

Town of Spring Lake	ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL POLICIES		SUBJECT: ELECTED OFFICIAL TRAVEL POLICY	
	Number 12	Revisions 2	Board's Approval Date November 9, 2015	
North Carolina	Supersedes 9-22-2014	Effective Date November 10, 2015		Page 1 of 8

**12.0 PURPOSE**

To establish uniform provisions for reimbursement of necessary expenses of elected officials who are required to travel within or outside the county boundaries for the purpose of representing the Town at meetings and professional associations, as well as for training to enhance their skills regarding the performance of their duties as elected officials for the Town. When it is necessary or desirable for an elected official to travel to participate in a meeting, conference, workshop, and seminar or otherwise conduct the Town's business, the Town will bear necessary and reasonable expenses relating to these activities.

**12.1 POLICY INTENT**

This Policy is intended to address out-of-pocket expenses for elected officials when traveling on Town business. It is not intended to replace allowances given to elected officials as a condition of their position.

**12.2 POLICY ADMINISTRATION / REPORTING**

The Town Manager is responsible for the administration of the provisions of this policy. It is the Manager's responsibility to determine if travel is necessary and reasonable and to set standards for reimbursement. The Manager, in his discretion, may defer to the Board on any particular issue. The Manager is responsible for reporting to the Board the status of travel policy, budgeting and expenditures as requested by the Board or as otherwise warranted but in no event on a less than annual basis.

Each year as part of the annual budget process, the Board shall establish the annual travel and training budget for the elected officials.

The Town Clerk shall report to the Board quarterly on the status of each elected official's travel budget and provide copies of settlement reports submitted by elected officials for travel conducted during the preceding quarter. No member of management shall be responsible for the prior review or approval of travel requests submitted by elected officials with the exception of the Finance Director who shall be responsible for pre-audit as to the availability of funds for the requested travel.

### **12.3 PURCHASING CARDS**

Whenever possible, municipal purchasing (credit) cards should be used rather than reimbursement to insure that the most accurate records are provided to the Town. If a municipal purchasing card is used, receipts should be returned to the Finance Department with the completed Travel Advance and Settlement form within the time frame required. All purchasing card transactions must adhere to adopted purchasing policies. Careful attention must be taken to ensure that receipts only include costs for elected officials.

### **12.4 AUTHORIZED TRAVEL MODES**

12.4.1 Town-owned Vehicle – This method of transportation is to be used solely by the Manager and shall be used by the Manager whenever the vehicle is available.

12.4.2 Privately Owned Vehicle – All elected officials shall use their personal vehicles and shall be reimbursed for expenses at the prevailing rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service for business mileage.

12.4.3 Public Transportation / Rental Vehicles – When authorized by the Manager or Board, public transportation may be used. Reimbursement will be for actual costs incurred. Reimbursement for air, rail, or bus fare is limited to business or coach fare, substantiated by a receipt. Quotes must be obtained from more than one common carrier, if multiple carriers exist, and documentation that the lowest fare available is that used must be submitted with the Travel Advance and Settlement form.

### **12.5 TYPES OF TRAVEL AUTHORIZED**

12.5.1 Local Travel – Elected officials who by the normal nature of their duties are required to travel regularly within the Town shall use their personal vehicle for such travel. Any elected official receiving a stipend shall not be paid for local travel when that travel is associated with the duties of the individual. For purposes of this subsection related to those elected officials receiving a stipend, and without relinquishing the reimbursement available for meals under 12.5.2 below, “local travel” shall include all travel within Cumberland County.

12.5.2 Special Local Travel – Elected officials who travel to training sessions, conferences, meetings, etc. within the Town/County may be reimbursed if such travel is in the interests of the Town for:

- (a) Meals that are in connection with or are part of the travel, meetings, etc.

12.5.3 Travel Outside the Town/County – Travel expenses outside the Town/County for Town purposes or purposes in the best interest of the Town for training, conferences, professional meetings, etc. shall be approved by the Manager or Board in advance and may be reimbursed to the limits of this policy, for:

- (a) Transportation
- (b) Meals
- (c) Lodging

**12.6 TRAVEL ADVANCE**

For “Travel outside the Town/County” elected officials may receive advances for reimbursable travel expenses to avoid personal inconvenience or hardships. Such advances shall be approved by the Manager or Board. The individuals traveling must make a request in writing, using the Travel Advance and Settlement form, estimating the travel cost and providing same at least two weeks prior to travel for processing. The Finance Director will issue a check in the amount of the estimate to the elected official upon receipt of the proper forms.

Immediately upon completion of the trip, the elected official will present a signed Travel Advance and Settlement form to the Finance Department and return any money advanced in excess of the actual expenses documented on the form. Any amount advanced and subject to return to the Town, which is not promptly refunded, will be deducted from the elected official’s next payroll. In the event that an elected official does not turn in his/her receipts within ten (10) business days, the entire travel advance will be deducted from the elected official’s next paycheck.

**12.7 MEALS**

Meals consumed by an elected official, as well as the tips thereon, will be advanced /reimbursed based upon the per diem allowance as established annually in the Town of Spring Lake Rate and Fee Schedule. If a meal is provided as part of a registration fee paid by the Town, then no additional reimbursement will be made for that meal. Meals not included in a registration fee as indicated on the meeting agenda will be reimbursed based on the following departure and return schedule, utilizing reasonable commuting times:

- Breakfast – Depart prior to 7:00 a.m.
- Lunch – Depart prior to 11:00 a.m. and return after 2:00 p.m.
- Dinner – Return after 7:00 p.m.

**12.8 LODGING**

Lodging necessary to accommodate overnight travel is appropriately reimbursable to an elected official upon approval of the Manager or Board. If an event is held at a hotel or other facility offering accommodations, that facility may be selected for lodging at the

single occupancy room rate. In the event that there is not lodging available at the conference hotel, an amount up to the cost of lodging in the conference hotel is authorized. The Town will only pay the lesser of the amount requested in advance or the expense actually incurred.

#### **12.9 INCIDENTAL TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Charges billed to an elected official's hotel/motel room that have no bearing to the legitimate business nature of the travel, are the responsibility of the elected official and will not be reimbursed by the Town. Expenses of this nature which are charged to the Town must be noted on the Travel Advance and Settlement Report form and immediately reimbursed to the Town by the elected official.

#### **12.10 OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSE**

Other travel expenses that are allowable are:

- (a) Taxi fares or other costs of transportations between the airport or station and elected official's hotel or from one place of business to another. Taxi fares are also allowable between the hotel and temporary work assignment.
- (b) Baggage charges

Tips that are incidental to any of the above travel expenses, not to exceed 10 percent of the fare, are reimbursable.

#### **12.11 RIDERS**

Individuals other than elected or appointed officials and coworkers may not accompany employees in Town owned vehicles unless they have a business interest in the purpose of the trip and their presence is related to Town business. All such riders shall be approved by the Manager or Board prior to departure.

#### **12.12 ATTENDANTS**

Payment of travel and subsistence expenses for attendants for physically challenged elected officials while traveling on Town business may be reimbursed to the same extent as are elected officials if advance approval is obtained from the Board.

#### **12.13 TRAVEL COMPANIONS**

Spouses, family members, or other guests may travel with elected officials to seminars, meetings, and other gatherings, at their own expense. Traveling companions will not receive a subsistence allowance for "working meals" or events, nor will "spousal events" be paid or reimbursed from Town resources. Careful attention must be taken to ensure that only expenses of the elected official are included on the receipts turned in for audit.

If arrangements have been made for group travel discounts, the cost of companion travel expenses shall be prepaid to the Town prior to departure and/or deducted from travel advances. If the Town provides pooled transportation services, companion attendance will be allowed on a space available basis. If an elected official chooses not to participate in the pooled transportation services, all cost of transportation shall be at the elected official's expense.

#### **12.14 TELEPHONE CALLS**

Elected officials are not allowed to charge long distance telephone calls to the Town for calls made of a personal nature, except as stated below. All long distance calls that are to be paid by the Town are those made pursuant to the elected official conducting official Town business. Anyone traveling to a location outside the local calling area is allowed one (1) long distance phone call to cover "safe arrival" calling. Additionally, elected officials may properly be reimbursed for emergency calls. An example of such is a call made when an elected official calls home to inform someone that the travel period has been extended beyond original plans due to unforeseen reasons.

#### **12.15 IDENTIFYING AND BUDGETING FOR ELECTED OFFICIAL'S TRAVEL**

Each year, as a part of the budget process, the Town Clerk will provide a list of previously attended and known upcoming conferences to the elected officials along with the estimated cost of attending these events. Each elected official will identify, on the form provided by the Clerk, the conferences or training sessions that they would prefer to attend during the upcoming fiscal year. The Town Clerk will use these forms to develop the travel and training budget request for the elected officials. During the budget deliberations, the elected officials will authorize the dollar amount to be included in the fiscal year budget based on the information accumulated and presented by the Town Clerk.

Upon approval of the Board, a fixed dollar amount will be budgeted for each elected official's travel for the fiscal year. The funds will be available for travel and training expense as outlined by this policy. The Clerk shall report to the Board the balance of each elected official's budget at the end of each quarter.

Should an elected official choose not to use a portion of their funds during any given year, they may request that those unspent funds be transferred to one or more elected officials for their use. A Budget Transfer Form shall be signed by the transferring official and presented to the Finance Department for recording of the transfer amount.

#### **12.16 TRAVEL ADVANCE AND SETTLEMENT PROCEDURES**

- 12.16.1 Unless otherwise noted herein, each elected official has the responsibility to determine, from this policy, whether the proposed travel expense is eligible for advancement or reimbursement.
- 12.16.2 An elected official submits the signed Travel Advance and Settlement form with the conference or training agenda attached, along with

appropriate "Blue Sheets" to the Finance Director for pre-audit at least two (2) weeks prior to the travel date(s).

- 12.16.3 The Finance Department returns the Travel Advance and Settlement form to the Town Clerk and processes all attached "Blue Sheets".
- 12.16.4 Within ten (10) business days of returning from travel, the completed and signed Travel Advance and Settlement form is submitted to Finance Department, along with appropriate receipts, for audit. Careful attention must be taken to ensure that only expenses associated with elected officials travel on official Town business are presented on the receipt. If personal expenses are presented, they should be noted as such on the face of the receipt and properly deducted from the total when reporting.
- 12.16.5 The Finance Department shall remit any additional reimbursement funds due the elected official or collect any over advanced funds due from the elected official based on an audit of the submitted documents.
- 12.16.6 The Town Clerk shall provide quarterly a report to the Board showing the status of each elected official's travel budget and copies of all Travel Advance and Settlement forms with supporting documents for the previous quarter.

INDEX

12.0 Purpose.....1  
12.1 Policy Intent.....1  
12.2 Policy Administration / Prior Approval Required .....1  
12.3 Purchasing (credit) Cards.....1  
12.4 Authorized Travel Modes .....2  
12.5 Types of Travel Authorized.....2  
12.6 Travel Advance.....3  
12.7 Meals.....3  
12.8 Lodging.....3  
12.9 Incidental Travel Expenses .....4  
12.10 Other Travel Expenses.....4  
12.11 Riders .....4  
12.12 Attendants .....4  
12.13 Travel Companions.....4  
12.14 Telephone Calls .....5  
12.15 Identifying and Budgeting for Elected Official’s Travel.....5  
12.16 Travel Advance and Settlement Procedures .....6  
12.17 Sample Travel Advance and Settlement Form .....7  
12.18 Sample Budget Transfer Form.....8

---

Approved:



Mayor  
Town of Spring Lake  
Board of Aldermen

11-10-2015  
Date

Attest: Rhonda W. Webb  
Town Clerk

