Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control

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July 27, 2023

The Honorable Esther E. Manheimer
Mayor, City of Asheville
P.O. Box 7148
Asheville, N.C. 28802

Dear Mayor Manheimer:

Each year the N.C. ABC Commission, in compliance with Chapter 18B-700, Article 7, g (2), requires its 167 ABC boards to get annual approval of board travel policies from their appointing authorities, which in our case is the City of Asheville. Section g (2) of 18B-700 states, "The local board shall annually provide the appointing authority's written confirmation of such approval....".

The ABC Board approved the current policy January 26, 2016. Last year the ABC Board incorporated all the elements to changes in the City's Travel Policy, and we made no changes to the current policy.

By way of this correspondence, the Asheville ABC Board formally requests the City of Asheville's written confirmation of the Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control Travel Policy.

Please place this request on the City Council agenda at a time most convenient to you. I will gladly attend the Council meeting if my attendance is requested.

It is my pleasure to serve the City of Asheville.

Cordially,

F. Mark Combs
General Manager

Board of Directors: Robin Cape, Chair I Nian Avery I Chappell Carter I Max Haner I Charles Triber

General Manager: Mark Combs

TRAVEL POLICY

CITY OF ASHEVILLE BOARD OF ALCOHOLIC CONTROL TRAVEL POLICY	EFFECTIVE DATE: Approved January 26, 2016

The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control ('Board') will pay reasonable expenses that are incurred in the course of authorized Board travel. Authorized Board travel expenses include expenses required for Board business or to enhance the knowledge of the individual for the benefit of the Board. The Board has two objectives when paying travel related expenses: 1) to provide employees sufficient funds to execute business on behalf of the Board; and, 2) to safeguard Board funds by paying only reasonable and necessary expenses. This policy outlines what constitutes a reasonable and necessary expense.

The General Manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring that travel expenditures comply with this policy and for the thorough review and approval of all documents necessary for the disbursement of Board funds related to employee travel. The purpose of the required documentation is to provide sufficient evidence to anyone who reviews travel transactions that public funds were expended in compliance with this policy.

Employees travelling on behalf of the Board of Alcoholic Control are expected to utilize services and accommodations appropriate for the business to be conducted. Employees are expected to travel and conduct business in reasonable comfort, within reasonable commuting distance from the meeting/work area, and exercise good judgment in distinguishing between comfort and extravagance. In addition, employees are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the Board of Alcoholic Control Ethics Policy.

I. Approval Required for Travel on Board Business

A. **Travel Authorization Form**: Employees must obtain prior approval for travel from the General Manager by completing a *Travel Authorization Form* (Appendix A). In the event travel is conducted without prior approval, the employee may be held responsible for all expenses incurred. The *Travel Authorization Form* must be signed by both the requesting employee and the General Manager. The form must include the purpose of the trip, the destination (city and state), the departure/returns dates, and the estimated expenditures. Once approved, the *Travel Authorization Form* must be submitted to the Finance Department, even if no travel advance is requested.

B. **Travel Advance Request:** An advance for estimated travel expenses may be requested on the *Travel Authorization Form.* Travel advances should be submitted no sooner than six (6) weeks prior but no later than two (2) weeks in advance of any travel. Following a trip, employees must account for their travel advance by completing and submitting a *Travel Expense Report* to Accounts Payable within twenty (20) working days of their return date. Failure to comply with this policy may result in: (1) a warning for the first offense and (2) disciplinary action and denial of future travel advances for a second offense. Unused travel advance money must be reimbursed to the Board and supporting documentation (receipts) attached to the *Travel Expense Report.* In the event that travel is canceled after the receipt of a travel advance, the funds should be promptly returned to the Chief Financial Officer.

C. **Travel Expense Report:** A *Travel Expense Report*, (Appendix B) must be completed, approved, and submitted to Finance for ALL travel, even when a credit card is used to pay for expenses and/or no reimbursement is due. The form must include the purpose of the trip, the destination (city and state), the departure/return dates, and the expenses incurred. All receipts and supporting documents must be attached to the *Travel Expense Report*. Receipts should be scanned and labeled appropriately or affixed in date order to an 8 1/2 x11 sheet of paper and attached to the *Travel Expense Report*. After review and approval (signature required) by the General Manager, the report should be forwarded to Accounts Payable. When a Board credit card is used, a copy of the Travel Expense Report must be attached to the copy of the credit card statement and receipts retained by the employee or proxy for audit purposes. Each employee traveling will be responsible for submitting his/her own receipts and *Travel Expense Report*. All Travel Expense Reports must be submitted within the timeframe as referenced in Section IB.

D. **Credit Card for Travel Expenses:** Some employees may be issued Board credit cards with travel privileges. These cards can be used for travel and other expenses that are typically paid by the Board. Personal expenses are not to be placed on a Board credit card under any circumstances. Misuse of a Board credit card or violation of this policy may result in card privileges being revoked and/or other disciplinary action being taken up to and including termination.

II. **Reimbursable Expenses:** The Board will pay an employee's actual expenses as authorized within this policy except for meals and incidental expenses (see IIA and IIJ). Itemized receipts from the vendor must be submitted except for meal receipts unless the meals were purchased on a Board credit card. While credit card/balance due receipts must also be submitted, such receipts on their own are unacceptable. Failure to submit itemized receipts will render those expenses non-reimbursable.

A. Meals, General Rules

1. Meals and incidental expenses will be paid on a per diem basis and based on rates established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for the current fiscal year (www.gsa.gov/perdiem). If neither the city nor county is listed, the rate for meals and incidental expenses will be the standard CON US (Contiguous U.S.) destination rate. The first and last day of travel, designated as travel days, will be paid at 75% the GSA per diem rate. Travel-related meals will be reimbursed if an overnight stay is required or if multiple trips are required during two or more consecutive days.
2. If the General Manager authorizes meal reimbursement for an employee for a day trip related to training or other Board business and the day-trip is for more than 12 hours and less than 24 hours, the employee will receive reimbursement at 75% the GSA per diem rate (travel day rate). If the General Manager authorizes a meal reimbursement for a day-trip that is less than 12 hours, the employee will receive reimbursement for specific meals during the trip only. Because current IRS regulations identify day-trip meals as taxable to the employee, any meal reimbursement for a day-trip will be reported on the employee's W-2 form and is subject to employment taxes in accordance with these regulations. That is, if travel does not require an overnight stay, meal expenses may be reimbursed with General Manager approval but must also be added to the employee's wages for tax purposes.

3. The Board will pay for meals at scheduled seminars, training sessions, and other meetings but will not reimburse for meals elsewhere if the meal cost was included in the conference fee. If meals are included in the conference fee, the per diem rate will be adjusted by the GSA amount for the covered meals. A conference itinerary/schedule must be included as supporting documentation. The Board will not pay for social or recreational conference functions that are separate ticketed events not included in the base conference registration fee without prior approval of the General Manager (to be noted on *Travel Authorization Form*). Meal related tips are included in the per diem rate total.

B. Meals Paid with a Credit Card:

1. Employees using their Board credit card for travel-related meals should retain receipts and submit them as usual as part of the credit card process. Use of a credit card for meals should be indicated on the *Travel Expense Report* with copies of the receipts attached.
2. Credit Card payment for meals should not exceed the per diem rate established by the GSA. Any cost in excess of the GSA established per diem rate must be reimbursed by the employee.
3. With prior written approval from the General Manager, an increase to the per diem rate may be granted on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with IRS regulations, any amount in excess of the maximum federal per diem rate for the travel destination will be reported on the employee's W-2 form and subject to employment taxes.

C. Meals Reimbursed or Paid with a Travel Advance:

1. Employees paying for meals out of pocket or with a travel advance DO NOT need to retain receipts. Meals will be reimbursed or travel advance provided at the GSA per diem rate.
2. With prior written approval from the General Manager, an increase to the per diem rate may be granted on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with IRS regulations, any amount in excess of the maximum federal per diem rate for the travel destination will be reported on the employee's W-2 form and subject to employment taxes.
3. **Entertainment:** The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will not reimburse employees for entertainment unless it is necessary for the purpose of the trip. Written approval from the General Manager stating the business purpose must be attached to the *Travel Expense Report.*
4. **Alcoholic Beverages:** *Under no circumstances will the cost of alcoholic beverages be reimbursed nor should they be charged on a Board credit card.* Employees are expected to pay for any alcoholic beverages separate from any eligible meal when using a Board credit card, in accordance with purchasing and credit card policy and procedures.

D. Transportation:

1. **Commercial Airlines:** The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will pay for coach roundtrip airfare. Employees are expected to take advantage of discounts whenever possible; however, employees are not required to fly at unusual times in order to qualify for discounts. Employees may retain frequent flyer miles and similar travel awards; however, employee shall not pay a higher price for the fare in order to obtain frequent flyer miles.
    i. *Baggage Fees*: The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will pay for the cost of one checked bag per employee traveling. Additional baggage fees will be covered only with written permission of the General Manager.

ii. *Upgrades*: Other updates such as seat selections, travel insurance, and internet on planes may be approved at the discretion of the General Manager.

2. **First-Class Airfare:** The Board will pay only coach class fares, but employees may choose to travel first-class at their own expense.
3. **Vehicle Use:** The objective of this policy is to insure the lowest reasonable cost for travel. However, it is not intended to create hardships for employees. Therefore, the employees' convenience may be considered in providing flexibility to those who travel by vehicle.
    i. **Board Vehicles:** Board vehicles or those vehicles should be used when available. A Board Fuel Card should be used for all direct expenses associated with the use of a Board vehicle, such as gasoline and oil.
    ii. **Rental Vehicles:** When renting vehicles, the employee should purchase the blanket insurance coverage offered by the Board's preferred vendor (consult with Purchasing Department regarding vendor to use). The appropriate size of the rental vehicles should depend on such factors as the number of passengers and the amount of luggage or equipment being carried.
    iii. **Car Services/Taxis/Public Transportation:** The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will reimburse employee's reasonable car fare plus gratuity for required transportation. No more than a 20% tip will be reimbursed. Receipts must be retained and attached to the Travel Expense Report.

iv. **Personal Vehicles:** Employees may use their personal vehicle for Board travel. Supporting documentation (i.e. Google maps directions) must be attached to the Travel Expense Report. The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will pay the Internal Revenue Service mileage rate in effect at the time of travel. For all mileage reimbursement, the employee's office is to be used as the starting point. When an employee is using his/her personal car on a trip and the destination is more than 300 miles from the employee's office (one-way), the Board will not reimburse the employee for expenses such as lodging, meals and incidentals while in transit, which exceed the cost of a 21-day advance round-trip coach airfare. Any travel time that is greater than the time required to travel by scheduled airlines will be considered vacation time. Normal travel time will not exceed one day.

1. The Board will pay for additional work-related mileage at the destination. A mileage log or other documentation (i.e. Google map} must be attached to the Travel Expense Report.
2. When travel is by airfare, the Board will pay for airport parking expenses. For airport parking, supporting documentation must be attached to the Travel Expense Report and can be obtained from the airport's website. Mileage reimbursement to the airport will be calculated from the employee's office (workday destination}.
3. If an employee is driving a personal vehicle outside of the City and has car failure, the Board will pay the expense of towing the vehicle to the nearest garage, over and above the employee's personal towing insurance coverage. The employee must pay for all repairs. The towing and insurance documentation, reflecting the amount covered, must be attached to the Travel Expense Report.

G. **Accommodations:** The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will pay actual expenses for hotel, motels or other lodging to include parking. Employees must request the reduced government rate or conference rate, if available, when making reservations. Most hotels will not accept claims to a government rate after check-in. Board employees are not exempt from hotel taxes and will be reimbursed for such taxes.

1. The Board will pay no more than the cost of a single occupancy room. If an employee shares a room with someone who is not an employee of the Board or who is not traveling on Board business and the room cost is higher than the single room rate, the employee is responsible for paying the difference in cost.

2. Meals ordered through room service will be subject to the GSA per diem rate as referenced above in Section IIC.

H. **Telephone:**

1. Employees should avoid using hotel provided phones whenever possible.

2. Employees who possess Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control cell phones should use that phone, subject to the rules outlined in the Cell Phone Policy.

I. *Internet*: Internet connection fees will be reimbursed at the discretion of the General Manager.

J. *Internet Expenses*: The Asheville Board of Alcoholic Control will not pay for dry cleaning, shoe shining, haircuts, manicures/pedicures, magazines and books, tickets to the theater, sports events or other such expenses. Incidental expenses covered as part of the GSA per diem rate for meals and incidental expenses include: fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, and restaurant servers.

K. *Travel on behalf of Other Agencies*: With the approval of the General Manager, employees may be granted travel time on behalf of other organizations. In unusual circumstances, the General Manager is authorized to approve an advance of Board funds for travel expenses incurred on such trips. The same guidelines outlined in this Policy apply.

L. *Travel Outside Normal Workday:* Compensation for travel required outside an employee's normal working hours (i.e. Saturday, Sunday, evening), will be calculated according to the department requirements and consistent with the *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)* and accompanying regulations.

III. Other Authorizing/Approvals: Authorization for Travel and Expense Report approval for the General Manager will be the next level of supervision as appropriate.