



City of Huntington Beach

File #: 18-165

MEETING DATE: 7/16/2018

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

SUBMITTED BY: Fred A. Wilson, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Antonia Graham, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject:

City Council Travel Protocol and Established Policies

Statement of Issue:

At the June 5, 2018 City Council Meeting, Mayor Posey and Mayor Pro Tem Peterson introduced a Council Member Item to discuss Council Member travel and State and Federal advocacy trips. Following discussion, Council directed the City Manager to review the current travel policies as well as the budget and bring back to City Council any recommendations if needed. This Request for Council Action provides an overview of existing Council Member Travel policies/protocol.

Financial Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the review of City Council travel protocol and the City's established policies related to such travel.

Recommended Action:

Provide staff direction on existing Council Travel Protocol and Established Policies.

Alternative Action(s):

Direct staff accordingly.

Analysis:

City Council Members often travel within the State and to Washington D.C. on official business to advocate for the City. These trips are often organized by third-party advocacy groups, such as the League of California Cities, Association of California Cities - Orange County, and Orange County Business Council.

Currently, no official "City Council Travel" Policy exists that outlines the process used to determine which Council Member(s) will represent the City on advocacy trips to Washington D.C., or other travel. In addition, no formal policy exists regarding the allocation of the annual training and conferences budget for the City Council.

City staff spoke with Council Member, Jill Hardy, who provided an overview of the past historical

practice. For many years, seniority determined who would attend advocacy trips; generally, the Mayor would be the primary elected official designated to attend trips to Washington D.C. Only when the Mayor could not attend, would the Mayor Pro Tem attend. It is only in recent years that these new third-party advocacy groups began offering advocacy trips, thereby resulting in multiple trips to Sacramento and Washington D.C. available throughout the year.

Council Travel Budget

Although there is no formal policy that states how much of the annual travel budget each Council Member receives, the budget for Council related conferences and training was \$21,100 in FY 2017/18. The general breakdown at the start of the fiscal year is as follows: \$4,300 for the Mayor and \$2,800 per Council Member. For FY 2018/2019 the budget was increased to \$26,100.

This has been the general budgetary practice. In the past, should a Council Member exceed his/her budget, he/she could ask another Council Member to use some of their unspent funds, depending upon availability.

Best Practices

Staff reviewed policies and procedures from various municipalities throughout the State. None of the policies reviewed dictate who can attend which conferences. However, Fountain Valley has a policy that states, "Every year sufficient funds are budgeted to allow every City Council Member the opportunity to attend the League of California Cities Annual Conference. Adequate funds are also budgeted to allow all Council Members to attend a national conference once every two years."

The policy adopted by the City of Irvine states that criteria is used to determine whether a City Council and/or appointed official can travel. An official with the City of Irvine can travel on "official" City business when: (a) The conference or meeting is held by an organization or agency of which the City is a member; (b) The purpose of the travel is City representation in support of a City Council approved program, or at the direction of the City Council; and (c) Adequate funds are available within the approved individual City Council Business Expense budget or approved by the City Council separately.

Some options the City Council may want to consider are the following:

1. Keep current practice in place
2. Memorialize current practice with a formal policy for advocacy travel to Washington D.C. only
3. Re-instate past historic practice with a formal policy for advocacy travel to Washington D.C. only
4. Appoint the Intergovernmental Relations Committee as the body tasked to determine attendance on advocacy trips to Washington D.C.

5. Create a new City Council Travel Policy incorporating best practices

Environmental Status:

Not applicable

Strategic Plan Goal:

Non-Applicable - Administrative Item

Attachment(s):

None