



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 7/14/2020

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File #: 20-813

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** County Administrative Office

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**SUBJECT:**

One-time Waiver of Reimbursement Requirement Concerning Employee Travel and Authorization to Pay Bridge Toll Evasion Charges

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve a one-time waiver of reimbursement requirement in the Travel and Meal Policy; and
2. Direct the Auditor-Controller to approve payment of the toll evasion charges.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

Social Service Fund 1160

**DISCUSSION:**

On Dec. 29, 2019 and Jan. 8, 2020, staff traveling on county business in county vehicles crossed over the Golden Gate Bridge, incurring toll charges. The Golden Gate Bridge no longer accepts payment at the bridge. Invoices were mailed to the County Administrative Office - Purchasing Team in the amount of \$8.35 for each of the toll charges on Jan. 21 and 23, respectively. Purchasing then notified the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Procurement of the toll charges related to DHHS employee travel. However, the invoices were not processed within the time period necessary to avoid the penalty assessment discussed.

On Feb. 18 and Feb. 25, 2020, Purchasing received toll evasion invoices assessing a \$25 penalty for each charge because the payments were late. Purchasing sent the invoices to DHHS for processing. On Feb. 27, 2020, Purchasing was contacted by Auditor-Controller (AC) staff indicating that travel costs were to be paid by the employee and then reimbursed by the county. Purchasing identified Section VI.G. of the policy, which states that bridge tolls and "other incidental expenses as approved by the department head or designee" are allowable expenses and may be claimed under this policy. Therefore, in order to avoid any additional penalties and to remove the negative impacts of the outstanding balances on the registration of Motor Pool vehicles, the toll evasion invoices were paid by Purchasing on Feb. 27, 2020, using the CAL-Card. The CAL-Card program has helped reduce the cost, time, paperwork and inefficiencies associated with small-value purchases. The program is a successful tool

that county departments use for travel expenses and small value purchases.

In order to avoid having the county employee submit a personal check for the toll charges and penalties incurred, staff recommends your Board approve a one-time waiver of the reimbursement requirement (Section 1.A-Statement of Policy of the Travel and Meal Policy) for travel expenses and direct the Auditor-Controller to approve payment of the toll evasion charges, allowing for further collection efforts to cease. Through approval of this item, your Board will concur that payment of the toll charges serves the public purpose of reimbursing employees for expenses incurred when conducting public business. CAO staff will return to your Board with a revised Travel and Meal Policy that will allow for expenses to be paid directly to a vendor, and under certain circumstances penalties, versus on a reimbursement basis.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The total cost of the toll charges (\$16.70) and penalties (\$50) is \$66.70. These costs will come from budget unit 1160-508.

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:**

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by investing in county employees and managing resources to ensure sustainability of services.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

N/A

**ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Your Board could deny this request and require the employee pay the toll charges associated to official county travel. This is not recommended.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Travel and Meal Policy
2. Toll Charge #1
3. Toll Charge #2
4. Toll Evasion #1
5. Toll Evasion #2

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A