

Requested by: Finance Department
Prepared by: Finance and City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-15

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2, ADMINISTRATION, ARTICLE IV, FINANCE, DIVISION 3, TRAVEL, BY AMENDING SECTION 2-240, IN GENERAL, SECTION 2-241, PREPAID TRAVEL EXPENSES, SECTION 2-242 EXPENSES APPROVED FOR REIMBURSEMENT, AND SECTION 2-243, SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the City of Venice ("City"), recognizes that effective management of costs is essential to good fiscal management and needs to be responsive to public trust and in compliance with legal requirements while maximizing the effectiveness of limited funds; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the need for employees to travel in carrying out City business and recognizes the need for development and training of the City's workforce by attending professional functions including, but not limited to, professional meetings, seminars, training sessions and conferences; and

WHEREAS, all expenditures for travel must be prudent and reasonable and procedures for travel reimbursement are needed to ensure reasonable cost constraints are in place for business travel; and

WHEREAS, this amended Travel Authorization and Expense Allowance Policy is adopted pursuant to Section 166.021(9)(b), Florida Statutes, and therefore the City is exempt from all provisions of Section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. The above whereas clauses are ratified and confirmed as true and correct.

SECTION 2. Chapter 2, Administration, Article IV, Finance, Division 3, Travel, is hereby amended as follows:

Sec. 2-240. In general.

- (a) *Objective.* To govern expenses incurred by city employees who travel out of the city on authorized city business.

- (b) *Responsible agency.* Department heads are responsible for managing the travel budget for their department and for ensuring travel expenditures are proper and in compliance with this policy. The finance department is responsible for auditing travel expenditures ~~and for approving travel advance~~ and expense reports.
- (c) Travel Destination. All employees should pursue trainings and conferences in-state whenever available. The city manager must approve all out-of-state travel.
- ~~(e)~~(d) Travel authorization. All eEmployees, including department heads, charter officers, and elected officials, must complete and submit a travel authorization form ~~to the department head~~ for approval before any funds are committed or travel occurs. When used in this division, "travel authorization" shall refer to:
 - (1) when an employee, receiving approval from a department head;
 - (2) when a department head, receiving approval from the city manager;
 - (3) when a charter officer, the travel is within the approved budget with the travel authorization form approved by the mayor; or
 - (4) when an elected official, the travel is within the approved budget with the travel authorization form approved by the mayor, or in the case of the mayor approved by the vice-mayor.

Sec. 2-241. Prepaid travel expenses.

- (a) *Purchasing card.* ~~City employees may, w~~With travel authorization from their supervisor, ~~obtain~~ a purchasing card ~~to~~ may be used for primary travel expenses such as airfare, lodging, rental car and conference/seminar registration. ~~Personal funds should be used for insignificant costs such as tips and taxi fares.~~ The purchasing card is a safe and direct way to pay for travel related expenses. ~~Employees are encouraged to use the card in lieu of requesting travel advances.~~ Meals and incidentals shall not be charged to the purchasing card.
- ~~(b)~~ *Request for travel advance.* ~~In the event an employee chooses not to use a purchasing card, a travel advance can be obtained by submitting a "request for prepaid travel funds" form approved by the city. Travel advances will not be issued for less than \$25.00.~~
- ~~(e)~~ (b) *Expense report.* Upon completing the travel, an exact description of the expenses incurred must be identified on a "travel and expense report" with a previously approved travel authorization form for reimbursement to the traveler, by the city. ~~The travel advance amount will be charged to an employee travel advance account until the expense report is received. Once the expense report is received, the advance will be charged to the appropriate departmental travel expense account. If proper documentation on a travel advance is not received on a timely basis upon completion of the travel, a payroll deduction from the employee's paycheck will be made to clear the advance.~~

Sec. 2-242. Expenses approved for reimbursement.

Following is a list intended as a general guide for reimbursement. It is not necessarily all-inclusive; discretion remains with the city manager or his designee, in approving travel expenses for unusual circumstances.

~~Employees~~ When traveling on behalf of the city, it is expected to utilize that services and accommodations appropriate for the business to be conducted will be utilized, with ~~Employees are expected to travel and conduct business in reasonable comfort, and to the exercise of good judgment in distinguishing between comfort and extravagance.~~

- (1) *Transportation.* ~~Employees are advised to use~~ City vehicles should be used as much as possible. ~~In all cases where~~ Needed reservations are possible, employees should be made ~~make the reservations~~ as far in advance as possible to obtain the lowest cost ~~lower rates~~. ~~Employees should check with the airline or travel agent booking the flight to determine if a lower fare is available if the employee's trip runs into a weekend. Usually,~~ Return flight costs are ~~may be~~ significantly lower if the individual stays a Saturday night. ~~Supervisors approving travel~~ The person doing the travel authorization should weigh the difference in additional hotel and meal costs and opt for the lesser-cost scenario. The following additional guidelines are to must be observed:
 - a. *Commercial airline.* The city will pay the cost of the airline ticket. Only "coach" flights will be authorized.
 - b. *City-owned vehicle.* ~~Employees are encouraged to~~ The use of city-owned vehicles is encouraged for out-of-town travel. If a city vehicle is used, a purchasing card may be used for gas and other vehicle costs.
 - c. *Personal vehicle.* If a city vehicle is not available or if ~~an employee's~~ a personal vehicle is the most cost effective alternative, the city will reimburse the current mileage rate authorized by the Internal Revenue Service for tax deduction purposes for mileage from the traveler's primary work location ~~destination city~~ or from the ~~employee's~~ taxpaying traveler's residence (whichever is less) to the destination city. Any vicinity mileage necessitated as a result of conducting business activities while out of town is eligible for reimbursement.
- (2) *Local transportation at the travel destination.* When air, rail or bus transportation is used, expenses for local transportation will be allowed whenever such transportation is necessary to conduct city business. In most cases, it is assumed that ~~taxi~~ ground transportation and hotel courtesy vans will be the preferred mode of travel. In certain circumstances, ~~taxi~~ ground transportation fares can be in excess of rental car rates and as such the traveler may be well advised to rent a car rather than use a ~~taxi~~ ground transportation service. Where there is sufficient justification, Employees may secure rental cars may be reserved with travel authorization ~~with prior approval of the department head~~. The most economical rates available shall be used when renting a vehicle. When more than one city employee travels in a ~~rented motor vehicle~~ rental car only one employee may obtain reimbursement for the vehicle rental. ~~Approval will only be granted in those cases where there is sufficient justification.~~

- (3) *Lodging.* The cost of lodging will be reimbursed when not using a city purchasing card. While the city expects ~~employees~~ travelers to enjoy comfortable lodging, luxury/resort accommodations shall be avoided. ~~However, employees should use the~~ The designated conference hotel(s) should be used and/or request the government rate should be requested when making a hotel reservations ~~at a hotel.~~ Most hotels will not accept claims to government rate after check-in. An original receipt must accompany the "travel and expense report."
- (4) *Meals and tips.* While in travel status, per diem rates must be used for meals and incidentals. Actual costs for meals will be reimbursed if required for business meetings. The detailed itemized receipt, an explanation of the circumstances, and prior ~~approval by the city manager or his designee~~ travel authorization must be attached to the "travel and expense report." (i.e., if an employee travels to Tallahassee to discuss legislative matters with members of the state legislature over dinner, the employee pays the actual cost of the meal and is not limited to the per diem for dinner. A detailed itemized receipt must be attached to the "travel and expense report.)"
- a. The source for per diem rates is on the United States General Services Administration's website www.gsa.gov/perdiem. Per diem rates are available for meals and incidentals for all locations. Employees are entitled to these per diem rates when leaving 1½ hours before the normal meal hours or returning 1½ hours after the normal meal hours. For the purpose of this policy, normal meal hours are considered 8:00 a.m. for breakfast, 12:00 noon for lunch and 5:00 p.m. for dinner. The time of departure and arrival shall be noted on the "travel and expense report." No receipts for meals and tips purchased with per diem are required.
 - b. Qualifying meals on the first and last day of travel will be reimbursed at 75 percent of the established per diem rates. ~~The rates will be available to employees on the United States General Services Administration's website www.gsa.gov/perdiem. (Note: These rates change periodically and need to be referenced when travel arrangements are made.)~~
 - c. ~~In all travel events, employees~~ There will not be no reimbursement ~~for meals that are included in conference registration costs or are otherwise provided at no cost to the traveler employee (. However, a continental breakfast does not constitute a meal under this provision).~~ A copy of the event brochure/itinerary must be provided with the "travel and expense report."
 - d. Fees and tips, not to exceed 15-20 percent, for services, such as ~~taxi~~ ground transportation drivers, meals, (only if when actual costs are paid in accordance herein) ~~with established rules in subsection 2-242(4),~~ and luggage handlers will be reimbursed.
 - e. Costs of alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable and must not be charged to the purchasing card. ~~Employees are expected to pay for any alcoholic beverages separate~~

~~from any eligible meal. This requirement includes purchase of meals on the city's purchasing card (i.e., charges for alcoholic beverages must not appear on purchasing card statements). If there is an unforeseen instance in which alcoholic beverages are charged to the purchasing card, the cost must be reimbursed to the city immediately. In these circumstances, the "travel expense report" requires approval by the city manager.~~

~~f. City funds may be used to reimburse meals under the following circumstances with the advance approval of the city manager:~~

- ~~1. Employees while in travel status, in accordance with the travel per diem amounts.~~
- ~~2. Meal expense reimbursements to interviewees, (including a significant other when required by the city) while in travel status for an interviewee's own meals incurred during a visit to the city.~~
- ~~3. Meal expense for the business meal of a guest, consultant, or other independent contractor.~~

~~f. Meals associated with day trips (no overnight stay) are not reimbursable.~~

~~(5) *Day travel.* The IRS has determined that payments for meals related to day trips (no overnight stay) are income to recipients. Therefore, all reimbursements made for meals will be included on the employee's W-2 and reported to the IRS as income. A separate "travel expense report" will be provided for trips which do not include an overnight stay away from the traveler's taxpaying residence.~~

~~(6) *Telecommunications.* Telephone, telegraph and facsimile communications, directly related to official business, will be reimbursed. It is expected that when employees travel out of town that they will incur reasonable expenses related to personal phone calls to family members. The maximum reimbursement for personal phone calls shall be no more than \$5.00 per day.~~

~~(5) (7) *Registration fees.* When possible, aAll registration fees should be paid in advance with the city purchasing card; however, employees will be reimbursed for fees charged for registration at any approved conference or meeting. A receipt and copy of the event brochure must be provided with the "travel and expense report."~~

~~(6) (8) *Personal and entertainment expenses.* The city will not reimburse personal expenses, including movies, health club charges, personal use of the business center, laundry or dry cleaning charges, as well as any personal entertainment expense.~~

~~(7) (9) *Spouses and guests.* The city will not reimburse an employee for any travel related expenses of his or her spouse or guest unless that spouse or guest is traveling on behalf of the city for a business related purpose. In the event that the spouse or guest is conducting business on behalf of the city, they should submit their own "travel and expense report," using this policy as a guide. These special circumstances require prior approval by the city manager.~~

~~(8)(10)~~ *Other expenses.* Tolls, parking, and other trip related expenses may be reimbursed, provided the ~~employee~~ traveler provides documentation and a valid reason for the expense.

Sec. 2-243. Submission requirements.

The completed, authorized "travel and expense report" supported by all necessary documentation should be submitted to ~~supervisors (department head level or above)~~ the individual who approved the travel authorization within ten working days of completion of travel. The review and approval of travel expense should be completed within five working days of receipt. When review and approval are complete, travel documentation should be forwarded to the finance department. Reimbursement for travel will be paid every other week, coinciding with ~~payroll~~ accounts payable. If a payment request supported by appropriate documentation is received in finance no later than ~~2:00~~ 4:00 p.m. ~~on Wednesday~~ on the Friday before the scheduled accounts payable check run before pay day, reimbursement may be expected ~~on the following Friday.~~ Any money due and owing to the city shall be deposited with the city cashiers within seven days of return from the trip. The employee (traveler) is to attach the receipt received from the cashiers office to the "travel expense report."

- (1) *Required documentation.* The purpose of required documentation is to provide evidence to anyone who reviews the travel transaction that public funds were expended in compliance with this policy. The standard for sufficient documentation is that anyone who reviews the transaction can review the accompanying documentation and see that all funds were expended in accordance with policy.
- (2) *Forms.* An approved "travel and expense report" and a copy of the conference brochure/itinerary, if applicable, must support each trip. ~~Separate "travel expense" reports must be submitted for day trips (taxable) and overnight trips (nontaxable).~~
- (3) *Receipts.* Detailed itemized receipts are the most accurate and thorough documentation as they clearly list the amount and nature of each expense. Detailed itemized receipts, including purchasing card receipts ~~and payments made via travel advance~~, must be attached to the "travel and expense report," summary receipts are not acceptable.
 - a. If a detailed receipt is not obtained and included as part of the documentation accompanying the expense report, the report will be returned to the employee's department head as incomplete.
 - b. All receipts must be attached, ~~by day, to an 8½-inch by 11-inch sheet of paper and attached to the~~ "travel and expense report." Separate reports must be submitted for each individual traveling.
 - c. If receipts ~~or travel funds~~ are lost or stolen, the traveler ~~employee~~ should contact ~~his department head or supervisor~~ the individual who approved the travel authorization, who will coordinate with the finance director for resolution.

Secs. 2-244—2-250. - Reserved.

SECTION 3. All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances in conflict herewith shall be and the same are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. If any part, section, subsection, or other portion of this ordinance or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is declared void, unconstitutional, or invalid for any reason, such part, section, subsection, or other portion, or the prescribed application thereof, shall be severable, and the remaining provisions of this ordinance, and all applications thereof not having been declared void, unconstitutional, or invalid, shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 5. Effective date. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval and adoption as provided by law.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VENICE, FLORIDA, THIS 24th DAY OF MARCH 2026.

First Reading: March 24, 2026

Final Reading: April 14, 2026

ADOPTION: April 14, 2026

Nick Pachota, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelly Michaels, MMC, City Clerk

I, KELLY MICHAELS, MMC, City Clerk of the City of Venice, Florida, a municipal corporation in Sarasota County, Florida, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full and complete, true and correct copy of an Ordinance duly adopted by the Venice City Council, at a meeting thereof duly convened and held on the 14th day of April 2026, a quorum being present.

WITNESS my hand and the official seal of said City this 14th day of April 2026.

Kelly Michaels, MMC, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Kelly Fernandez, City Attorney