ORDINANCE NO. 0-07-79

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 0-00-55, WHICH ADOPTED AN AMENDED EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND PERSONNEL POLICY FOR THE CITY OF CONWAY; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City Council has adopted, pursuant to Ordinance No. 0-00-73, an amended handbook to be used for personnel matters for the City; and

WHEREAS, a revision of Section I, Employment Policies – Travel Expenses is needed for clarification and for the fair and impartial implementation of personnel policies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS THAT:

SECTION 1: Section I, Employment Policies – Travel Expenses shall be amended as follows:

TRAVEL POLICY

Any employee, during the course of his/her employment with the City of Conway, may be required to travel outside the city limits of Conway on official business, thereby incurring certain expenses for accommodations and meals. Reimbursement of actual out-of-pocket expenses requires proof of purchase and original receipts submitted with a completed and approved Travel Expense Report. It is inherently understood in this policy, however, that an individual traveling on official City business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary, unjustified, or solely for the convenience or personal preference of the traveler in the performance of official City business are not acceptable under this standard, and travelers will be held responsible for unauthorized costs and additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

All employee travel must have proper authorization by a department head and mayor (if applicable) prior to its occurrence. Documentation of such approval must be kept on file within the department until the completion of the trip, at which time the approval and request for reimbursement are to be submitted to the Finance Department with the Travel Expense Report and all original receipts for expenditures.

All transportation shall be by the most economical means—taking into consideration the direct cost of the carrier, the cost of the employee's time away from the office, and expenses incurred for additional nights lodging and meals.

Airlines – All commercial air travel shall be by the least expensive service available, generally coach rates. An employee may be asked for documentation justifying the means of transportation and/or cost savings. Advance planning should be used to take advantage of
various special airline rates. When airfare rates are considerably less leaving a day earlier, the City will pay the extra day’s meals and lodging. However, the reduced airline rate must compensate for the additional meals and lodging. In those cases where an employee decides to have a family member accompany him or her on a business trip, the employee must pay all additional expenses. No adjustment is permitted to cover the expenses of accompanying family members (e.g., exchanging a regular round trip fare for two excursion fares).

Lodging – City travelers are expected to seek accommodations that are comfortable, convenient, meet business and personal needs and offer good value. The City will reimburse only for the single occupancy rate. Reimbursement of hotel rates will not be made in excess of the maximum lodging rate (excluding taxes) by location as stated on the U. S. General Services Administration website, www.gsa.gov without advance written approval by the Department Head and Mayor. When an employee is accompanied by a spouse or other guest, the lodging invoice shall note the single occupancy rate for the hotel/motel and shall be signed by an authorized employee of the hotel/motel. The employee is responsible for the difference and any room charges not pre-approved. All lodging will be reimbursed with appropriate original receipts. Travel distance greater than 70 miles is required for reimbursement of lodging expenses.

City Vehicle – Whenever possible, employees should use City vehicles for official City business. City vehicles shall be legally and appropriately operated and/or parked at all times. If expenses for gasoline or other repairs occur, the employee shall submit original receipts for such expenses to obtain reimbursement. The City has liability insurance coverage on City vehicles being driven on official business. However, this does not cover accidents which occur while NOT ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS. Employees will be responsible for their own liability insurance coverage in this situation.

Personal vehicle – Use of a personal vehicle will be reimbursed at the mileage rate in use by the City at the time of the travel. Reimbursement will be on a per mileage basis based on the shortest route. When using a personal automobile for a trip which originates from home, the mileage reported for reimbursement should be from home or from City offices, whichever is less. Additional vehicle related expense incurred will be the responsibility of the vehicle owner and are not the responsibility of the City. All personal vehicles used for City business must be adequately insured for liability, personal injury and property damage. Mileage shall not exceed the cost of airfare unless pre-approved by the Mayor in writing.

Economy measures – When practical, employees will carpool when attending the same conference or training. An employee may take their own car, but will not be reimbursed for mileage, or upon agreement split the reimbursement with the other drivers. Cost-sharing measures are encouraged when practical and appropriate.

Other – Reimbursement for expenses incurred for taxi/bus/shuttle services shall be allowed in conjunction with official City business. Original receipts should be obtained where possible, but if no receipts are available, then an explanation (accounting) of the request is necessary. Note that reimbursement for taxis taken between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken is included in and limited by the Incidental portion of Meals & Incidents discussed below. Reimbursement for rental car expenses must be pre-approved by the Department Head.
A justification for the need for a rental car must be included with the Travel Expense Report indicating approval by the Department Head prior to the date of travel. Expenses necessarily associated with authorized automobile travel such as tolls and parking will be fully reimbursed upon presentation of the original receipt.

Reimbursement for business related telephone calls, conference registration or tuition, and necessary conference or training materials will be allowed with the appropriate original receipts. Whenever possible, registration costs and material costs should be pre-paid through the City or billed to the City.

Meals (inclusive of tips) will be reimbursed based on actual original receipts not to exceed the current rate of reimbursement established by the U. S. General Services Administration and available on the federal agency's website at www.gsa.gov. This provides a meals & incidentals ("M&I") rate for various cities and modifies the reimbursement rate currently utilized by the City for travel incurred on or after the effective date of this Ordinance. Any meal related expense in excess of the stated daily rate is the responsibility of the employee. The cost of meals is not to be averaged over the length of travel. Employees may not claim reimbursement for a meal if the cost is included in the registration cost of the training/conference. Meal allowances for the first and last day of travel is limited to 75% of the daily M&I rate, with appropriate receipts.

Travel Advances - Travel advances will not be issued for less than $200 or more than 80% of the anticipated cost of travel. Immediately upon return, the employee must submit a Travel Expense Report and original receipts regardless of whether the employee owes advance moneys back to the City or is due additional reimbursement. Each employee requesting a cash advance must sign a payroll deduction authorization form which will allow the City to recover the advance from any salary owed the employee in the event of termination of employment or failure to submit a travel claim. A payroll deduction equal to the travel advance will be processed if a Travel Expense Report has not been submitted to the Finance Office two (2) weeks following the employee's return from travel.

Unauthorized Expenses - Notwithstanding the above provisions, the City will not reimburse items of a personal nature. Such items include but are not limited to: movies, premium television services, alcohol, dry cleaning, spas, gyms, barber/hair stylist, magazines, shoeshine, clothing, toiletries, fines or traffic violations, and spouse/guest accommodations. The City will not pay for any entertainment expenses, including but not limited to rental of movies, attendance to non-seminar or non-job related activities or for alcoholic beverages.

If unauthorized expenses have been paid by the City, the employee will be responsible for immediate reimbursement to the City either by personal check or payroll deduction.

City Credit Card - Airline reservations will be preferably made by the Mayor’s office using the City credit card. Airfare charges are due and payable upon receipt of the billing from the credit card company and will be processed and charged to the traveler’s department. Hotel reservations may be held by the City credit card, however, the traveler will need to arrange for direct bill, advance payment or charge the actual lodging to the traveler’s personal card and request
reimbursement after the travel. Any deposit charge for lodging that is due and payable upon receipt of the credit card billing will be charged to the traveler's department.

It shall be the responsibility of each Department Head to examine and approve all travel and reimbursement requests, provide written authorization and justification if there exists any variances from the travel policy directives, and to always be cognizant of the costs for employees to attend seminars, meetings and training institutes, for determining feasible use of financial resources provided in your annual operating budget. Any deviation from the above stated policy requires advance written approval of the Department Head and the Mayor.

SECTION 2: Three (3) copies of the revised section of the Amended Employee Handbook, City of Conway, Personnel Policy shall be and are hereafter kept on file in the Office of the Clerk/Treasurer.

SECTION 3: That all ordinances in conflict herewith are repealed to the extent of the conflict, specifically, Ordinance No. O-00-55 and Ordinance No. O-00-73.

SECTION 4: That this ordinance is necessary for the protection of the peace, health and safety of the citizens of Conway, and therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this ordinance shall go into effect from and after its passage and approval.

PASSED this 26th day of June, 2007.

Approved:

[Signature]

Mayor Tab Townsell

Attest:

[Signature]

Michael O. Garrett
City Clerk/Treasurer