

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT TRAVEL EXPENSE POLICY

WHEREAS, in the normal course of performing their duties to the residents of the Yaphank Fire District and to the members of the Yaphank Fire Department in order to provide the best fire and rescue service, certain officers of the District and the Department must travel to various locations in the performance of these duties **AND**

WHEREAS, this travel is authorized by law as an expense to the Fire District, **AND**

WHEREAS, the Commissioners are mindful that this travel can be expensive to the residents of the Yaphank Fire District, **THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED the Board of Fire Commissioners hereby adopts policy 19-006 as its policy on travel expense

Adopted at the Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Yaphank Fire District on January 20, 2021.

Attest by:

Paulamarie Rosso-Thompson
District Secretary

Yaphank Fire District

Travel Expense Policy and Procedures

General

1. This policy covers the review, reimbursement and/or settlement of all travel related expenses.
2. All travel for Fire District business must be authorized by the Board of Fire Commissioners and such approval must be noted in the official meeting minutes of the Board. Personnel electing to travel to and attend events at their own expense without Board authorization will not be considered to be on official district business and will not be deemed to be representatives of the Fire District or fire department at such events. It is important to note that personnel are not covered under Workers Compensation or Volunteer Firefighters Benefits Law plans unless they are engaged in officially authorized travel and are injured or rendered ill in the performance of official duties.
3. All travel arrangements must be made by the Fire District Secretary or other approved representative of the Board of Fire Commissioners unless otherwise authorized by the Board of Fire Commissioners.
4. Lodging accommodations on official business are exempt from State and local taxes if travel is within New York State. A form should be obtained from the Fire District Secretary prior to travel so that it can be used by the traveling official, employee, chief or firefighter at the travel location.
5. Alcoholic beverages are not an authorized expense and will not be reimbursed.
6. Travel must be by the most direct route possible. Travel must be undertaken by the *most cost effective and reasonable means*. The most cost effective and reasonable means of travel will be determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and the district official assigned to make reservations and travel arrangements. It will not be at the discretion of traveling personnel. Any person traveling on district business at district expense seeking to change travel arrangements must contact the district office and obtain official approval before making any changes to arrangements made by the district office. In the event that the person fails to do so, he or she will be personally responsible for any additional cost created by unauthorized changes to travel arrangements. The decision to use air or rail transportation rather than a district owned vehicle, personal vehicle or rental vehicle shall be a Board decision based upon the *most cost effective and reasonable means* of travel. Personnel with special needs must advise the district office of those needs. However, it is important to note that special needs relate to the traveling official, employee, Chief or firefighter. They do not relate to family members who might be traveling with the official, employee, chief or firefighter. The special needs of family members are a personal concern and expense issue for

the official, employee, chief or firefighter. Please note that it is not that the Board of Fire Commissioners is insensitive to such needs, but rather that district funds can only be expended on the legally reimbursable expenses incurred by the official, employee, chief or firefighter.

7. Per Diem Allowances

Whenever a municipality is authorized or required to reimburse its officers, employees or the volunteer members or officers of the fire department for their actual and necessary expenses for meals in conjunction with travel on official business, the governing board of such municipality may be determined by resolution to allow and pay a reasonable per diem allowance for meals in lieu of such actual and necessary expenses. Such allowances shall meet the standard meal allowances for business-related travel adopted or prescribed for federal income tax purposes. **GML 77-c.**

8. Travel will begin on the day of the convention or seminar and end on the last day of the convention or seminar unless the Board determines to permit travel the day before and the day after the convention or seminar based upon the location of the meeting, and the time of the first /last meeting that is scheduled for the event. If travel to and from the location of the meeting will take in excess of two hours (portal to portal, land and air transportation combined), and the meeting /registration begins before 11:00 A.M., the Board will consider authorizing travel the day before. Under similar circumstances the Board will consider travel the day after the convention or seminar if the last meeting ends at 3:00 P.M. or later.

In addition, the Board will consider, on a case by case basis, an application to leave for a convention/seminar early or return later if the convention/seminar requires air travel, does not require a Saturday stay over, and the inclusion of a Saturday stay over will result in a net savings to the District when airfare cost is compared to the cost of lodging/meal/rental car, etc. for the additional day(s).

Meals

The Board reserves the right to set a per diem meal rate based upon the Government Services Administration rate for per diem meals at the location and in that case the traveling personnel will receive the meal allowance and will not be required to supply receipts. This option will only be available if approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners for the travel event. When the Board sets a per diem rate for an event under this rule, the per diem dollar limit for the location set by the Government Services Administration.

Lodging

1. Hotel and Motel expense shall be reimbursable when incurred in the course of official business
2. If the duration of the stay necessary is sufficient to warrant a weekly rate efforts should be made to secure the weekly rate.
3. Original Hotel bills and receipts for hotel and motel room charges must be submitted. These charges are to be attached to the members Travel Expense Report.
4. Lodging accommodations on official business are exempt from State and Local taxes if the travel is within New York State.
5. In additional, the Board will review hotel and lodging accommodations in order to make certain that personnel obtain the Government Services Administration rate for lodging in that location where available and when not available, the convention, conference or seminar published room rate provided same is not greater than three times the Government Services Administration rate for lodging in that location (see 300% rule applied by GSA under Federal Travel Regulation). The Board minutes will reflect Board review and approval of the lodging rates approved for each event.

Transportation

1. Travel shall be either Coach, Economy or Business Class unless the trip is of an emergency nature and Coach, Economy Class or Business Class is not available, or unless the effect of First Class travel is an overall economy to the travel purpose.
2. The passenger's portion of the used tickets and any unused tickets must be attached to the Travel Expense Report.
3. If a member's spouse or other members of their family accompany a member on a business trip, expenses other than those directly applicable to the member , are considered personal and are therefore non reimbursable.
4. Reimbursable charges for intercity travel are authorized. The use of public mass transit is encouraged. However if it is necessary to use Taxicabs, Buses, Etc., efforts should be made to secure receipts and attach them to the Travel Expense Report.

Personal Vehicles

1. Personally owned vehicles may be used for approved business travel unless the Board determines that travel by automobile is not the *most cost effective and reasonable means* of travel for the particular event. Mileage, round trip from the member's home to the activity and required mileage at the destination are reimbursable items.
2. Mileage reimbursement shall include all costs with the exception of tolls and parking. A per mile dollar figure will be approved yearly by the Board of Fire Commissioners at the Organizational Meeting. The rate will be based upon the applicable rate set by the Internal Revenue Service and in no event shall be higher than that rate. The rate set by the Internal Revenue Service for business related travel as adopted annually.

Rental Vehicles

1. Full sized cars or S.U.V. should be selected for rental. Drop off charges for one way rentals should be avoided if possible.
2. If the car rental is of sufficient duration to warrant a weekly rate, then all efforts should be made to secure such a rate.
3. A copy of the car rental charges must be submitted.

Other Incidentals and Emergency Expenses

1. Costs of a business nature for such additional items as handling of baggage, parking, tolls and gratuities not included under meals/lodging are allowable. Receipts should be obtained for tolls and attached to the Travel Expense Report.
2. Any tolls that are incurred to and from the site of the authorized event are reimbursable. Each member requesting reimbursement for tolls must attach a receipt for the requested toll(s) from the issuing agency to his/her claim voucher. If an E-Z Pass Statement is to be used, the cover sheet showing the member's name and E-Z Pass Tag# as well as the activity sheet showing the toll activity covering the authorized toll(s) is also to be attached to the claim voucher.
3. The Board reserves the right to authorize other necessary travel expenses that relate to the business needs of the Fire District.

In the event of some unforeseen emergency or natural disaster occurring at the location of the event, the Board of Fire Commissioners reserves the authority to approve extraordinary expenses for traveling personnel unable to complete their business travel based upon normally accepted travel rules. Personnel may make arrangements to return home early if early warnings of a pending emergency or natural disaster permit,

and in fact, should make every effort to do so. Personnel confronted by such a situation must make every effort to contact the District office in order to keep the Fire District advised of their status.

Special Rules for Volunteer Firefighter Out of State Training

In 2006 Section 72-g of the General Municipal Law which governs sending volunteer firefighters to training schools and seminars was amended. The amendment sets new parameters when firefighters are sent out of state to attend a training school or seminar. The Board must determine with regard to out of state training for volunteer firefighters that the training;

1. Is necessary and in the public interest, and
2. Is not available within a reasonable distance and time period in the state.

The Chief will submit a report to the Board of Fire Commissioners at an official meeting thereof when he or she requests the attendance of such volunteer firefighters at an out of state training event detailing why the training attendance is necessary and in the public interest, and his or her research that has revealed that the training or a suitable substitute for same is not available within a reasonable distance and time period in the state.

Thus, Board approvals for such training will state in the minutes of the meeting that these requirements have been met.

After completion of the training the Chief must send a report on the training to the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (“OFPC”) on the form provided by that office and a copy of the report shall be filed with the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Training Schools and Seminars as Opposed to Conferences and Conventions

The above rules on out of state travel shall pertain to sending volunteer firefighters of the rank of captain and below to training schools and seminars. Chiefs, district officers and employees may attend conferences and conventions in New York State and outside of New York State in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 77-b of the General Municipal Law which does not require the findings described about for volunteer firefighter training/ travel.

Cost Effective Travel

However, Section 77-b of General Municipal Law and Section 178-c of the Town Law were amended in 2006 in order to provide that travel expenses incurred by fire district officers, employees and chiefs must be incurred based upon the *most cost effective and reasonable* means of travel, and that any mileage allowances may not to exceed the Internal Revenue Service limits. The Board of Fire Commissioners has determined that all travel expenses incurred by the Yaphank Fire District shall be incurred based upon the use of the most cost effective and reasonable means of travel.

In additional, the Board will review hotel and lodging accommodation in order to make certain the personnel obtain the Government Services Administration rate for lodging in that location where available and when not available, the convention, conference or seminar published room rate provided same is not greater than three times the Government Services Administration rate for lodging in that location (see 300% rule applied by GSA under Federal Travel Regulation). The Board minutes will reflect Board review and approval of the lodging rates approved for each event.

By Order of
Board of Fire Commissioners
Yaphank Fire District

Chairman Peters	AYE
Commissioner Thebold	AYE
Commissioner Austin	AYE
Commissioner Schaaf	AYE
Commissioner Skidmore	AYE

Adopted at the Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Yaphank Fire District on January 20, 2021.

Re-Adopted this 2nd day of January 2024 by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Attest by:

Paulamarie Rosso-Thompson
District Secretary