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Office of the Mayor

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TO: Ames City Council Members
FROM: Ann H. Campbell, Mayor
DATE: March 2, 2012
SUBJECT: City Council Travel Expenses

It has been a long-standing policy that the City would pay for the costs for Council members to attend Iowa League of Cities, National League of Cities (NLC), and Town and Gown Association conferences. We are members of these three nationally recognized organizations whose mission's are to expose elected and appointed officials to problems and solutions uniquely related to the municipal government. As a result of this policy, the staff typically includes in the Council's budget funds for a limited number of members to attend these important gatherings.

In the event that a Council member should desire to attend a conference other than for the three organizations names above, we have asked that the request be placed on the Council agenda and the City Council decide whether or not to approve the attendance and cost reimbursement.

I am bringing this issue to your attention since the Ames Chamber of Commerce is planning a trip to Washington D.C. in mid-April to "lobby" our Congressional delegation and has invited the Mayor, Council, and City Manager to accompany their delegation. Normally, we participate in an annual lobbying effort in conjunction with the National League of Cities conference in April. However, after discussing this event with the Executive Director of the Iowa League of Cities, it appears that this would be a good year to skip the NLC lobbying trip since there are no significant pieces of national legislation affecting cities.

In the past, it has been difficult to justify two lobbying trips so close together (one at the NLC conference and one with the Chamber). However, this year offers us a unique opportunity to participate in the Chamber's trip to Washington. If you agree, we will need to know how many of you would like to go to Washington with the Chamber and to pass a motion supporting cost reimbursement for this trip.

In the future, it is my hope that we can combine the NLC and Chamber trip to Washington since there is a lot to be gained from the NLC spring conference in addition to lobbying.