

SeaTac

City Council Expense and Reimbursement Policy

Statutory Authority. RCW 35A.13.040 provides in relevant part, “Councilmembers shall receive reimbursement for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of the duties of their office, or the council by ordinance may provide for a per diem allowance.”

Policy Intent. The purpose of this Policy is to address the City’s reimbursement of Councilmember expenses.

Cellular Phones. Cellular phones are an important and necessary tool in the performance of Councilmember duties. Payment for Councilmember cellular phone use will only be allowed in accordance with this Policy.

It is preferred that a City-provided cellular phone be used for City business. The reason for this is because a City-issued cell phone allows for standardization of equipment, the enforcement of security policies, the consistent review of billing statements, and more efficiency for Public Records Act and State Archivist requirements. However, a personal cellular phone may be used in lieu of a City provided cellular phone at the discretion of the Councilmember.

A Councilmember may elect one of the following options as set forth below:

Option A--City provided cellular phone service. The Councilmember will be provided a City issued cellular phone and cellular phone service on the City’s cellular phone plan, which includes data plan access (Smartphone) if requested by the Councilmember. Cellular phones provided will be the same phones provided to other City employees. The Councilmember will also be provided one cellular phone case and one hands-free (Bluetooth) device. All equipment issued by the City will remain property of the City and the Councilmember will be responsible for protecting the equipment from loss, damage, or theft.

Councilmembers are not required to reimburse the City for *de minimis* personal calls as set forth in the City’s “USE OF CITY PROVIDED CELLULAR TELEPHONE POLICY” as doing so would require overly burdensome recordkeeping that would outweigh the costs recovered for personal calls. However, the use of City cellular phones *shall not be used for any purpose prohibited by law (for example, campaign purposes)*.

Option B--Privately obtained cellular phone service. The Councilmember may utilize a personal cellular phone and personal cellular phone service. In the event that a Councilmember utilizes their personal cellular phone service in lieu of City provided cellular phone service, the Councilmember will be entitled to receive a cellular phone allowance up to the cost paid by the City for phone service as provided in Option A. Appropriate payroll taxes on the allowance amount will be withheld, and the amount of the allowance will be included on the year-end W-2.

If a Councilmember selects *Option B*, they will be solely responsible for the purchase and maintenance of any cellular phone equipment and charges, including accessories (including but not limited to hands-free devices), and paying any associated charges. The City will not provide

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technical support for personal cell phones, except for limited support for data communication with the City's network for those authorized to have the ability to do so.

Internet Expenses. Members of the City Council rely on access to Internet communications and network-based electronic information resources to carry out the basic functions needed to support the City's business. This access is often needed at a Councilmember's home. Councilmembers can make significant contributions to City business and the City's mission outside normal business hours while conducting their Councilmember duties at home. These contributions are dependent on ubiquitous, reliable, and often high-speed Internet access. Therefore, Councilmembers may receive reimbursement for high speed internet access up to \$55.00 per month. However, no reimbursement for Internet access is allowed if a Councilmember receives data service for an iPad or similar tablet device.

Meal Reimbursement. This policy clarifies that individual Councilmember meal expenses that are not covered by the City's Travel Policies, Regulations, and Procedures are not authorized expenses and will not be reimbursed. However, meal expenses will be provided if in connection with a seminar or conference, or if being provided to the Council as a whole as a matter of convenience due to Council meeting times. The following is intended to be an illustration of the intent of the policy with regard to meals:

Not reimbursable:

- Councilmember(s) and Staff meet during a meal to discuss City business.
- Councilmember(s) meet with a constituent/citizen during a meal to discuss City business (expenses of Councilmember and constituent/citizen not reimbursable).
- Councilmember(s) have coffee together and discuss City business.
- Councilmember(s) attend a charity function/fundraiser in which a meal is provided.

Reimbursable:

- Councilmember(s) attend a conference/seminar/training in which a meal is part of the conference/seminar/training.
- Councilmembers attend functions related to City business (e.g. Suburban Cities Association dinners, Southwest King County Chamber of Commerce lunches, etc.).
- Meals provided when there is not adequate time for Councilmembers to leave the building to eat in between meetings (e.g. lunch during council retreat; sandwiches in between Study Session and Regular Council Meetings).

Time Period for Reimbursement. Councilmembers reimbursement requests must be submitted within 90 calendar days of incurring the expense except at fiscal year-end (December 31st), when requests must be received by January 15th.