

1 **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF STONECREST, GEORGIA, ADOPTING THE**
2 **CITY OF STONECREST, GEORGIA, TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

3 **WHEREAS**, the City of Stonecrest, Georgia, Mayor, and City Council are authorized by the City
4 Charter to authorize the expenditure of money for any purpose for which a
5 municipality is authorized by the laws of the State of Georgia and O.C.G.A. § 36-
6 35-4 authorizes the governing authority of each municipal corporation to fix the
7 expenses of its municipal employees; and

8 **WHEREAS**, this Ordinance seeks to provide guidelines for the payment of necessary travel
9 expenses in an efficient, cost effective manner, and require travelers execute their
10 travel obligations at the lowest reasonable costs, resulting in the best value for the
11 citizens of Stonecrest, Georgia.

12
13 **THEREFORE**, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Stonecrest, Georgia, hereby ordain as
14 follows:

15 **Section 1:** **The Mayor and City Council of the City of Stonecrest, Georgia, hereby adopt**
16 **the City of Stonecrest, Georgia, Travel Policy and Procedures as contained in Exhibit "A"**
17 **attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.**

18
19 **Section 2:**

- 20 1. It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and City Council that all sections,
21 paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Ordinance are and were, upon their
22 enactment, believed by the Mayor and City Council to be fully valid, enforceable and
23 constitutional.
- 24
25 2. It is hereby declared to be the intention of the Mayor and City Council that, to the greatest
26 extent allowed by law, each and every section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this
27 Ordinance is severable from every other section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of
28 this Ordinance. It is hereby further declared to be the intention of the Mayor and City
29 Council that, to the greatest extent allowed by law, no section, paragraph, sentence, clause
30 or phrase of this Ordinance is mutually dependent upon any other section, paragraph,
31 sentence, clause or phrase of this Ordinance.
- 32
33 3. In the event that any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section of this Ordinance shall,
34 for any reason whatsoever, be declared invalid, unconstitutional or otherwise
35 unenforceable by the valid judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, it is
36 the express intent of the Mayor and City Council that such invalidity, unconstitutionality,
37 or unenforceability shall, to the greatest extent allowed by law, not render invalid,
38 unconstitutional or otherwise unenforceable any of the remaining phrases, clauses,
39 sentences, paragraphs or sections of the Ordinance and that, to the greatest extent allowed

40 by law, all remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of the Ordinance
41 shall remain valid, constitutional, enforceable, and of full force and effect.
42

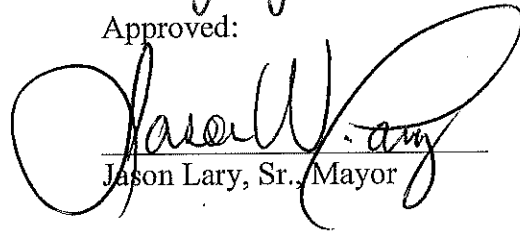
43 4. All ordinances or resolutions and parts of ordinances or resolutions in conflict herewith are
44 hereby expressly repealed.
45

46 5. The within ordinance shall become effective upon its adoption.
47

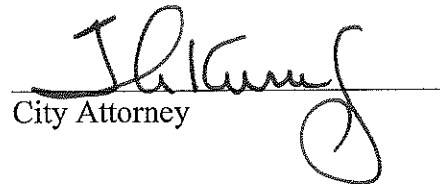
48 6. The provisions of this Ordinance shall become and be made part of The Code of the City
49 of Stonecrest, Georgia, and the sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered to
50 accomplish such intention

51 **SO ORDAINED AND EFFECTIVE** this the 16 day of July, 2018.

52 Approved:

53 
54
55
56 Jason Lary, Sr., Mayor

57 As to form:

58
59
60
61 
62
63 City Attorney

64 Attest:

65 
66
67
68 Brenda James, City Clerk

69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82

83
84
85
86

EXHIBIT A

CITY TRAVEL REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION:

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for payment of travel expenses in an efficient, cost effective manner, and to enable travelers to successfully execute their travel requirements at the lowest reasonable costs, resulting in the best value for the City. Teleconferencing instead of travel should be considered when possible. Each department is charged with the responsibility for determining the necessity, available resources and justification for the need and the method of travel.

It is important for Elected Officials and employees to understand the intent of the Policy and work with their management on managing work related travel, accordingly.

AUTHORITY

The Mayor and Council are authorized to adopt rules and regulations governing in- state and out-of-state travel and travel reimbursement that promote economy and efficiency in city government and which treat elected officials and employees fairly and equitably. Appeals from a decision under this travel policy shall be taken to the Mayor and City Council. In the event that an Elected Official appeals a decision, the Elected Official shall be recused from voting on the appeal.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Throughout this document words like “must” and “should” are used. When the term “must” is used, no department or individual has the authority to deviate from the specific policy/procedure. The term “should” is used to convey that departments and individuals are expected to follow the policy/procedure as written and are required to justify any departures from such policy/procedure when the specifics of the situation indicate an alternate procedure is a reasonable departure from the recommended policy/procedure.

All departments and governing body are required to follow the guidelines outlined in the City of Stonecrest Travel Regulations. For disabilities, the City has authority to provide reasonable accommodations during travel on official city business.

All requests for reimbursements under this policy must be made within thirty (30) days of incurring the expense. The City will not reimburse travelers for expense requests made more than thirty (30) days after incurring the expense.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

The City of Stonecrest reimburses travelers for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in connection with approved travel on its behalf pursuant to the traveler's official duties. All reimbursements for Elected Officials must be in accordance with the City's Charter and Georgia law. The City encourages travelers to take advantage of arranged travel discounts whenever possible.

A necessary expense is one for which there exists a clear business purpose and is within the City's expense policy limitations. A clear business purpose contains all information appropriate to and the purpose for attending and how the expenditure benefited the City.

Establishing policies and procedures for travel expenses enable the City to effectively comply with federal and state regulations.

These policies are intended to be guidelines for the planning and reimbursement of all City approved travel expenses. There are several key points to remember when incurring expenses on behalf of the City:

- Under no circumstances should an individual approve his/her own expense report. In most cases he/she should not approve the expense report of a person to whom he/she functionally or administratively reports.
- All expense reports must be submitted by the individual who incurred the expense.
- A large number of exceptions or Policy violations will increase the likelihood of expense report audits.
- The City will not reimburse employees or Elected Officials for personal expenses.
- The Elected Official is required to return any unused portion of a reimbursement.
- All travelers must return any amounts paid in excess of expenses within a reasonable time, not to exceed thirty (30) days.
- All expense reports and receipts are subject to the Open Records Act.
- When submitting an expense report, the traveler is subject to O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20, which lists the punishment for making false statements and writings, concealing facts, and presenting fraudulent documents in matters within the jurisdiction of state or political subdivisions.

AUTHORIZATION FOR TRAVEL:

Elected Officials and employees may be reimbursed for reasonable travel-related expenses incurred while on official business for the City. Subject to the provisions outlined in these travel regulations, reimbursements are authorized for the following expenses:

CITY OF STONECREST TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- Meals associated with overnight travel and in certain circumstances where there is no overnight lodging;
- Lodging expenses;
- Mileage for use of a personal motor vehicle;
- Transportation expenses; and
- Certain miscellaneous expenses associated with travel, such as parking and toll fees.

AUTHORIZATION FOR EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

Elected Officials and employees who are required to travel for their job and are eligible for travel reimbursement should receive authorization from their department head or other designated official prior to performing the travel. For Elected Officials, the designated official is the City Manager. Except in the case of emergencies, requests for travel authorization should be made at least seven (7) days prior to date of travel.

Departments must utilize the travel request form for in-state and out-of-state travel. However, department heads or their designees should specifically authorize out-of-state travel prior for each trip. Signature of the approving official on the travel expense form constitutes authorization of employee travel. Each department should provide the City Manager with a list of all persons/positions authorized to approve travel expense statements.

TRAVEL TO CONFERENCES FOR CERTIFICATION PURPOSES

Department heads, Elected Officials and employees traveling to or for certification purposes should limit their travel to these conferences and prohibit “discretionary” travel. If travel for certification is necessary, then efforts should be made to seek a location within the State of Georgia or closer to Georgia.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

Elected Officials and employees requesting reimbursement for travel expenses are required to submit their claim to authorized personnel on the employee travel expense statement within thirty (30) days of incurring the expense.

Requests for reimbursement should include the following information:

- Itemized expenses for authorized lodging, mileage, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. The types of expenses which are authorized and the allowable limits are discussed in subsequent sections;

CITY OF STONECREST TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- Explanation of any expenses which exceed the established limits and of any unusual expenses;
- Explanation of the purpose for the trip; and
- Description of the type(s) of transportation used.

Elected Officials and employees are required to sign their travel expense statement, attesting that the information presented on the form is accurate.

Elected Officials and employees are required to submit receipts for expenses, including:

- Meals purchased,
- Lodging,
- Airline or Railroad fares,
- Rental of motor vehicles,
- Registration Fees,
- Gasoline purchased for rental vehicles,
- Parking,
- Tollway,
- Mass transit,
- Taxi, and
- Airport vans.

If a receipt is not available, Elected Officials and employees are required to include an explanation of the expense on the travel expense statement. Credit card receipts are valid provided they contain complete details of the purchase.

BAGGAGE AND LUGGAGE FEES – Baggage and luggage fees are a reimbursable expense. All travelers should consider the extra fees charged by the airlines prior to making their travel arrangements and plan accordingly. When combining personal travel and City business travel, baggage and luggage fees should be allocated accordingly and reasonable under the circumstances.

MEALS AND INCIDENTAL TRAVEL EXPENSES:

Generally, meals are reimbursable on an actual expense basis, subject to the maximum amount below. These maximum rates for meal expense reimbursement for each day is fifty-five dollars (\$55.00). On the first and last day of travel, the maximum rates for meal expense reimbursement is capped at seventy-five (75%) the daily rate, or forty-one dollars and twenty-five cents (\$41.25). t

However, the traveler may only receive reimbursement for the actual expense of the meal.

CITY OF STONECREST TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It should be noted that the City of Stonecrest Travel Regulations **does not** authorize Elected Officials and employees to receive a reimbursement for a “lunch meeting” in which the meal and meeting are the same, or when meals are otherwise provided at the meeting.

Reimbursement for meals must be reasonable and necessary.

LODGING EXPENSES:

Elected Officials and employees who travel more than 50 miles from their office and/or residence, may be reimbursed for lodging expenses associated with approved overnight travel.

Elected Officials and employees will be reimbursed for the actual lodging expenses, providing the expenses are reasonable.

Elected Officials and employees traveling overnight are responsible for ensuring the most reasonable lodging rates are obtained. To accomplish this, the employee should:

- Provide human resources with information about hotel accommodations,
- Utilize minimum rate accommodations,
- Avoid the “deluxe” hotels and motels, and
- Obtain city/government rates, whenever possible.

Elected Officials and employees who stay at a hotel/motel that is holding a scheduled meeting or seminar may incur lodging expenses that exceed the rates generally considered reasonable if no alternative hotels or lodging is available or the higher cost is justified in order to avoid excessive transportation costs between a lower cost hotel/motel and the location of the meeting.

Elected Officials and employees should review hotel/motel receipts to ensure that taxes have not been applied to their lodging expenses in accordance with the state tax laws and regulations.

Elected Officials and employees should attempt to resolve any problems with the billing prior to checkout.

Local government officials and Elected Officials and employees traveling within the state for official business are exempt from paying the *county or municipal excise tax* on lodging (“hotel/motel” or “occupancy” tax): [OCGA 48- 13-51 (H) (3)], regardless of the payment method being used. Elected Officials and employees are required to submit a copy of the hotel/motel tax-exemption from when they register at a hotel/motel. This exemption does not apply to Elected Officials and employees staying at an out of state hotel/motel. Elected Officials and employees should be able to provide proper identification to document their employment as a City/local government employee or official.

A traveler may use a privately-owned vehicle when it is in the best interest of the City. The approving official shall be responsible for substantiating that use of a privately-owned vehicle is in the City’s best interest. Mileage rates are based on the federal per diem rate in effect and the most advantageous form of travel. The traveler shall receive a mileage reimbursement equal to the established rates. If the use of a personal vehicle is the most advantageous, the following conditions have to be met:

CITY OF STONECREST TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- No suitable City vehicle is available.
- Traveling outside the city, but within 300-mile radius of the city.
- In Georgia, state statute specifies that Automobile Insurance follows the vehicle. If a personal auto is being used, the personal auto policy covering that vehicle would be responsible for any loss.

PROHIBITED MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT – Elected Officials and employees are not entitled to mileage reimbursement for travel between their place of residence and their official headquarters, or personal mileage incurred while on travel status.

PARKING FEES AND TOLLS – the City may reimburse elected officials and employees who incur parking and toll expenses while on official business for the City. Elected Officials and employees that attend offsite meetings or training sessions may also be reimbursed for parking expenses. These expenses are reimbursable for travel in both city-owned and personal vehicles. Elected Officials and employees are expected to obtain receipts for these expenses. If it is not possible to obtain a receipt, then a written explanation should be included on the expense statement.

TRAVEL EXPENSES & REQUIRED RECEIPTS/DOCUMENTATION – All requests for reimbursement of mileage, parking, and toll charges must be documented on the travel expense statement and a receipt must accompany the documentation. Employee should claim mileage based on the most direct route from the point of departure to the destination.

TRAVEL BY COMMERCIAL or PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

When commercial transportation is necessary, elected officials and employees may be reimbursed for the expenses incurred. Elected Officials and employees will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred, provided the appropriate steps were taken to obtain the lowest possible fare or cost.

Authorized department personnel must approve travel by commercial or public transportation prior to the date of travel. When considering such a request, designated personnel should consider the distance to be traveled, the travel time and the cost.

COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORTATION

Elected Officials and employees should utilize commercial air transportation when it is more cost effective and efficient to travel by air than by vehicle. Elected Officials and employees who choose to travel by personal vehicle when air travel is more cost effective should only be reimbursed for the cost of the lowest available airfare to the specified destination. In some instances, a higher airfare may be appropriate to reduce or eliminate for multiple stops and extended travel time.

CITY OF STONECREST TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Under such circumstances, the City of Stonecrest may reimburse elected officials and employees for expenses incurred for air travel, provided these expenses were approved prior to the date of travel. Additionally, the City may reimburse elected officials and employees for reasonable expenses associated with selecting seats or checking bags. These expenses should be included in the total cost of the airline ticket.

Elected Officials and employees who require air travel should obtain the lowest available airfare to the specified destination by comparing rates as follows:

- Utilize the Internet (i.e. Priceline.com, Expedia.com, Travelocity.com)
- Contact carriers directly

Tickets may be purchased using a city issued city charge card, personal credit card (on an as-needed basis with prior approval of the City Manager).

In general, it will be the City's policy that the Mayor and Council Members or Elected Officials and employees traveling by commercial air carrier travel in the most cost-effective manner and utilize the lowest possible coach fares. City Officials or Elected Officials and employees traveling by commercial air carrier will not be reimbursed for the portion of non-coach (first class, business class, etc.) airfare that exceeds the cost of the lowest, available fare on the same flight.

TRAVEL BY MASS TRANSPORTATION, TAXI OR AIRPORT VANS

Elected Officials and employees officially on travel status may be reimbursed for necessary costs of transportation by bus, taxi, or airport vans for the following situations:

- Between the individual's departure point and the common carrier's departure point;
- Between the common carrier's arrival point and the individual's lodging or meeting place; and
- Between the lodging and meeting places if at different locations.
- Elected Officials and employees will be reimbursed for economy parking only.

It is expected that airport vans will be utilized when available and practical, and when they are the lowest cost alternative.

UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following expenses are not reimbursable unless specific legal authority has been established:

- Laundry (allowable when overnight travel exceeds seven (7) consecutive days)
- Tipping for maid services

- Theatre
- Entertainment
- Alcoholic beverages
- Bank charges for ATM withdrawals
- Clothing or toiletry items
- Commuting between Residence and Primary Work Station
- Country Club dues
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry, cleaning, pressing costs for trips of less than seven days
- Loss or theft of cash advance, money or airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases
- Medical expenses while traveling (*Exceptions may be made to accommodate ADA compliance*)
- Mini-bar charges
- Movies
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related)
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Personal vehicle maintenance
- Personal entertainment
- Personal Pet care
- Recreational expenses
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe Shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available, unless there are valid security reasons

CITY CHARGE CARDS

The City Manager or his/her designee may issue city charge cards to eligible Elected Officials and employees upon approval. City charge cards are beneficial because they:

- Reduce the employee's and the city's cash flow by minimizing the need for cash advances;
- Reduce the frequency of reimbursements for travel expenses;

CITY OF STONECREST TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- Require no annual membership fee or finance charges if paid within the terms of the agreement;
- Provide emergency cash to the employee;
- Eliminate the need for the City to directly pay airline tickets and car rental agencies;
- Provide guarantee for hotel rooms and other services requiring a deposit; and
- Provide the city with various financial reports regarding employee travel expenses.

Elected Officials and employees who are issued city charge cards are authorized to use the charge cards for business purposes only.

