

Reply to Common Council File No. 011098

From DOA-Budget and Management Division

December 18, 2001

Ref: 01013 (52)

File 011098 contains an ordinance relating to travel regulations and procedures and relates to a provision of the City of Milwaukee 2002 Budget.

In 2001, the Finance & Personnel Committee discontinued the use of special purpose accounts to fund departmental travel, seminar and convention costs, the purpose being to fund these expenses in departmental operating budgets. The 2002 Budget executed this policy change and eliminated funding for the Convention and Travel Fund, Seminar Fund, and Wisconsin League of Municipalities special purpose accounts. Section 350-181 of the City Ordinances governed the use of these special purpose accounts for travel purposes. File 011098 repeals and recreates Section 350-181 to provide consistency with the 2002 Budget and also to retain Common Council approval of some travel expenses.

Current ordinances establish approval procedures for three types of travel: Conventions, Seminars, and Other City Business Travel. The proposed ordinance requires Council approval of only out-of-city Conventions. Under the ordinance, all non-convention travel by departments requires the approval of the respective department heads. Any travel by members of the Common Council or to be paid from the contingent fund also requires Council approval. In addition, travel by the Mayor or Council President paid by their respective special expense funds and travel related to the city's legislative activities are exempt from the proposed travel regulations in File 011098.

Other procedures created by File 011098 are the same as current procedures, including limitation of the number of conventions and convention attendees for each department; request procedures; and reimbursement of travel expenses. Departments must submit requests to the Department of Administration (DOA) once a year prior to November 15 for all conventions anticipated to be attended in the next year. Requests submitted after November 15 must be submitted directly to the Common Council by letter. DOA prepares resolutions, including the estimated costs of each convention, to authorize convention attendance. Each person who attends an authorized convention must, upon request, submit a report concerning the benefits derived from attendance to the Finance & Personnel Committee.

The procedures for requiring Council approval for expenditure of funds on conventions was necessary when these funds were appropriated in special purpose accounts. These procedures are not inherently necessary if departments fund convention travel in their own budgets, since adoption of the departmental budget indicates approval of the expense. A more streamlined process that minimizes administrative workload while retaining some Council oversight is to require submittal of a list of planned convention attendance by departments to the Council early in the budget year. The Council could review the planned convention attendance and request additional information from departments if there were questions or concerns about specific conventions.

**RECOMMENDATION: DO NOT APPROVE COMMON COUNCIL FILE  
NO. 011098. ADOPT A SUBSTITUTE THAT ESTABLISHES  
PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING PLANNED CONVENTION  
ATTENDANCE TO THE COUNCIL FOR ITS REVIEW BUT WITHOUT  
REQUIRING PRIOR COUNCIL APPROVAL OF CONVENTION  
ATTENDANCE.**



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ECP:

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