

**MEMO**  
**(via email)**

**TO:** **Personnel and Finance Committee:** Chair Miles, Vice-Chair Chenoweth, Supervisor Eicher, Supervisor Schauer, Supervisor Erickson, Supervisor Audet and Supervisor Stubbs

**CC:** Assistant Controller, Meg Krohn  
DCDHS Director Shawn Tessmann  
PEI Division Administrator, Connie Bettin

**FROM:** Kate Gravel Senior Social Worker, DCDHS

**DATE:** March 23, 2021

**RE:** Request for exception to Ordinance 20 regarding mileage reimbursement.

Good Afternoon. On 3/16/21 I received an email from the Controller's Office (see below) denying my mileage claim for December 2020. These are miles driven during my course of duty as a social worker for the Department of Human Services and I am respectfully requesting the Personnel and Finance Committee make an exception to the ordinance and authorize reimbursement of \$58.08. I have included a timeline and series of events related to mileage submission that I believe are relevant to my claim. Thank you for your consideration and please let me know if you have any questions.

**TIMELINE:**

- Prior to 2019 all DCDHS mileage claims were due the end of January for the previous calendar year (i.e. all 2018 mileage claims were due by end of January 2019)
- 2016-2018 several issues and discrepancies with mileage computation - FMS staff was changing SW mileages forms that had been approved by Social Worker and supervisor w/o permission or notification.
- EGR Leaders and Human Services leadership met for dozens of hours in 2016 and again in 2018 to try and resolve issues and come to agreement.
- Summer/fall 2019 amendment to Ch. 20 of the Dane County Code of Ordinances – Expense Account Ordinance. These changes were recommended by the Controller's Office, and EGRs

and affected employees were not made aware of these recommended changes until they were passed by the County Board.

- The amendment indicated that Mileage Claims must be submitted within 60 days of travel or the Person will FORFEIT Reimbursement.
- This disproportionately affects Social Workers in Human Services who are required to use their own vehicles for work related travel. Sixty-day submission is not always possible.
- Sept-Dec 2019 discussions with DOA, Dept and EGR regarding mileage submission. ALL agreed Social Workers would have two months from end of the month driven to submit mileage reimbursement forms. At that time EGR leaders also asked for electronic submission - controller's office said no.
- 12/13/19 FMS - Lillethun Email to DCDHS staff:
  - ...*"Finally, the 60-day time limit/deadline employees have to submit employee reimbursement requests will start at the end of each month. The following are the reimbursement request cut-off dates provided by DOA. Please note these are the dates that reimbursement requests need to be to the Controller's Office:*

*Reimbursement Request Deadline to Controller's Office:*

*January travel will be due by 4/1*

*February travel by 5/1*

*March travel by 6/1*

*April travel by 7/1*

*May travel by 8/1*

*June travel by 9/1*

*July travel by 10/1*

*August travel by 11/1*

*September travel by 12/1*

*October travel by 1/1*

*November travel by 2/1*

*December travel by 3/1"...*

- 1/8/21 FMS - Malone email shortened submission timeline by approximately two weeks - from first of month to 15th of previous month without discussion or agreement with EGR. Introduced new PDF mileage form with electronic submission.
- 1/22/21 EGR leaders emailed Tessmann asking her to return to previously agreed upon submission date. Tessmann did not address at Town Hall. No response from Tessmann.
- 2/25/21 EGR leaders sent follow up email to Tessmann asking her to address unanswered question about mileage.
- 2/26/21 at 1:17p Gravel sent Dec. mileage to FMS - Sedlmayr.
- FMS Sedlmayr said form changed in Oct. 2020 (form actually changed in January 2021), new form required.
- Numerous flaws with new form make it more time consuming to complete. Significant modifications to the form are needed. The flaws include but are not limited to:
  - New form is PDF format and does not expand when typing
  - Cannot copy and paste from previous mileage documents
  - Cannot copy and paste from same document requiring you to re-enter duplicate trips
  - Form does not pre-fill when entering same destinations as in prior line
  - Because form is PDF it is locked and cannot be modified once signed. Need to re-create form to make any revisions.

- 2/26/21 at 2:02 FMS Sedlmayr emailed - will try to process ASAP forms were due 2/15/21.
  - FMS Sedlmayr sent back form stating to use multiple lines for one trip with various destinations requiring Gravel to recreate both forms
  - FMS Sedlmayr sent back form second time because did not have return trip identified - although form clearly indicates I am working from home. Literally had to re-create both forms in order to add "RT" to the destinations.
- Friday 2/26/21 at 3:00 (after nearly two hours of revisions requiring Gravel to recreate the form) Gravel's Supervisor sent final form to FMS Sedlmayr
- 2/26/21 KG sent email to Tessmann and Employee Advocate Shannon Maier expressing concern about possible mileage rejection and unanswered question about submission time line.
- 2/26/21 Tessmann explained FMS needed time to process claims and agreed to talk with FMS again. Tessmann advised Gravel she should not be using county email system to contact her. Gravel emailed again clarifying purpose of communication.
- Wednesday 3/3/21 mileage form received in Controller's office
  - Gravel's December mileage form only had 2 different destinations and should not have taken 3 days to process. Using Google map to search locations took 8min 45 sec.
  - Due to pandemic, significantly less miles being driven by DCDHS employees and drastically fewer claims for FMS to process.
- 3/3/21 Tessmann responded to EGRs questions, including addressing mileage explaining FMS needed time to process forms.
- 3/16/21 Controller's Office - Meg Krohn sent email denying Gravel's December Mileage
  - "From: Krohn, Margaret <[Krohn@countyofdane.com](mailto:Krohn@countyofdane.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 8:38 AM  
To: Gravel, Kate <[Gravel@countyofdane.com](mailto:Gravel@countyofdane.com)>  
Cc: Malone, Thomas <[Malone.Thomas@countyofdane.com](mailto:Malone.Thomas@countyofdane.com)>; Sedlmayr, Dena <[Sedlmayr.Dena@countyofdane.com](mailto:Sedlmayr.Dena@countyofdane.com)>  
Subject: December mileage claim

Kate –

*County Ordinance section 20.08 states that (employee reimbursement) "Claims must be submitted within 60 days of travel or the Person will forfeit reimbursement". In accordance with the ordinance and county policy, claims for December mileage were due to the controller's office by 3/1/21 to be within the 60-day claim period. We received your claims on 3/3/21, which falls outside the 60-day window. Your claim has been forfeited and will be returned to your department payables clerk.*

*To ensure you are within the 60-day claim period, please submit future claims to your accounts payable clerk in your department in a timely manner.*

*If you would like to appeal this denial, an exception to Chapter 20 is required to be approved by the Personnel & Finance Committee prior to payment. If you would like to pursue an exception, please provide me with a memo addressed to the Personnel & Finance committee with both your division administrator and Director Shawn Tessmann copied. Once we received the request, it will be scheduled for action by the Personnel & Finance committee at their next meeting.*

*Please let me know if you have any questions.*

Meg Krohn  
Assistant Controller"