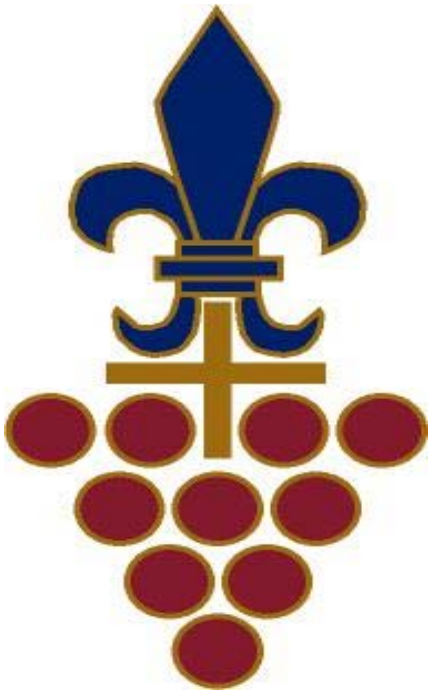
APPENDIX 16

STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY



TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCY POLICY

2023/2024

STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

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1. OBJECTIVE

It is essential that representatives of this municipality from time-to-time travel in order to establish and maintain links and relationships with other municipalities, government bodies, and other parties, institutions and organizations operating in the sphere of local government. It should also be read together with paragraph 2 of MFMA Circular 82 of 30 March 2016 as well as the Cost Containment Regulations as far as it is applicable to travel and subsistence issues.

This policy sets out the basis for the payment of a subsistence travel allowance, hourly rate when applicable and for the purpose of such official traveling.

In the event of any conflict between a provision of this policy and the Cost Containment Policy, the latter policy shall apply.

2. TRAVEL

2.1 *Responsibilities of Representatives who travel on Business of the Municipality*

a) Every representative who travels on the business of the municipality must comply with this policy in letter and in spirit.

b) Representatives who travel on the business of the municipality must take note that their actions, conduct and statements must be in the best interest of the municipality, and they must comply with any specific mandates they have been given.

2.2 Air Travel

a) **The Accounting Officer in respect of all officials or political office bearers and the Executive Mayor in respect of the Accounting Officer only approve the purchase of economy class tickets for air travel.**

b) All flights by representatives of the municipality shall be in economy class, unless another class of travel is specifically authorized by-

(i) the executive committee, with regard to Holders of Public Office and the Municipal Manager, or

(ii) The Municipal Manager, with regard to officials and applicants for interviews

2.3 International Travel

a) International travel for any official or political office bearer can only be approved by the municipal council in a meeting open to the public with a supporting vote of the majority of the members of the municipal council present.

b) The report to council for approval of international travel must include:

(i) A motivation why the international travel is seen as critical and fully setting out the anticipated benefit that the municipality will derive from attending the event, meeting or function;
(ii) If international travel to the destination or event was previously undertaken, state what benefits if any derived from the previous attendance;
(iii) The full cost of the international travel including travel allowances and visas if applicable to be paid; and
(iv) The proposed officials and political office bearers, not exceeding three, to travel and why they have been identified.

c) The following events will not be considered critical to justify international travel whether the full cost of the travel is paid by another institution or not:

(i) Attendance of international sporting events;
(ii) Attendance of international social events;
(iii) Attendance of international party-political events;
(iv) The opening of another country's parliament or any other country's government's celebration events.

d) The accounting officer or delegated official must ensure that requirements for international travel by officials or political office bearers are not inserted into bid documents, whether it is for inspection of products at source of construction/assembly or for any other reason.

2.4 Car Rental, Travel Costs and rates

a) Only “A” or “B” category vehicles may be rented, unless it is more cost-effective to hire any other category (for example, when the number of representatives involved could justify the hire of a micro-bus).

b) Car rental must be approved as part of the travel package before the trip is embarked on. A representative who rents a vehicle whilst traveling on the business of the municipality without having received prior authorization will only be reimbursed for the cost of the vehicle rental if proof of expenditure can be produced and the representative can demonstrate that vehicle rental was reasonably but unexpectedly necessitated by the circumstances.

c) Parking and toll fee – actual cost will be reimbursed via Petty Cash after the submission of proof of expenditure.

d) If a representative has to utilize his or her personal motor vehicle, he or she will be reimbursed at the tariffs listed below. The distance to which the reimbursement applies, must be the shortest distance via tarred road between the municipality’s offices and the location where the official business is to be transacted.

- Councilors:

  Will be reimbursed in terms of the Private Column of Department Transport monthly circulars pertaining to Tariffs for the Use of Motor Transport to a maximum of R4.18 per kilometer.

- Officials with vehicle/car allowance:

  Will be reimbursed at a flat rate of R4.18 per kilometer where motor vehicles are used and R2.00 per kilometer where motorcycles are used. Where it is possible to fly to a destination, but the official prefers to drive with his own vehicle, the lower value between kilometer claim and a flight ticket will be used as basis for reimbursement.

- Officials who are in receipt of an Essential User Transportation Allowance:

  Will be reimbursed according to the official Cost Tables contained in the “Essential User Scheme: Transport Allowance” circulars of the South African Local Government Bargaining Council – Western Cape Division applicable.

- Officials without a car allowance and Members of a Committee: established in terms of applicable legislation, as per the Rate per kilometer fixed by the Minister of Finance under section 8(1) (b) (ii) and (iii) of the Income Tax Act, 1962. If the total number of kilometers for which such reimbursement is received exceeds 8 000 in any tax year, reimbursement for the excess kilometers over 8 000 must be taxed for PAYE purposes. If the cost of any one trip exceeds that of an air ticket, the lesser amount will be paid.

The number of employees travelling to conferences or meetings on official duty for the same matter is limited to three (3) employees, unless otherwise approved in advance by the relevant Director, or Accounting Officer in the case of Directors travelling.

e) Similar to the above, the number of employees travelling by air to other centers to attend an official engagement on the same matter is also limited to three (3) employees, unless otherwise approved in advance by the relevant Director or Accounting Officer in the case of Directors travelling.

f) For the purpose of this policy, domestic travel shall mean travel within South Africa, and international travel shall mean travel to any country other than South Africa.

g) The Accounting Officer will when appropriate determine an hourly rate for the different committees serving Council.

h) Notwithstanding the above provisions, all employees must make use of shuttle services if the cost of such services is below the cost of hiring a vehicle.

3. SUBSISTENCE

3.1 Subsistence Allowance

a) A representative may claim a daily subsistence allowance as provided in this policy with the understanding that all authorized personal expenses are covered by the subsistence allowance. No further expenses, with the exception of certain business expenses (see below), may be claimed.

b) In line with SARS guidelines on Subsistence Allowances and Advances, A daily subsistence allowance will only be applicable where-
   (i) The representative is obliged to spend at least one night away from his or her usual place of residence on business; R493 per day, or

(ii) The representative will be on official business for a period exceeding 12 consecutive hours per day, without having to spend a night away from his or her usual place of residence; R152 per day.

c) A representative of the municipality must claim his or her subsistence allowance, as provided in this policy before embarking on any official trip, with the exception where such claim reaches the creditors section at least three days before the trip; in which case such claim must be submitted after the event. Such a claim must be accompanied by details of the conference or workshop or emailed/faxed invitation.

d) No subsistence allowance will be paid, and no representative will be entitled to a subsistence allowance, if the trip or travel is not related to the official business of the municipality. All travel on business of the municipality must be approved as such before a representative is entitled to a subsistence allowance.

e) For the purpose of a subsistence allowance, a representative shall mean-

(i) mayor or executive mayor, as the case may be
(ii) deputy-mayor
(iii) speaker
(iv) members of the executive committee or mayoral committee, as the case may be
(v) other councilors specifically authorized to represent the municipality on a particular occasion
(vi) municipal manager
(vii) directors
(viii) any other official/representative specifically authorized to represent the municipality on a particular occasion
(ix) any official or councilor who is a member of a recognized professional institution and is granted permission to attend meetings and conferences of such institution.

f) The subsistence allowance of international travel will be the <u>lesser of:</u>

(i) an amount equivalent to the rates as determined by SARS, at the beginning of 1 July every year.

Or

(ii) US$190 per day where the exchange rate of ZAR is more than 5:1 in relation to the currency of the destination country; and

(iii) US$100 per day where the exchange rate of ZAR is less than, or equal to 5:1 in relation to the currency of the destination country;

4. ACCOMMODATION

4.1 Accommodation Costs

a) Overnight accommodation may only be booked where the return trip exceeds 500 kilometers.

b) Notwithstanding the provision in paragraph 4.1(a) overnight accommodation where the return trip is 500 kilometers or less, may be booked where in the view of the Accounting Officer or delegated official the limitation may be impractical and any of the following instances are present:

(i) The road or any other conditions could jeopardize the safety, health and security of officials or political office bearers;

(ii) The trips are to be undertaken over a number of consecutive days provided that a return trip is in excess of 200 kilometers;

(iii) The starting time of the meeting or event would require the official or councilor to leave his/her place of residence before 05h00 in order to be punctual.

(iv) Should the circumstances as stated in paragraph 4.1 (b)(i) – (iii) not be applicable, but an official still prefers to sleep over and not travel every day, the relevant director may approve travelling and accommodation expenses to be paid in the following manner:

- The cost of one return trip at the applicable rates stated in this policy to be claimed and reimbursed to the official, plus
- The Daily Allowance referred to in paragraph 3.1 (b) (ii) of this policy for every night the official spends away from the workplace to be claimed and paid to the official and
- Accommodation paid directly to the relevant establishment equal to the monetary value of R4.50 per kilometer, the potential travel claim for every night that officials sleep over instead of travelling. In cases where more than one official was to travel together, the travel claim will be equally divided between the accommodation costs of the respective officials. Any excess accommodation costs must be borne by the official concerned.

c) Any request for overnight accommodation and/or travel must be motivated on a prescribed form and approved by the municipal manager or delegated official prior to the arrangement for overnight stay or travel.

d) The actual cost of accommodation will be borne by the municipality, subject to a maximum of 3- to 4-star rating for the accommodation itself in respect of domestic travel. Where such accommodation is available, the rate for a single room will be payable.

e) If no such accommodation is available, higher rating accommodation can be used subject to the prior approval of the Municipal Manager.

f) If a representative stays with a relative or friend, no accommodation allowance may be claimed, but the representative may claim a subsistence allowance of R493 per day.

g) The recoverable cost of accommodation for international travel may not exceed US$350 per day.

h) The municipality will at all times firstly consider accommodation where the National Treasury has negotiated discounts for rates as per MFMA circular 97. In the absence of such accommodation or failure to secure space, only then will the municipality consider accommodation outside the "NT negotiated accommodation".

i) Notwithstanding the provisions of 4 (1) (c), the procurement of all accommodation services will be subjected to the municipality's SCM policy and preferential procurement policy. The written approval in terms of paragraph 4.1(c) must be filed with the relevant supply chain documents for the accommodation booking.

5 CONFERENCES, MEETINGS AND STUDY TOURS

5.1 Applications for conferences, meetings and conferences, both within or outside South African borders, must be done on the prescribed form. Applications for conferences, study tours and similar events must be accompanied by a motivation that takes the under mentioned aspects into account:

a) The official's or political office bearer's roles and responsibilities and the anticipated benefits of the conference or event;

b) Whether the conference or event addresses relevant concerns of the institution;

c) The appropriate number of officials or political office bearers, not exceeding three, attending the conference or event;

d) The availability of funds to meet expenses related to the conference or event.

5.2 The accounting officer may consider appropriate benchmark costs with other professional bodies or regulatory bodies prior to granting approval for an official to attend a conference or event within and without the borders of South Africa.

a) Such benchmark costs may not exceed an amount as determined from time to time by the National Treasury through a notice.

b) The costs exclude costs related to travel, accommodation and related expenses, but include conference or event registration expenses and any other expenses in relation to the conference or event.

c) When considering costs for conferences or events these may not include items such as laptops, tablets or other similar tokens that are built into the price of such conferences or events.

d) The accounting officer must grant the approval for officials and in the case of political office bearers and the accounting officer, the mayor for attendance of conferences and events.

5.3 The accounting officer must ensure that meetings and planning sessions that entail the use of municipal funds are, as far as may be practically possible, held in-house.

a) Municipal or provincial office facilities must be unitized for conference, meeting, strategic planning sessions, *inter alia* where an appropriate venue exists within the municipal jurisdiction.

5.4 The municipality must, where applicable, take advantage of early registration discounts by granting the required approvals to attend the conference, event or study tour, in advance.

6. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTANCE ALLOWANCES FOR APPLICANTS INVITED FOR INTERVIEWS

(a) If an invited for an interview has to utilize his or her personal motor vehicle he or she will be reimbursed at the same rates as stipulated in paragraph 2.4 (d) of this policy. The actual cost of air travel will be reimbursed subject to the prior approval of the Municipal Manager or the Director Corporate Services.

(b) Candidates residing outside the boundaries of Stellenbosch municipality will be reimbursed for reasonable costs of travelling as provided for in this policy. Where the distance to travel and interview circumstances is such that a candidate requires accommodation, suitable accommodation may be pre-authorized by the relevant director and the candidate may be reimbursed.

(c) If a candidate is made an offer of appointment and declines the offer, no reimbursement of costs will be made.

(d) Where necessary the User Department in consultation with Human Resources will make suitable travelling and accommodation arrangements and provide budget for the costs.

7. AUTHORISATION

7.1 For purposes of implementing this policy

a) Only the Municipal Manager may authorize any travel to be undertaken by Directors, but provided the expenses to be incurred are on the approved budget of the relevant department. Claims by other officials to be authorized by directors concerned.

b) Only the Director Strategic and Corporate Services or the Municipal Manager may authorize payments to be made for persons invited for interviews, but provided that the expenses to be incurred are on the approved budget.

c) Only the Executive Mayor together with the relevant director may authorize any travel to be undertaken by Holders of Public Office, or the municipal manager, but provided that the expenses to be incurred are on the approved budget of the municipality.

d) Only Directors may authorize any travel to be undertaken by employees in the respective Directorate, but provided that the expenses to be incurred are on the approved budget of the municipality.

e) As far as is practically possible, authorization for the above must be obtained prior to the occasion by any representative who travels on the business of the municipality.

An invitation to attend a workshop, meeting or related event is not an automatic authorization to attend such workshop or event. The required authorization must still be obtained from the municipal manager or executive mayor, executive committee or director as the case may be.

8. COUNCIL DELEGATES

Council delegates or representatives to any conference, workshop or meeting must ensure that they arrive on time and attend until the conclusion of such event. If any representative fails to do so, the executive mayor or executive committee, the municipal manager or director as the case may be, may recover all allowances and disbursements paid to enable such delegate or representative to attend such event, provided that such delegate or representative is afforded the opportunity to submit reasons for not being able to be present from the commencement to conclusion of such event.

9. COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED AS A RESULT OF PRESCRIBED LEGISLATION

Any committee established as a result of prescriptions in relevant legislation, will for the purposes of application of this policy, qualify for an allowance equal to that paid to Holders of Public Office.

10. AUTHORITY

Any deviation from this policy for whatsoever reason must be authorized by the Municipal Manager and in the case of the Municipal Manager, the Executive Mayor will authorize.

In any instance where a delegate did not attend business as approved in accordance with this policy, any expenditure incurred by the council should be refunded by the representative. All deviations in this regard must be approved by council.

11. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTANCE ALLOWANCE CLAIM FORM

The official Travel and Subsistence Allowance claim form, as prescribed by Chief Financial Officer must be used with regard to Travel and Subsistence Allowance applications. The approved form should reach the creditors office 3 days before the intended day of departure in order for allowances to be paid to the representative timeously.

12. SHORT TITLE

This Policy will be known as the Travel and Subsistence Policy.