna Trapp, Assistant to the City Manager.

Staff absent: Luke Howe, Economic Development; Nikki McGraw, 911; and Joshua Guerrero, Information Technology.

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Minutes: May 8, 2025 Benefits Committee Meeting

Approval of the May 8, 2025, Benefits Committee Meeting minutes

Bill McNair made a motion to approve the May 8, 2025, Benefits Committee meeting minutes as presented. Seconded by Brian Acker.

Vote taken and approved (Luke Howe, Nikki McGraw, and Joshua Guerrero absent). Motion passed.

3. Announcements/ Public Comment

There were no announcements or public comment.

4. Old Business

A. Update to Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual

Revisions to Section 15.5 Training, Conference, and Meeting Attendance
Travel Policy

Anna Trapp reviewed the requested amendments to the proposed update of the *Training, Conference, and Meeting Attendance* travel policy.

Dave Simpson raised a concern about the use of the term “*reimbursement*” throughout the policy, noting that employees are encouraged to charge eligible expenses to a City-issued credit card when possible. Members agreed that language regarding the preferred use of the City-issued credit card should be moved toward the beginning of the policy. Anna agreed to review and highlight all references to reimbursement, clarifying what constitutes a qualifying expense.

Dave Simpson also requested clarification on travel arrangements when multiple employees attend the same conference, specifically regarding expectations of transportation and lodging. It was further clarified that if an employee is traveling with a spouse or partner, the employee would not be expected to pay for half the cost of the room.

Adam Hainline inquired whether a T3 form is still required if an employee only needs a travel advance. Jennifer Gordy confirmed that employees should continue completing T3 forms for auditing purposes.

Members agreed to proceed with using the Excel version of the travel forms.

Dr. Drobney thanked everyone for their input and stated that the City Manager's office would incorporate the suggested changes and reconvene once more to finalize the policy.

5. New Business

6. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

DRAFT



Item Report

TO: Benefits Committee
FROM: Anna Trapp, Assistant to the City Manager
DATE: July 21, 2025
TITLE: **Update to Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual**
Revisions to Section 15.5 Training, Conference, and Meeting Attendance Travel Policy

Summary: The Training, Conference, and Meeting Attendance Travel Policy was last updated in 2017 and is in need of additional revisions. Significant revisions made to the policy include:

1. Reformatted and reworded to improve clarity and readability.
2. Clarification that Meals & Incidental Expenses will be administered on a per diem basis as found on the GSA Website.
3. Travel Advance and Reimbursement Requests will be submitted via Tyler instead of via a paper check request.

Following June 25, 2025 discussion, the Policy was revised to clarify the preferred use of City-issued credit cards for direct payments, and clarifying language was added around the use of "reimbursement" and "advance payments". Some additional formatting changes were also made to improve the flow of the document.

Recommendation:

To approve the revised Training, Conference, and Meeting Attendance Travel Policy.

Fiscal Impact:

Attachments:

1. Revised Travel and Meal Expense Policy July 2025 - Clean
2. 2017 City of Kennesaw Travel Policy

Revised 7-17-25

**City of Kennesaw
Personnel Policy and Procedures**

TRAVEL & MEALS

Draft July 17, 2025

TRAVEL AND MEAL EXPENDITURE POLICIES

This section provides guidance on authorized expenditures for all departments under the authority of the City Manager and Mayor and City Council. This section shall cover those costs incurred for travel and meal expenses by any elected official, City employee, or board member who travels on City related business. Operating guidelines and procedures for procuring travel and meal expenses shall be issued under separate cover as they do not constitute nor necessitate City Council approval.

A. APPROPRIATION

In conjunction with the annual budget process, the City Council shall authorize department appropriations for travel and meal expenses consistent with the annual adopted operating budgets. Departments shall not incur travel expenditures unless an appropriation is available, or a budget amendment has been completed.

B. EXPENDITURE APPROVAL

All expenditures relating to travel and meals shall be processed consistent with purchasing guidelines. Once finance staff receives the proper documentation from the incurring departments, the execution of payment shall occur. Finance staff will only process transactions for payment based upon the proper approval for the dollar amount of the expenditure, including adequate documentation received electronically.

C. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTED ADVANCED PAYMENT OR REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

Finance staff shall review expenditure documents for compliance and appropriateness with all City policies and procedures. Advance of expenditure or reimbursement requests that are not in compliance with these policies and procedures shall be returned to the originating traveler and department with recommendations for changes. In the event the department does not agree with the recommendations, the City Manager shall make the final decision regarding whether to authorize the expenditure.

D. OVERNIGHT TRAVEL EXPENSES

Approved Travel/City Business: The City shall pay expenses incurred by elected officials, City employees, or members of City advisory boards for travel related to official City business. Official business shall be deemed that which

has been approved prior to the expenditure being incurred on a City of Kennesaw Travel Authorization form (Form T1).

- Travel authorization forms are required for any travel exceeding 50 miles from the employee's place of work. The traveler is expected to search out the most economically priced arrangements for their travel event taking into consideration their personal safety and a reasonable level of comfort.
- Additionally, the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and Department Directors shall be allowed to receive advanced payment or reimbursement for official city business which may be associated with meetings or business meals outside of the scope of the purpose of travel (i.e. a meeting outside of the approved conference or seminar).

Advanced Pay, Direct Pay, and Reimbursement: Each traveler shall pay for all expenses associated with travel (i.e. conference registration, lodging, and transportation tickets) using a direct payment method either via invoice or charged to a City issued credit card. This excludes meals and other incidental expenses.

Travel advances for meal/incidental expenses, if over \$100, shall be provided to the employee prior to travel by the Finance Department following the traveler's submittal of a Form T2 and supporting documentation. Any amount under \$100 shall be reimbursed post travel through the submittal of a detailed Form T3 along with receipts and other supporting documentation.

Expenses eligible for advanced payment or reimbursement shall include travel costs associated with lodging, transportation, meals & incidentals, and program/conference fees which are applicable as follows:

- 1) **Lodging:** Hotel/motel charges shall be paid at cost to the traveler, with receipts provided, when the lodging exceeds a 50-mile radius of the employee's place of work. All traveling personnel shall minimize the expense associated with hotel/motel costs by procuring a government rate for qualified stays. Lodging expense shall be benchmarked against the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) approved per-diem rate of reimbursement. When the GSA rate is exceeded by 20% or more, additional justification shall be required from the traveler. Per diem rates for each fiscal year can be found on the [GSA Website](#)

When traveling in the State of Georgia, all travelers must use the [hotel/motel tax-exempt status form](#). Sales and occupancy taxes charged for lodging within the State of Georgia do not qualify as eligible reimbursable travel expenses under this policy.

Hotel accommodation for travel less than a 50-mile radius from The City of Kennesaw must be approved by the employee's department director. Elected officials, the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Department Directors, and Managers of the City may be allowed hotel accommodation for travel less than a 50-mile radius from The City of Kennesaw, based upon meeting schedules and attendance needs.

- 2) **Transportation:** Approved modes of transportation include vehicle, air, rail, taxi, and public transportation. The method selected by the traveler shall be subject to the most economically feasible, taking into consideration the value of time and personal safety.
- a. City & Personal Vehicles: If a City vehicle is available, it should be used in lieu of a personal vehicle. When more than one City employee or elected official is attending the same conference, meeting, training, etc., such individuals shall ride-share in a City vehicle unless granted an exception by the City Manager or by Mayor and Council. Absent the granting of such exception, if space is available in a City vehicle (up to 4 employees per vehicle), but the employee or elected official chooses to use their personal vehicle, then that employee or elected official will not be reimbursed for mileage.
- i. The use of a City Vehicle is authorized for City business purposes only for travel destinations within the State of Georgia. Operation of a city vehicle outside the State of Georgia requires the prior written approval of the City Manager.
- Expenses associated with the travel in City vehicles such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. shall be the responsibility of the City, and necessary purchases should follow normal purchasing guidelines and processes.
 - Miles traveled in City owned vehicles shall not be subject to reimbursement to the traveler.
 - Non-city employees are **not** permitted to travel in a City Vehicle. If a traveler's dependents/spouse are accompanying the traveler, they must use an alternate form of transportation, or the City employee may request authorization to use a personal vehicle.
- ii. Use of a Personal Vehicle may be authorized if one of the following conditions is met:
- no suitable City vehicle is available,
 - round-trip travel is less than 100 miles, or

- the traveler has a physical handicap which requires the use of a specially equipped vehicle.

Department heads have the authority to approve or deny the use of a personal vehicle for official City business for reasons that do not meet the approved conditions.

Generally, the City will not reimburse for the use of a personal vehicle within 10 miles of an employee's official headquarters and/or residence.

- Expenses associated with employee's personal vehicles such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. (deemed normal wear and tear) will not be subject to reimbursement and will be the responsibility of the traveler.
- Miles traveled in personal vehicles shall be advanced or reimbursed at the rate designed by the [Internal Revenue Service](#). Mileage shall be calculated using the employee's place of work as the origination point, so long as the employee reported to work prior to departing to the destination. In the event the employee does not report to work prior to traveling to the destination, mileage shall be advanced or reimbursed from the employee's origin, less their normal commute to the workplace. Substantiation of mileage is required for reimbursement.

City employees receiving a monthly auto allowance will not be advanced nor reimbursed per mileage since the City employee is being compensated for business use of a vehicle on a monthly basis.

- b. Rental Cars: Expenses associated with rental cars, i.e. rental expenses and fuel shall be paid at cost to the traveler, with receipts provided. Employees shall rent mid-size or smaller vehicles, or an appropriate vehicle size based upon the number of employees needing transportation. Expenses associated with exceeding this car class will be the responsibility of the traveler. Employees should decline additional insurance coverage offered by rental car companies since the City's insurance coverage is applicable to car rentals.
- c. Air/Rail: Transportation provided by major airlines or railroads shall be paid at cost to the traveler, with receipts provided. Travel will be limited to coach/economy classes of service. In the event the traveler chooses a class higher than coach/economy (business or first class) or to extend the trip and change departure or arrival dates, the

difference of the expense shall be the responsibility of the traveler. Any reduction in the expense associated with transportation costs as a result of extended or modified travel dates for personal benefit shall not be provided back to the traveler.

d. Taxi/Shuttle/Ride Sharing and Public Transportation: Expenses associated with local transportation shall be paid at cost to the traveler, with receipts provided and documentation showing point-to-point explanations for this mode of transportation.

- 3) **Meals & Incidentals Expenses (M&IE)**: Expenses associated with meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and incidentals (snacks, tips, miscellaneous) shall be administered on a per diem basis by the City. Per diem amounts will be derived from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which can be found on the [GSA Website](#). Receipts will not be required on incidental or meal expenses. Overages of meal expenses will be the responsibility of the employee, while any savings may be retained by the employee. Alcoholic beverages are not allowable reimbursable expenses and will not be reimbursed pursuant to the City's Personnel Policies.

If meals are included in the conference cost, then the per diem rate will be reduced accordingly from the total M&IE per the [GSA Website](#). No advanced payment nor reimbursement will be allowed when meals are included as part of a registration fee or provided free. Itinerary/program must be provided for all M&IE advanced payments and/or reimbursements.

Expenses incurred for meals when travel does not include overnight stay shall be advanced or reimbursed under Section E of this policy.

- 4) **Program/Seminar/Conference Fees**: Charges relating to the traveler's attendance to the particular event (training, conference, seminar, etc.) shall be paid by the traveler's corresponding department, subject to the provisions identified for expenditures in the City's Expenditure and Purchasing Policies and when supported by proper documentation. Proper documentation is that which provides information about the course, such as the date, place, time, and course programming. The following are examples of proper documentation: registration form, brochure or agenda, screenshot from vendor website detailing event, or email from agency conducting event.

5) Miscellaneous Travel Expenses:

- a. Baggage: Baggage fees shall be paid by the City of Kennesaw following the guidelines below:
- i. Baggage fees will NOT be paid by the City of Kennesaw for the following:
 - Travel that is only one (1) day
 - Travel that is only one (1) day overnight (unless otherwise authorized and approved as to why extra baggage is needed).
 - ii. Baggage fees WILL BE paid by the City of Kennesaw for the following:
 - Travel that is two (2) day overnight stay or longer; one checked bag will be allowed.
 - If extra baggage needs to be checked, it must be pre-approved by an Authorizing Party.

Any baggage fees incurred that does not meet the above-mentioned conditions for payment by the City will be the responsibility of the traveling City employee, elected official, or member of a City advisory board.

- b. Parking Fees: Parking fees accumulated during approved travel shall be deemed eligible expenses if receipts are provided with an explanation of need. Travelers should always select parking options that are the most economically feasible, such as economy parking and self-parking, when available. Tips for valet parking are not reimbursable.
- c. Non-Refundable Purchases: If a non-refundable ticket, hotel room, or registration is purchased and is cancelled by the traveler, the cost incurred will be at the expense of the traveler, unless authorized by the approving authority to be paid at cost to the traveler with valid written justification as to why the ticket or other arrangements were not used and not cancelled in an appropriate manner.
- d. Dependents/Spouses: Dependents and/or spouses accompanying employees on official business shall not be eligible for advanced nor reimbursed expenses by the City. If a dependent or spouse accompanies an employee on an authorized business trip, only those expenses that can be directly attributed to the employee will be advanced or reimbursed (i.e. a single hotel/motel room). Per diem used for expenses other than

those directly attributable to the employee will be allowed; however, the per diem amount will not be increased because of dependent/spouse travel.

E. NON-TRAVEL OR SINGLE-DAY TRIP MEALS

Non-travel expenses related to the furnishing of meals, snacks, or food should be limited to the following circumstances:

- 1) Meetings hosted by the City Council, City Manager, or Department Director;
- 2) A meeting or training during regularly scheduled business hours required by law or authorized by a department director which is anticipated to last more than four (4) hours and which is scheduled through normal meal times;
- 3) A business meal with someone other than another City official or employee to discuss a specific item of City business; and
- 4) Meals that are an integral part of a scheduled meeting at which the individual is required to attend.

To be eligible for meal advanced payment or reimbursement during a single-day trip, the approved traveler must meet the following conditions for each applicable meal:

- **Breakfast:** Advanced payment or reimbursement is allowed if travel begins before 8:00 a.m. and the one-way distance is at least 50 miles.
- **Lunch:** Advanced payment or reimbursement is allowed if travel begins before 8:00 a.m., ends after 1:00 p.m., and the one-way distance is at least 50 miles.
- **Dinner:** Advanced payment or reimbursement is allowed if the traveler returns after 7:00 p.m. and the one-way distance is at least 50 miles.

If the single-day trip is for a training or conference and meals are included in the program cost, then the per diem rate will be reduced accordingly from the total M&IE per the [GSA Website](#). No advanced payment nor reimbursement will be allowed when meals are included as part of a registration fee or provided free. Itinerary/program must be provided for all M&IE advanced payments and/or reimbursements.

Receipts provided for meals within this category should detail the nature of the meeting and the people who were present for the discussion, meeting, or training.

F. SUBMISSION OF EXPENSES

All expenses relating to travel shall be entered into Tyler for processing no later than ten (10) business days after the traveler returns from a trip via completion of Form T3, which should include itemized receipts for all travel costs incurred and documentation supporting the purpose of travel i.e. copy of meeting agenda or conference schedule.

Non-travel meals shall be submitted no later than seven (7) days from the date of occurrence.

Expense reports must be prepared to reflect only actual expenses essential to the conduct of City business by the employee, elected official or member of city advisory board/committee. The City will not pay for any nonessential expenses.

G. TRAVEL FORMS

All forms can be found on the [City of Kennesaw – Intranet](#). The traveler will submit each form to his/her manager as outlined below. Once approved, each form along with any supporting documentation and all receipts should be entered into Tyler - a copy of the approved form should be retained by the traveler.

1. Travel Authorization Request Form (Form T1) - this form is used to receive authorized permission to travel to the specified destination and within the specified guidelines stated on the form and in accordance with this travel policy. Form T1 should be submitted thirty (30) days prior to the first day of travel, unless a special circumstance is approved by the traveler's manager.
2. Travel Advance Request Form (Form T2) - this form is used to request a specified advance payment prior to the trip specified on the associated Travel Authorization Request Form. The Form T2 shall be submitted no less than two (2) weeks prior to the date of travel to allow ample approval and processing time. The Travel Advance Request Form can be used for any advance subsistence payments over \$100. Any amount under \$100 must be reimbursed post travel through a detailed Form T3.
3. Travel Expense Summary/Reimbursement Statement Form (Form T3) - this form is required to be submitted no later than ten (10) business days after returning from the trip to reconcile all expenses paid as well as requesting a reimbursement and/or pay back to the City of Kennesaw due to overpayment through an advance. If the traveler received an

advance that was greater than the actual expenses incurred, a check in the amount of the unused portion of the advance must accompany the Form T3. All checks should be made payable to the City of Kennesaw.

**CITY OF KENNESAW
TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

I. PURPOSE:

To provide consistent guidelines for the authorization and administration of travel expense reporting by City employees, elected officials, and members of City advisory boards. Objectives of these guidelines include: uniformity and fairness to all travelers, conservation of public funds, as well as allowing travel that enables City business to be conducted in a professional manner.

I. SCOPE:

These policies and procedures apply to all City of Kennesaw employees, elected officials, members of City advisory boards, and all others who are authorized to travel on City business.

II. DEFINITIONS:

As used in this statement of policy, "**City Business**" shall pertain to either of the following:

1. "Business Travel" - travel for the purpose of conducting official City business.
2. "Professional/Educational Travel" - travel to attend meetings, conferences, and training programs for professional growth and development for the mutual benefit of the business traveler and the City of Kennesaw.

"Approved traveler" – refers to a City employee, elected official, or member of a City advisory board whose travel has been reviewed and approved.

"Authorizing party" - individual authorized to approve or disapprove all travel-related requests. Individual is assumed to be in a level of authority such that they can accurately evaluate the need for and the cost and benefit of such travel.

"City" – shall mean the City of Kennesaw.

"Metro-Atlanta Area" – counties within a 50-mile radius of Cobb County, including but not limited to Gordon, Gilmer, Lumpkin, Pickens, Dawson, Hall, Forsyth, Cherokee, Bartow, Floyd, Polk, Paulding, Haralson, Carroll, Douglas, Fulton, DeKalb, Heard, Coweta, Clayton, Meriwether, Pike, Spalding, Henry, Rockdale, Newton, Walton, Gwinnett, Barrow, Fayette and Butts.

"Requesting party" - individual who is seeking authorization to travel and advance/reimbursement of related travel expenses.

"Travel Advance Request Form (Form T2)" – this form is used to request a specified advance payment prior to the trip specified on the associated Travel Authorization Request Form. The Travel Advance Request Form can be used for any advance subsistence payments over \$100.

"Travel Authorization Request Form (Form T1)" – this form is used to receive authorized

permission to travel to the specified destination and within the specified guidelines stated on the form and in accordance with this travel policy.

“Travel Expense Summary/Reimbursement Statement Form (Form T3)” – this form is required to be submitted no later than (5) business days after returning from the trip to reconcile all expenses paid as well as requesting a reimbursement and/or pay back to the City of Kennesaw due to overpayment through an advance. Advance overpayment may result if an approved trip is cancelled after the advance has been paid or the trip concludes earlier than outlined on the Travel Authorization forms (Forms T1 and T2).

IV. ADMINISTRATION:

1. The Requesting Party is expected to search out the most reasonably priced arrangements for their travel event taking into consideration their personal safety and a reasonable level of comfort.
2. The City does not contract with a specific travel agent. The Requesting Party may book travel arrangements through an agent of their choosing or by utilizing one of the many internet sites available for such purposes.
3. Travel arrangements that include air, lodging and/or car rental should be made as far in advance as possible, preferably at least 30 days prior to the travel event, to ensure the most economical and desirable arrangements.
4. The Requesting Party shall use a city issued credit card for payment of hotel, transportation and registration expenses. All travel related meal expenses must be paid for using funds issued through the per diem advance process.

V. GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION:

1. Decisions as to which travel is authorized begin with the budgetary process. Travel needs must be anticipated and submitted in the annual budget for approval by the Mayor and Council.
2. No travel payments or reimbursements will be made without a pre-approved signed Travel Authorization Request Form.
3. The Requesting Party's responsibility is to stay within his/her departmental budget's travel allocation as approved by the Mayor and Council, and to complete in full the travel forms with all necessary funding information specific to their department and acknowledgment of budget verification is checked.
4. Prior to approving a travel request, the Authorizing Party is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended appropriation remains in the travel and training budget to cover all expected costs of the travel as well as ensuring that all forms are completed in full prior to submittal to the Finance Department.

5. Personal items, alcoholic beverages, and expenses of family members are not authorized. Expense reports must be prepared to reflect only actual expenses essential to the conduct of City business by the employee, elected official, or member of city advisory board/committee. The City will not pay for such items as movies, snacks, room service, pay per view, sporting events, and any other nonessential expenses.
6. No per diem travel advance will be issued in an amount less than \$100.00. Anything less must be reimbursed at a later time through a detailed Travel Expense Summary/Reimbursement Form submitted no later than 5 business days after return from travel.
7. Requests for travel, meal per diem advances (see Section VI B for guidelines), and actual expense reimbursement should be authorized as follows:

Requesting Party	Authorizing Party	Final Approval
Employee (other than Department Head)	Department Head	City Manager
Department Head	City Manager	City Manager
Elected Officials (Council)	Themselves	Council
Elected Official (Mayor)	Themselves	Council
Boards, Commissions, Authorities	Department Head	City Manager

VI. EXPENSE POLICIES:

The following guidelines are intended to set forth minimum standards. Employees, elected officials and members of City advisory boards are expected to spend funds prudently and in the best interest of the City.

A. Lodging

City payment for lodging is authorized when the individual’s travel requires overnight accommodation. Overnight accommodations are not considered necessary in the Metro-Atlanta area unless special circumstances warrant. Documentation is required stating the purpose of the special circumstances. All overnight travel accommodations must be approved by the Authorizing Party. Receipts are required for all lodging costs. Submission of itinerary is required to process travel arrangements.

1. The City will pay the cost of single standard room accommodations typically occupied by business travelers at moderately priced hotels. The minimum corporate, governmental or lowest special rate must be requested along with any other discounts which the employee or official might be entitled to receive (i.e. Senior citizen/AARP).
2. For travel in the state of Georgia, City employees, elected officials and members of a City advisory board are responsible for obtaining tax-exempt certificates for both sales

tax and hotel/motel tax exemption from the Finance Department prior to travel. These certificates must be presented at the time of check-in. It is the responsibility of the City employee, elected official or member of a City advisory board to ensure the necessary steps are taken to receive tax exempt status for lodging. If the certificate is not presented and taxes are charged and paid with a City credit card, the City employee, elected official or member of a City advisory board will be required to reimburse the City no later than 5 business days after return from travel.

3. For hotels within the state of Georgia, payment for hotel registration with a City issued credit card is required to avoid being charged sales tax. The Travel Advance Request form (T2) should be used to send a direct payment when possible.
4. The City will pay only actual room rental costs supported by the hotel bill for each day that lodging away from home is required for business reasons. Requests for lodging the night before a conference or class begins, based on the start time stated in the agenda or itinerary attached to the Travel Authorization Request Form (T1) and the distance from the city, will be approved at the discretion of the Authorizing Party. The approved traveler is responsible for submission of the receipt to support any and all lodging charges (including hotel parking fees) made to the City credit card when direct advance payment is not authorized. Tips offered to hotel staff **are not** reimbursable.
5. All approved travelers shall attempt to incur only reasonable hotel expenses when out-of-town. Concierge level, suite and condominium accommodations are not permitted for City business.
6. When two approved travelers share a room, one individual will pay the full lodging charge. In the rare instance where the hotel agrees to split the bill, each approved traveler will be responsible for their share of lodging costs.
7. Hotel receipts must be attached to the Travel Expense Summary. Charges other than actual room cost should be itemized on the Travel Expense Summary/Reimbursement Form.

B. Meals

Approved travelers are entitled to a per diem rate for meals and incidentals when traveling for City business. Actual receipts are not required when requesting reimbursement at the per diem rates. ***These are approved maximum per diem rates.***

If an approved traveler is attending training at a facility where meals are provided at a cost lower than per diem rate, the per diem rate can be reduced, at the discretion of the Authorizing party.

Overnight Travel

1. The total per diem rate for overnight travel ***within the state of Georgia*** is \$54 per

full day of required overnight travel, based on the following breakdown:

Breakfast	\$12.00, including gratuity
Lunch	\$13.00, including gratuity
Dinner	\$24.00, including gratuity
IE	\$5.00 per day

If meals are included in the conference cost, then the per diem rate will be reduced accordingly (i.e. lunch then subtract \$13.00 from the per diem rate). No reimbursement will be allowed when meals are included as part of a registration fee or provided free. Itinerary/program must be provided for all meal reimbursements.

For travel *outside of Georgia*, the federal per diem rate for meals and incidentals from the U.S. General Administrative Services Administration can be used at the discretion of the Authorizing Party. Rates can be found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. The approved traveler will attach a printout of the webpage to the Travel Forms (Form T2 and T3).

2. ***Day of travel to and from event*** will be paid at 75% of the per diem rate which is \$40.00, if the event is more than 150 miles from Kennesaw. If less than 150 miles, then at 50% of per diem which is \$27.00. Substantiation of mileage is required for reimbursement.

Single Day Trips Outside Cobb County

Travel outside of Cobb County for a conference, training, or other authorized City business is eligible for ***actual meal expenses*** of up to 75% of per diem rate which is \$40.00, at the discretion of the Authorizing party. Actual receipts will be required and attached to the Travel Expense Report.

For a single day trip the approved traveler must meet all of the guidelines cited below to be eligible for reimbursement for meals:

Breakfast – reimbursement will be authorized provided the requesting party began his/her travel day before 8 a.m. and the one-way trip, supported by odometer readings, is at least 50 miles.

Lunch – reimbursement will be authorized only if the travel day begins before 8 a.m., ends after 3 p.m. and the one-way trip, supported by odometer readings, is at least 50 miles.

Dinner – reimbursement will be authorized provided the employee/official returns after 8 p.m. and the one-way trip, supported by odometer readings is at least 50 miles.

Process to Request Meal Per Diem Travel Advances

- a. Advance payment of the meal per diem shall be requested not less than two (2) weeks prior to the date of travel to allow ample approval and processing time. Exceptions to the two (2) week rule may be approved by the City Manager in emergency travel situations.
- b. All meal per diem payments must have prior approval and signature of the City Manager on the Travel Advance Request Form (T2).

Misc. Items

- a. Meal costs must be incurred directly by the claimant; direct billing to the City by a restaurant is prohibited.
- b. The City Manager is authorized to periodically review and update the meal allowance schedule based on informal survey of actual meal costs charged by restaurants, or by applying some other appropriate measure, such as a regional consumer price index adjustment. Updates shall be reviewed at a public meeting and approved by Mayor & Council as necessary.

VII. Transportation

It is the responsibility and obligation of each approved traveler to choose the least expensive mode of transportation that conforms to this policy.

Air, Rail, and Bus

Air, rail, and bus fare is acceptable for destinations not within reasonable driving distance. Transportation will be obtained at the most economical rate. "Economy" or "tourist" level shall be obtained at the most economical mode of travel where available. Advance payment for air, rail, or bus tickets with a city issued credit card is required.

Air Travel

1. It is the obligation of the approved traveler to choose the least expensive flight – planning in advance will generally guarantee the lowest airfare and satisfy the traveler's preference. Travel arrangements should be made at least thirty (30) days prior to the travel date.
2. The approved class of transportation for all approved travelers is coach/tourist. First class air travel is not authorized. Every effort should be made to take advantage of any discounted rates by planning and ordering tickets within the required time frames.
3. Baggage fees will be paid by the City of Kennesaw following the guidelines below:
 - a. Baggage fees will NOT be paid by the City of Kennesaw for the following:

- i. Travel that is only one (1) day
- ii. Travel that is only one (1) day overnight (unless otherwise authorized and approved as to why extra baggage is needed).
- b. Baggage fees WILL BE paid by the City of Kennesaw for the following:
 - i. Travel that is two (2) day overnight stay or longer; one checked bag will be allowed.
 - ii. If extra baggage needs to be checked, it must be pre-approved by an Authorizing Party.

Any baggage fees incurred that does not meet the above listed conditions for payment by the City will be at the cost of the traveling City employee, elected official or member of a City advisory board.

- 4. A copy of the ticket and or boarding pass showing the cost of the flight must be attached to each Travel Expense Summary.
- 5. If a non-refundable ticket is purchased and it is NOT used to travel, the cost incurred will be at the expense of the purchaser, unless authorized by the approving authority to be reimbursed with valid written justification as to why the ticket was not used and not cancelled in an appropriate manner.
- 6. If personal travel is combined with business-related travel, the approved traveler shall be responsible for paying the increase in airfare necessary to accommodate the personal part of the flight. Such payment for personal travel shall accompany the City's payment to the vendor for the tickets.
- 7. If changes in travel plans occur that are the result of city business requirements (i.e., delay in departure, cancellations, extended stays, or revised itinerary), any associated costs shall be paid by the City. However, any increase in the cost of travel due to changes for personal convenience will be borne by the employee, elected official or member of a City advisory board.

Parking at Atlanta Hartsfield is strongly discouraged because of the premium paid for parking. Approved travelers are strongly encouraged to use one of the many park-n-fly lots located near the airport. Many of these park-n-fly lots have coupons available on line. Approved travelers are encouraged to utilize any and all available discounts.

Rail and Bus Travel

- 1. A copy of the ticket and or boarding pass showing the cost of the ticket must be attached to each Travel Expense Summary
- 2. Transportation reservations shall be obtained at the most economical rate available.

City Vehicles

1. The use of a City vehicle is authorized for City business purposes **only for travel destinations within the State of Georgia**. Operation of a city vehicle outside the State of Georgia requires the prior written approval of the City Manager. City vehicles can only be driven by City employees or elected officials. City employee and elected official responsibilities as driver of a City vehicle:
 - a. Must possess a valid Georgia driver's license.
 - b. Be insured by the City's vehicle insurance policy.
 - c. Be the only person to drive/operate the vehicle.
 - d. Seat belts must be worn at all times during operation of vehicle.
 - e. Forbidden to operate vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any medication that may impair the ability to operate the vehicle.
 - f. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited in City vehicle.
 - g. Employee is required to immediately report any damage to the vehicle to his/her immediate supervisor or department head.

2. When more than one City employee or elected official is attending the same conference, meeting, training, etc., such individuals shall ride-share in a City vehicle unless granted an exception by the City Manager or by Mayor and Council. Absent the granting of such exception, if space is available in a City vehicle, but the employee or elected official chooses to use their personal vehicle, then that employee or elected official will not be reimbursed for mileage. A second 2nd City vehicle (or a personal vehicle if a City vehicle is not available) may be utilized if there are 4 or more employees traveling to the same location.

3. Receipts must be obtained for all City vehicle expenses, including gasoline purchases and included on the Travel Expense Summary (T3). Tips for valet parking **are not** reimbursable.

Personal Vehicle

Use of a personal vehicle may be authorized only if one of the following conditions is met:

- a. No suitable City vehicle is available
- b. Round trip travel is less than 100 miles.
- c. The Requesting Party has a physical handicap which requires the use of a specially equipped vehicle.

Advance written approval shall be obtained prior to using a personal vehicle. No reimbursement will be made if an employee chooses to use a personal vehicle when a City vehicle was available and there were no special circumstances to prevent use of the City vehicle.

1. The reimbursement rate is the per diem business rate published by the Internal Revenue Service as cents per mile reimbursement. This amount changes periodically and can be found on the Internal Revenue Service website. This rate covers fuel, maintenance, and liability and physical damage insurance costs of the personal vehicle.
2. City employees receiving a monthly auto allowance will not be reimbursed per mileage since the City employee is being compensated for business use of vehicle on a monthly basis.
3. When more than one City employee or elected official is attending a particular function, separate car allowances are not approved unless separate arrival and departure times are dictated by other City business or the vehicle will not accommodate the number of people attending the function (normally four persons) and another City vehicle is not available. It is the responsibility of the Authorizing Party to document and approve.
4. The City employee or elected official must submit a Travel Expense Report documenting mileage driven for City business before reimbursement will be made. Requested mileage reimbursements must be supported by odometer readings, or mapping software digital prints, sent with the supporting backup information along with a completed mileage reimbursement form. Incidental travel will only be reimbursed when pertaining to official City business.
5. Reimbursement requests should be made on a monthly basis and submitted to the Finance Department no later than the 15th (for the previous month's expenses). The Authorizing Party is responsible for ensuring that the total number of miles is correct.
6. Mileage reimbursements are only for City business with your employment requirements. The following instances are not valid reimbursements:
 - a. Not valid for trips within walking distance
 - b. Not valid for City functions, i.e. retirement parties, voluntary luncheons
 - c. Not valid for the trip from your home to the office if you leave from the office prior to your destination
 - d. Not valid on trips to a retailer for purchase of items that could have been purchased on-line unless otherwise authorized by the Department Director or City Manager.

Rental Cars

Rental vehicles are not to be used unless the cost is less than that of other available local transportation such as taxis, hotel/airport shuttles, or mass transit. In many cases a hotel shuttle, taxi or airport limousine offers a fast, convenient and economical mode of

transportation from the airport to the hotel. If a car rental is necessary to reduce costs, approved travelers shall share rental cars, use the appropriate size car as indicated below and utilize any discounts offered.

1. The use of a rental car must be justified as an economical need and not as a matter of personal convenience. Vehicles may be rented when:
 - a. Local transportation is not available.
 - b. The cost of local transportation equals or exceeds the cost of renting an automobile.
2. When renting a vehicle:
 - a. Rentals will be limited to “mid-size” cars with standard accessories, unless special circumstances dictate a larger vehicle.
 - b. Rentals will be covered by appropriate insurance, as required by applicable state laws.
 - c. City policies and procedures governing the use of City vehicles will apply to rental vehicles.
 - d. The approved traveler shall return the rental car according to the car rental policies and signed form for refilling the gas tank to the specified amount on the rental contract to avoid the City being charged a premium rate if the car rental agency refills the tank.
 - e. Receipts **are required** for reimbursements of all rental car costs, including gasoline and parking fees. The rental agreement or express check-out receipt must accompany the reimbursement request.

Local Ground Transportation and Parking

Local transportation and parking costs incurred while out of town for City business will be reimbursed. All reimbursement requests must have a receipt and be submitted with the Travel Expense Summary and Reimbursement Request form.

VIII. REGISTRATION

Registration fees for conferences, seminars, continuing professional education, and training events associated with City business and the professional development of City employees, elected officials or members of a City advisory board are payable by the City when supported by proper documentation. Proper documentation is that which provides information about the course (date, place, time) and course attendee. The following are examples of proper documentation:

- a. Registration form
- b. Brochure or agenda
- c. Screenshot from vendor website detailing event
- d. Email from agency conducting event

City employees, elected officials or members of a City advisory board shall register through advance registration utilizing a City issued credit card. Registration paid by the City in advance is treated as a travel advance to the employee, elected official, or member of City advisory board and must be

accounted for upon return.

NON-ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

It is the policy of the City to reimburse the approved traveler for all reasonable and necessary costs incurred while transacting City business; however, there are specific types of expenses which are considered personal in nature and **not reimbursable and under no circumstance shall they be charged to a city issued credit card**. These expenses specifically include, but are not limited to:

- Personal air travel and other personal trip insurance
- Barber, manicurist, shoe polish
- Briefcases or other items of personal use
- Entertainment expenses (airline headsets, theater or movie tickets, sporting events)
- Personal reading materials
- Repairs, maintenance, or insurance on personal vehicles
- Traffic fines or court costs
- Unauthorized trips, gifts, donations, or club memberships
- Lost or stolen personal property while traveling on City business
- Any alcoholic beverage
- Expenses of a spouse or other persons not authorized to receive reimbursement under this policy
- Damage caused by City employee, elected official or member of City advisory board
- Personal toiletry articles

IX. PROCEDURES

Request for Authorization to Travel

1. When it becomes necessary for a City employee, elected official or member of a City advisory board to travel, the Requesting Party shall prepare and submit a Travel Authorization Form a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the first day of travel, unless a special circumstance is approved by the Authorizing Party. The form must be approved by the Authorizing Party as shown in **Guidelines for Authorization to Travel**. All applicable fields must be completed or the form will be returned.
2. When requesting authorization to travel along with a request for meal per diem advance, the Requesting Party must complete the Travel Advance Form in its entirety.
3. The estimated total travel expense to be incurred for the travel being authorized must be verified against the department's budget and approved by the Authorizing Party.
4. The Advance Request Summary section is to delineate the trip costs for which the City employee, elected official or member of a City advisory board would like to have funds prior to the trip – **this is limited to the approved meal per diem**.

5. The Authorizing Party is responsible for determining that:
 - a. There is sufficient and factual justification provided by the Requesting Party to permit approval.
 - b. There are sufficient unexpended funds remaining in the department's travel budget to reimburse all expected costs of travel.

6. The Authorizing Party will approve or deny the request form once he/she had determined the validity of the request.

When approved the ORIGINAL Travel Authorization Request Form will be submitted to the Finance Department – a copy of the approved form should be retained by the originating department.

Expense Reimbursement Procedures:

Upon returning from the properly authorized trip, the approved traveler must present to the Authorizing Party a complete itemization of all trip expenses on a Travel Expense Report. This final expense statement, with all required receipts and deductions of any prepayments (per diem amounts, etc.) and or travel advances, must be submitted to the Authorizing Party within five (5) business days after returning from the authorized trip. The Authorizing Party will review, sign, date, and properly submit the itemization of expenses to the Finance Department.

To ensure timely processing, the Travel Expense Summary/Reimbursement State Form will be prepared accurately, completely and will include all required receipts and explanations for all expenses. Direct payments and advances to the employee, elected official, or member of City advisory board or committee should be deducted and a net amount due to or from the traveler shown. No claim for reimbursement shall be paid unless it is accompanied by a bona fide vendor's receipt.

The Authorizing Party shall review, sign and submit the expense statement to the Finance Department within two (2) business days.

If the Requesting Party received a travel advance that was greater than the actual expenses incurred, a check in the amount of the unused portion of the advance must accompany the Travel Expense Summary/Reimbursement Form. All checks should be made payable to the City of Kennesaw.

X. GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT:

Overnight travel:

Must have a hotel receipt even if lodging prepaid by City issued credit card.

Any exception must be noted on report (stayed in training facility, stayed with relative, etc.)

Registration:

Must have documentation of registration even if prepaid by City issued credit card (registration form, brochure, agenda, etc.).

If no registration fee applies (i.e. training provided free of charge), it must be noted on report along with documentation (i.e. email from agency, agenda, etc.).

Meals:

If claiming meal reimbursement or per diem associated with an event, must provide supporting documentation for event that evidences date, time, and place (brochure, agenda, registration form, etc.).

If claiming per diem rate for out of state travel, must provide print out of GSA website for that state and city/region evidencing rate.

If claiming a per diem rate less than maximum (meal included in registration, training facility provides food at lessor cost, etc.), it must be noted on report.

The Finance Department will audit Travel Expense Reports to determine mathematical accuracy, cross-reference amounts to receipts, and review appropriateness of expenses within guidelines of this policy. Upon determination of accuracy, the reimbursement request will be processed and payment made approved traveler.

Submission of an inaccurate Travel Expense Report will be returned to the department for correction and resubmission.

Any employee who knowingly submits a false claim for reimbursement may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.