



Position Paper

File #: 25-114

Agenda Date: 10/20/2025

Agenda Item Request:

Amend the following sections of the *Administrative Regulations & Policies*: #3 “FOAA Schedule of Fees,” and #4 “Meal & Travel Allowance,” and adopt proposed Policy #22 “Unassigned Fund Balance Policy” (new admin reg).

Background and Purpose of Request:

Policy #3 “FOAA Schedule of Fees” was reviewed after consulting with the Public Information Officer in the Executive Department. The amendments are necessary to update references in the Policy to statutory thresholds regarding FOAA fees (see P.L 2023, c. 155, § 3). Furthermore, staff believe that it would be helpful to amend this policy to clarify that FOAA fees and record request requirements are governed by State law, not exclusively the Policy. The proposed amendments clarify the internal procedures for handling record requests, including stressing that record requests must be forwarded by employees to the appropriate Public Information Officer immediately to ensure the County complies with the response timeframes in the FOAA. Staff recommend re-naming the policy from a “schedule of fees” to a policy governing “record request procedures” to reflect the purpose of these amendments. This document is presented as a repeal and replace.

Policy #4 “Meal & Travel Allowance” was reviewed by staff after confusion with the implementation of a per-diem reimbursement for meal expenses when County employees travel on County business. The proposed amendments to this Policy are also intended to clarify what documentation is required for employees to be reimbursed for meal and travel expenses. The proposed amendments eliminate the distinction between reimbursements for in-state and out-of-state travel and instead categorize travel as either “same-day” or “multi-day” travel. Same-day travel and meal expenses generally do not need to be approved prior to travel, but must be itemized on an *Expense Reimbursement Form* approved by the employee’s Director, Deputy Director, or Captain level supervisor or above before the employee can be reimbursed. Multi-day travel expenses must be estimated and approved prior to travel on a *Multi-day Travel & Professional Development Request Form*. Staff recommend that this form be removed from Appendix H1 and relocated to the Staff Intranet. This multi-day travel pre-approval form, along with an *Expense Reimbursement Form*, which contains the actual expenses incurred, must be submitted to the Finance Department with itemized receipts or credit card receipts. The multi-day per-diem meal reimbursement is retained, but the proposed Policy clarifies that employees may be reimbursed \$45 for meal expenses incurred on the first and last day of travel and \$65 for meal expenses incurred on all other full days of travel. Finally, staff recommends that the section in the Policy regarding transportation expenses (i.e., airfare, mileage) be clarified to stress that an employee is only eligible for mileage reimbursement when using their own private vehicle to conduct County business during working hours. Staff recommend that the discussion in the current Policy on what constitutes working hours be taken out. Instead, the proposed Policy directs employees to contact their Director, Captain level supervisor or above, the County Manager or Finance Director to discuss specific travel situations and the applicability of Fair Labor Standards Act requirements on a case-by-case basis. We have presented a redline document for Commissioner review.

After discussing recommended financial policies with the County Auditor staff recommends that the

Commissioners adopt a new policy, **Policy #22 “Unassigned Fund Balance Policy.”** This proposed Policy clarifies and more clearly establishes the County’s goals regarding unassigned fund balance. Maintenance of sufficient level of unassigned fund balance is essential to ensuring the County can cover unanticipated budget expenses, maintain or improve the County’s bond rating, and maximize investment earnings. The proposed Policy establishes a goal amount of unassigned fund balance that is consistent with GFOA recommendations, procedures for maintaining that goal amount, and references the statutory requirements regarding surplus funds (30-A M.R.S. § 924, which requires that unencumbered surplus funds exceeding 20% of the amount to be raised by taxation in the following fiscal year be used to reduce the tax levy). This is a repeal and replace policy and for the first time added to the Admin Regulations.

Funding Amount and Source: N/A

Effective Date: Effective immediately.