NEW CASTLE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
TRAVEL AND TRAINING EXPENSES POLICY

1. **Scope:**

a) This Policy applies to the Fire District Commissioners, employees, and members of the Fire Department when traveling on behalf of the Fire District and/or Fire Department (hereinafter collectively referred to as a "Traveler").

b) The Fire District may expend funds for actual and necessary costs associated with events and related travel where training is provided to Fire Department and Fire District employees, officers, and, or when travel is required in conjunction with the manufacturing of a new piece of fire apparatus. Training costs include items such as registration fees, transportation, meals, and lodging. For expenditures to be considered "actual and necessary," they must be incurred for a lawful municipal purpose and must not be for an amount that is greater than necessary.

c) If travel is related to training it is preferred to take training within Westchester County, if said training is not available within Westchester County, the Chief must grant approval prior to any out of County training where travel expenses will be incurred.

2. **Objective:** This Policy establishes guidelines for: (a) requesting approval, (b) lodging and meal reimbursement options, (c) other expenses that will be reimbursed, (d) expenses which are not reimbursed, and (e) expense reimbursement.

3. **Requesting Approval for an Upcoming Trip:**

a) A Traveler wishing to attend a conference, seminar, training or a miscellaneous fire department training or educational trip must first make a request to the Chief, upon approval, the Chief will make a request to the Board of Fire Commissioners at their regular meeting.

b) The request must be made before taking the trip.

c) This approval must be noted in the official meeting minutes of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

4. **Meal Reimbursement Options:** Traveler will be reimbursed the amount specified in the Per Diem Rates for NYS or GSA Rates for the location where the expense occurs, and no documentation will be required.

5. **Overnight Accommodations:**

a) To qualify for overnight accommodations, the one-way mileage distance from New Castle must exceed one hundred (100) miles. The Board of Fire Commissioners may grant a variance from this distance if special circumstances exist.

b) Per person nightly hotel cost reimbursement will be made at the prevailing NYS Per Diem or GSA rates for the respective city. If these rates are not available permission must be obtained from the Board of Fire Commissioners in advance.

c) Same sex Travelers are to maintain double occupancy in a hotel room. Different sex Travelers are to maintain separate hotel rooms.

6. **Transportation and Other Expenses:**

a) Transportation to and from New Castle and the destination, and necessary travel in the city/town where the seminar/event is located, is reimbursable.

b) Travel by airplane, train, bus, taxi, or car is acceptable. However, travel shall be via the most economical and practical means available. For example, airplane travel may be more cost effective than auto.

c) The Board of Fire Commissioners reserves the right to determine the means of transportation.

d) Travel by District vehicle is preferable, however, using a personal vehicle is authorized, and Traveler must produce mileage to/from The destination. Reimbursement will be at the standard mileage rate (set by Internal Revenue Service) or documented actual expense.

e) Other expenses include: tolls (receipts or EZ Pass documentation) and other similar ordinary and necessary expenses related to business travel.

7. **Lodging in New York State:** Lodging accommodations on official business are exempt from New York State and local taxes if travel is within New York State.

8. **Electing to Travel without Consent of the Board:** A member or employee electing to travel to and attend events at their own expense without the Board of Fire Commissioner's authorization will not be considered to be on official Fire District business and will not be deemed to be representatives of the Fire District or Fire Department at such events.
9. **Cost-Effective and Reasonable:**

a) Travel must be by the most direct route possible.

b) Travel must be undertaken by the most cost effective and reasonable means.

c) The most cost effective and reasonable means of travel will be determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and the Fire District official assigned to make reservations and travel arrangements. It will not be at the discretion of traveling personnel.

d) The decision to use air or rail transportation rather than a Fire District-owned vehicle, personal vehicle, or rental vehicle shall be the decision of the Board of Fire Commissioners based upon the most cost effective and reasonable means of travel.

10. Expenses that Cannot be Reimbursed:

a) The Fire District will only pay expenses for authorized personnel.

b) No food, lodging, or travel reimbursement can be made for expenses for spouses or companions traveling with a Traveler. Should a spouse or companion accompany a Traveler, the Traveler is to reimburse the Fire District the difference between the actual cost of the hotel room and the respective NYS/GSA rate.

c) The Fire District cannot pay for or legally reimburse a Traveler for any alcohol purchases nor entertainment.

11. Requesting Reimbursement:

a) An expense report will be issued to the Traveler prior to the event.

b) The Traveler must submit original receipts. A Traveler can only be reimbursed for documented expenses.

c) The Traveler must complete the expense report by attaching all receipts and providing it to a Fire Commissioner of the Fire District for his/her review. Expense reports must be submitted within two (2) weeks from the last day of travel.

d) The expense report with the receipts will be forwarded to the Fire District Treasurer for payment after review by a Fire Commissioner.

12. Bookings:

a) Members on Fire District travel will be booked in a single room when traveling alone and in double occupancy rooms (two people to a room) when traveling in groups of two or more, where applicable.

b) To avoid the appearance of violating the "cost effective and reasonable clause,"

c) members on Fire District travel will not be booked in suites or other luxury hotel accommodations.

d) Cancellation Policy: Any representative of the Fire District who cannot fulfill the obligation of attending any sponsored training class or conference will be responsible for any costs of the travel, lodging, and/or training class that the Fire District cannot be reimbursed for.

13. **Inquiries:** When there is a question, inquiries should be directed to the Fire District Treasurer for clarification.

14. **Amendment:** The Board of Fire Commissioners may amend this Policy from time to time in accordance with the law.

15. **Adoption:** This Policy is adopted on August 15, 2024 and supersedes any previous versions of this policy.