

LAFCO

Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission

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July 5, 2012 (Agenda)

Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street, Room 403
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Policy for Travel Expense Reimbursement for Commissioners and Staff

Dear Members of the Commission:

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Commission consider whether to amend the travel expense reimbursement policy that is included as part of the Commissioner Handbook.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Craig Geyer asked that this item be placed on the agenda. At issue is whether there should be a more specific or detailed policy or understanding regarding reimbursement of costs when Commissioners choose to attend CALAFCO workshops, classes or other LAFCO-related activities.

Legal Counsel Bill Dillon advises that any Commissioner may attend these events on their own time and expense, assuming the workshop is open to Commissioners. The only time the Commission must approve an individual Commissioner's attendance at an event is when the Commissioner is authorized to represent the entire Commission.

The issue that appears to need clarification is whether or not an individual Commissioner should be required to have prior authorization for reimbursement of expenses to attend CALAFCO classes or other LAFCO-related events.

The traditional practice has been to reimburse costs for Commissioners to attend CALAFCO Annual Conferences and to reimburse travel expenses when a Commissioner has been elected to serve as a member of the CALAFCO Board of Directors. It has not been the practice to reimburse individual Commissioners who are not on CALAFCO for their attendance at CALAFCO workshops and other educational events.

Attached for reference are the portions of Section 9 “LAFCO Budget and Financial Procedures” of the Commissioner Handbook that pertain to reimbursement of expenses. In particular, Section 9(F) addresses reimbursement of travel and educational expenses for individual Commissioners.

As the policy is written, there is no limit on reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by Commissioners in attending “. . . LAFCO sponsored or related events and in performing the duties of their office.” Approval of such expenses is, however, subject to the review and approval of the Executive Officer.

If such claims are to be paid by the Executive Officer, the following issues should be addressed by the Commission:

- Should there be a specified dollar limit for individual Commissioners during a fiscal year?
- Should there be criteria and a procedure for Commissioners to obtain pre-approval before attending such events?
- Is there a potential impact on the LAFCO budget for travel expenses that was set at \$21,000? The Commission declined a request to increase this budget item to \$24,000.

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,



BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer

LAFCO BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

E. Per Diem Stipends for Commission members

Members and alternative members are eligible to receive a stipend of \$150 for attendance at the following meetings

1. Regular and special meetings of the Commission.
2. Meetings of standing committees, ad hoc committees and governmental agencies and commissions when appointed to such entities by the Commission or the Chair of the Commission.
3. Meetings of the Board of Directors of the California Association of LAFCOs when the Commissioner is a member of the Board of Directors.

Payment of stipends is limited to no more than five (5) per member in any month.

F. Reimbursement of Commissioner Expenses

1. Commission members and alternates may claim reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in attending LAFCO sponsored or related events and in performing the duties of their office.
2. Commissioners attending LAFCO-related conferences, meetings and events shall be reimbursed for expenses in the same manner as the staff.
3. The Executive Officer is responsible for reviewing and approving each request for Commission reimbursement.

G. Reimbursement of Staff and Legal Counsel Expenses

1. The Executive Officer and Legal Counsel shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses in connection with the conduct of LAFCO business including but not limited to office expenses, training, travel, lodging, meals, gratuities and other related costs.
2. The Executive Officer is responsible for reviewing and approving requests for Legal Counsel reimbursement.
3. The Chair, Vice Chair, or other Commissioners authorized to sign claim forms with the County Auditor Controller are responsible for reviewing and approving requests for Executive Officer reimbursement.

H. Reimbursement Policies

1. Expense reimbursement requests should be submitted monthly, although flexibility is permitted if the claimable amount is not deemed to be significant.
2. Claims for reimbursement of costs related to LAFCO meetings, conferences and seminars should be submitted not later than 60 days following completion of the event for which reimbursement is being claimed.
3. Expense claims for costs incurred in one fiscal year should be, whenever practical, submitted for reimbursement during the same fiscal year.
4. Reimbursement for Private Automobiles
 - a. Use of private automobiles to conduct LAFCO business shall be reimbursed at the IRS allowable rate or 36.5 cents per mile, whichever is greater.
 - b. This rate shall be considered full and complete payment for actual expenses for use of private automobiles, including insurance, maintenance and all other automobile-related costs.
 - c. LAFCO does not provide insurance for private automobiles used for LAFCO business. The owner is responsible for personal liability and property damage insurance when vehicles are used on LAFCO business.
5. Receipts or vouchers which verify the claimed expenses are required for reimbursement of all items of expense except private automobile mileage and taxis or streetcars, buses, bridge and road tolls and parking fees
6. Reimbursement of expenses is not allowed for personal items such as, but not limited to, entertainment, clothing, laundering, etc.
7. The general rule for selecting a mode of transportation for reimbursement is that method which represents the lowest reasonable expense to LAFCO and the individual Commissioner or staff member.