**CITY OF BIRCHWOOD**

**TRAVEL POLICY FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

1. **General Statement of Policy**

The City of Birchwood shall not reimburse any elected official for travel expenses to any event, workshop, conference, or assignment unless the travel has been approved in advance of incurring the expense. This policy sets forth the conditions under which travel expenses will be reimbursed by the City. This policy is being promulgated

pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 471.661. This policy shall apply to both in-state and out-of-state travel.

1. **Procedures for Obtaining Approval of Official Travel**
2. The Mayor or any other council member who seeks authorization to incur travel expenses shall request the Clerk to place the matter on the agenda for a regular or special council meeting.
3. The person requesting the travel shall provide the Council with an explanation of the reasons for the travel and an estimate of the cost.
4. The Council shall consider the matter in the form of a motion. A majority vote of a quorum is required to authorize the travel and reimbursement of expenses. The person requesting the travel may vote on the matter.
5. The Mayor may authorize another council member to attend an event and incur expenses when there is insufficient time to bring the matter to the full council and the Mayor determines it is in the best interest of the City to attend the event. The Council shall be advised of the decision at the next regular council meeting.
6. **Guidelines for Approval of Official Travel on Behalf of the City**
7. No travel on behalf of the City shall be authorized by the Council unless the Council determines it is in the best interests of the City to send the Mayor or other council member to the event.

2. The Council shall consider the following factors in deciding whether to authorize the travel and reimbursement of expenses:

1. Whether the elected official will be receiving training on issues relevant to the City or to his or her role as the Mayor or as a council member;
2. Whether the elected official will be meeting and networking with other elected officials to exchange ideas on topics of relevance to the City or on the official roles of local elected officials.
3. Whether the elected officials will be viewing a city facility or function that is similar in nature to one that is currently operating at, or under consideration by the City, where the purpose for the trip is to study the facility or function to bring back ideas for the consideration of the full council.
4. Whether the City has sufficient funding available in the budget to pay the cost of the trip.
5. No reimbursements will be made for attendance at events sponsored by or affiliated with political parties.
6. The Council shall not authorize more than one council member to attend an event unless it is a training event that will benefit all members who attend.
7. **Reimbursement of Expenses for Official City Travel**
8. The City may make payments in advance for airfare, lodging and registration if specifically approved by the council. Otherwise all payments will be made as reimbursements to the elected official.
9. The City will reimburse for transportation, lodging, meals, registration, and incidental costs in accordance with the following:
   1. Airfare will be reimbursed at the coach rate, but no air travel is authorized to any location within the State of Minnesota without specific authorization from the Council.
   2. Mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS rate. If two or more council members travel together by car, only the driver will receive reimbursement. The City will reimburse for the cost of renting an automobile if necessary to conduct city business.
   3. Lodging costs and meal expenses are limited to a reasonable amount, taking into account the location of the travel.
   4. Receipts are required for lodging, airfare, and meals and should accompany an expense report form. It is not necessary to have receipts for cabs and tips. The expense report form shall be submitted to the City Clerk for payment.
   5. The City will not reimburse for alcoholic beverages, personal telephone calls, costs associated with the attendance of a family members, rental of luxury vehicles, meal expenses included in the cost of registration, or recreational expenses such as golf or tennis.
10. **Unreimbursed Travel**

Nothing in this policy shall preclude the Mayor or a council member from traveling to a workshop, conference, or other event at his or her own expense.

1. **Review of Policy**

The Council shall review the Travel Policy to determine whether any amendments are appropriate once each calendar year. Any amendments to the Policy shall be by majority vote of a quorum of the council.

Adopted this 12th day of July, 2011