

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 1 PART 3 OF THE ROCKDALE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, AS AMENDED, SO AS TO AMEND PROVISIONS REGARDING COUNTY TRAVEL EXPENSE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, Part 3, Chapter 1 of the Code of Rockdale County, Georgia, regulates county travel expense; and

WHEREAS, following a review of those regulations, the Board of Commissioners finds that the following regulations are appropriate in order to advance the public health, safety and welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Rockdale County, Georgia, and it is hereby ordained by the authority of same as follows:

SECTION 1

That Section 3-1002 of the Rockdale County Code of Ordinances, as amended, is hereby deleted in its entirety and a new Section 3-1002, to be entitled "Travel Expenses and Reimbursement" is hereby adopted in lieu thereof.

SECTION 2

Sec. 3-1002

- A. This section shall be considered a part of a limitation on each annual county budget and appropriations, and no county budget and appropriations, and no county funds appropriated for travel shall be encumbered or spent in violation of this section.
- B. All county officials and employees shall be entitled to reimbursement of any travel expenses personally incurred while on county business provided that such travel expenses are provided for in the county budget and appropriations and the terms and conditions of this section are fulfilled.
- C. Definitions.
As used in this section, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

1. Authorizing Party: The Elected Official, Director, Deputy Director or Department Head shall be authorized to approve or disapprove all travel-related requests.
2. Authorized Travel: Travel approved by the authorizing party.
3. Business Travel: Travel for the purpose of conducting official county business.
4. Metro-Atlanta Area: Includes the counties of Cobb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, DeKalb, Clayton, Rockdale, Henry, Newton and Walton.
5. Professional/Educational Travel: Travel for the purpose of attending meetings, conferences and training programs for professional growth and development as well as for the mutual benefit of the county.

6. Requesting Party: Any individual who will be reimbursed for those costs incurred while conducting business travel and/or professional/educational travel.
7. Travel-Related Expenses: Expenses incurred for mileage, meals and lodging during professional/educational travel.
8. Travel Expense Statement: A form used to authorize payment for the reimbursement of professional/educational travel-related expenses.
9. Mileage Report Statement: A form used to authorize payment for the reimbursement of mileage incurred by use of employee's personal vehicle.

D. Guidelines:

1. Decisions as to which travel is authorized begin with the budgetary process. Travel needs must be anticipated and submitted in the budget each year for approval by the Board of Commissioners.
2. The authorizing party's responsibility is to stay within his budget's travel allocation as approved by the Board of Commissioners.
3. Prior to approving a travel request, the authorizing party is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended/unencumbered appropriation remains in the travel budget to reimburse and cover all expected costs of the travel.
4. Requests for travel, travel advances, and actual expense reimbursement should be authorized as follows:

Requesting Party	Authorizing Party
Employees of elected officials, other than members of the Board of Commissioners	Elected county official or a designee thereof.
Any member of the Board of Commissioners	Board of Commissioners through adoption of an annual operating budget.
County department heads and other county officials	Chairman of the Board of Commissioners
Employees of county department heads and other county officials	County department head. County official

5. Personal items, alcoholic beverages and expenses of family members are not authorized. Travel expense statement must be prepared to reflect only actual expenses essential to the conduct of county business.

E. Professional/Educational Travel Reimbursement:

Reimbursement shall be made for actual expenses incurred for conventions, seminars, or other registration fees; reasonable expenses incurred at meetings related to official

county business; transportation to destination and return or mileage, single occupancy lodging and automobile rental or taxicab expense when overnight lodging is required; and incidentals. Employees and officials of the county are expected to spend funds prudently.

F. Authorized Meal Expense Reimbursement:

1. Name and affiliation of the person(s) for whom the meal was purchased must be provided.
2. The purpose of the business discussion must be provided.
 - a. Under no circumstances shall the explanation 'business discussion or working lunch' be allowed. The requesting party must make reference to the specific topic/project discussed.
3. Rates can be accessed on the GSA government website (GSA Per Diem Rates). Rates are set by fiscal year effective October 1 each year.
 - a. The per diem allowance includes expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and incidental expenses. Rates may vary depending on the location and category of travel, please refer to GSA website for updates.
 - b. The County will provide a breakdown of daily meal allowances based on the GSA rates.
 - (1) M&IE Total_ the full daily amount received for a single calendar day of travel when that day is neither the first nor last day of travel.
 - (2) M&IE Total = Breakfast + Lunch + Dinner + Incidentals.
 - (3) Breakfast, lunch, dinner, incidentals - Separate amounts for meals and incidentals.
 - (4) First & last day of travel - Amount allowed on the first and last day of travel will equal 75% of total M&IE.
4. Under no circumstances shall expenses accrue as a result of a business meal include costs otherwise prohibited under the terms of this section.

G. Lodging:

1. Lodging shall be allowed for official county business. Reimbursements or allowance shall be made for expenses incurred for lodging as follows:
 - a. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct official County business or to provide formal training to County employees or County officials.
 - b. The lodging is an integral part of the meeting or training session.
 - (1) The meeting or training session takes place away from the employee's or official's regular workplace.
 - (2) Elected Official, Department Head or their designee approve payment in advance for the lodging.
 - (3) Employees are responsible for obtaining all tax- exempt certificates prior to travel. The certificates are to be presented to the hotel/motel at the time of check in.

H. Travel:

1. Air, rail and bus fare
 - a. Receipts are required for reimbursement of transportation costs.
 - b. Transportation reservations shall be obtained at the most economical rate available.
2. Personal vehicles:
 - a. Any County officials and employees who are required or authorized to use their private automobiles in the performance of their official duties shall be allowed a reimbursement equal to the standard mileage rate allowed per the Travel Per Diem & Mileage Policy.
 - b. All mileage payments are for each mile of necessary travel, provided that:
 - (1) Reimbursement for mileage shall not exceed the round-trip coach airfare of a common carrier; and
 - (2) Reimbursement for mileage shall be prohibited for travel by County officials or employees between their usual place of residence and their usual place of work. Parking expenses may be claimed under the category of incidentals.
 - (3) Requested mileage reimbursement must be supported by odometer readings.
 - (4) Employees who use their personal vehicles on county business and request mileage reimbursement must prepare a mileage reimbursement statement on at least a monthly basis.
3. Rental Cars:
 - a. A rental car may be used when it is determined that no other mode of transportation is as economical or practical,
 - b. i.e. taxi, subway.
 - c. Rentals shall be limited to "mid-size" autos with standard accessories unless special circumstances dictate a larger vehicle.
 - d. Rentals shall be covered by appropriate insurance as required by applicable state law.
 - e. All county policies/procedures governing the use of vehicles shall apply to rentals.
 - f. Receipts are required for the reimbursement of any rental car costs, including gas.

I. Local Ground Transportation:

1. Local transportation costs incurred while on out-of-town business will be reimbursed if applicable.
2. Receipts for the above services must be obtained and provided to support reimbursement.

J. Approval of Expense Reimbursement:

Upon returning from an authorized trip, the requesting party shall present to the authorizing party a complete itemization of all weekly trip expenses on a travel expense statement.

1. The authorizing party shall forward the travel expense statement to the Department of Finance within five (5) working days of receipt.
2. Gas, oil, and emergency repairs on county vehicles will be reimbursed when supported by receipts.
3. No claim for reimbursement for travel expenses shall be paid unless approved by the authorizing party.

K. Expenses for Which Reimbursement is Not Available

1. Fines, penalties, and/or forfeitures.
2. Tobacco, alcoholic beverages or other personal items.
3. Meals or lodging in lieu of other meals and/or lodging the expense of which is included in a convention or other registration fee.
4. Meals or other expenses for persons not employed by the County, except as provided.
5. Any unreasonable or unnecessary expense which may be otherwise permitted under this Chapter as determined by the appropriate authorizing party or elected official or designee.

L. Penalty for False Submissions

Any person who knowingly approves or pays or causes to be approved or paid a false or untrue claim shall be punishable and civilly liable there under.

M. Advance Allowances – Authorization

Officials and employees of the County may receive advance cash allowances covering anticipated, reimbursable expenses to be incurred in the course of all authorized travel on County business. Such advance allowances shall be made upon the prior request of such officials and employees when approved by the appropriate department head where the nature and duration of travel justify such advance or where the failure to make such advance would result in economic inconvenience to such official or employee. Requests for such advances shall be made on a Request For Travel Expense Statement.

N. Advance Allowances - Accounting, Repayment, and Liability for Failure to Repay


Travel advances shall be accounted for by submission of a proper claim and any excess repaid following the completion of travel, and failure to do so shall render the official or employee receiving such advance personally liable for the full unpaid amount and the County shall thereupon have a prior lien against and a right to withhold all funds payable or to become payable by the County to such official or employee. No advance shall be made to any official or employee who is delinquent in accounting for or repaying a prior advance. Under no circumstances shall any advance be considered as a personal loan to any official or employee and any unauthorized expenditure of any such advance shall be deemed a misappropriation of public funds.

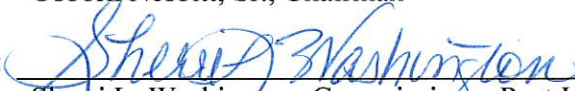
SECTION 3

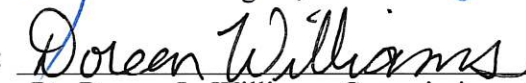
That all ordinances or resolutions, or parts of ordinances or resolutions in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Adopted this 27th day of August, 2024.

Rockdale County, Georgia
Board of Commissioners

By: 
Osborn Nesbitt, Sr., Chairman

By: 
Sherri L. Washington, Commissioner Post I

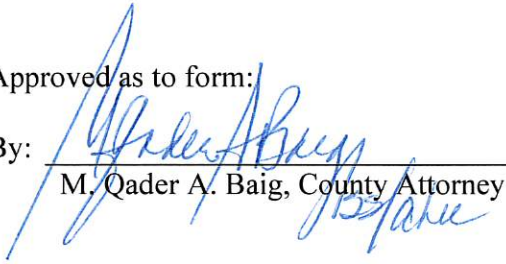
By: 
Dr. Doreen L. Williams, Commissioner Post II

Attest:

By: 
Jennifer Rutledge, County Clerk

First Reading: 8/27/2024
Second Reading: waived

Approved as to form:

By: 
M. Qader A. Baig, County Attorney



**Board of Commissioners
Agenda Item Transmittal Form
Ordinance Transmittal Form**

Type of Request: Amendment		County Clerk Use Only Ordinance #: 2024-12	
Submission Information		Information	
Contact Name: Chantall Hunt		Summary of Request: Amendment to Ordinance Chapter 1 Part 3 of the Rockdale County Code of Ordinances; for provisions regarding county travel expenses and reimbursements.	
Department: Talent Management			
Department Director /Elected Official Signature		Chief Operating Officer Signature	
I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved as to substance.		I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved for processing.	
Signature: <i>Kimberly Rodd</i> Date: <i>8/21/24</i>		Signature: _____ Date: _____	
County Attorney Signature		Executive Director of Government Affairs/County Clerk Signature	
I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved as to form.		I have reviewed the attached, and it is approved for processing.	
Signature: _____ Date: _____		Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Notes and Comments:

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