



MEMORANDUM

Date:	November 19, 2024
To:	Finance Committee
From:	Kim Taylor, Council Auditor
Subject:	London Trip 2024 – Review of City Costs for Mayor’s Delegation

Background

We were requested to review the costs to the City for the Mayor’s delegation that went to London in October 2024. This memo does not represent an audit or attestation pursuant to Government Auditing Standards. The Background and Review Steps section outlines the work performed.

Below is a summary of questions we were asked to answer and an explanation of our review process.

Questions and Answers

1. **Question** – What amount was spent by the City for the Mayor and each employee of the Mayor’s delegation?

Answer: On the next page is a table of current estimated costs by each employee. The table shows the amounts estimated in the original summary provided by the Mayor’s Office and the current updated amounts. The original amounts were in some instances not the final amounts submitted and there were other adjustments made based on our review. Exhibit 1 includes a further breakdown by each employee.

The reason for the difference in travel costs for each employee is mainly due to the length of the trip being shorter for Mayor Deegan and Phillip Perry as well as those two not seeking reimbursement for airfare or per diem for meals.

It is important to note that all of the amounts are currently in the standard City review process and subject to adjustment. No amounts have been paid except what was directly paid by a City P-Card.

Name	Original Summary	Updated Amount	Increase/ (Decrease)	Comments
Mayor Deegan	\$ 2,978.18	\$ 2,799.37	\$ (178.81)	Per the Mayor's Office, the Mayor is reimbursing the City for incidental charges at the hotel.
Phillip Perry	2,961.77	2,693.31	(268.46)	Original summary had slight conversion difference and included the City paying JAXUSA for two meals.
Ed Randolph	9,541.15	9,327.75	(213.40)	Original summary had some differences for per diem and conversion rates.
Alex Alston	7,253.36	8,371.36	1,118.00	Original summary did not include per diem costs.
	<u>\$ 22,734.46</u>	<u>\$ 23,191.79</u>	<u>\$ 457.33</u>	

2. **Question** – Does it appear as though any taxpayer funds were spent during the Mayor's or an employee's vacation time period?

Answer: No, based on the documentation provided to us.

3. **Question** – Were there any costs to the City for the spouses of the Mayor's delegation that were on the trip?

Answer: There was no evidence of any incremental costs paid by the City for the three spouses to attend the trip. Additionally, we confirmed that the one spouse who is also a City employee was on leave during the time of the trip.

4. **Question** – Why were there different hotel rates?

Answer: Three of the four travelers booked their rooms through the JAXUSA link to the block of rooms. The three each had the same rate in British Pounds (GBP); however, the rates could be different in US dollars based on the date of check-out which could have a different conversion rate on that date.

The fourth traveler booked the room directly and had a slightly lower average price per night in British Pounds; however, given their dates of travel were different from the others, booking directly may not have resulted in a lower average rate for the others.

5. **Question** – Were there any instances of non-compliance with City laws or policies or other issues of note?

Answer: There did not appear to be any instances of non-compliance with City law regarding travel. There were some issues with the initial information provided to us where City policy does not appear to have been followed and some other issues of note. Here is a summary by each traveler.

- Mayor Deegan –
 - There were incidental items amounting to \$178.81 that were charged to the City P-Card as part of the hotel stay. We have been informed the Mayor is reimbursing the City for these amounts. Included in these items was a meal. It is a violation of City Policy for P-Cards to charge a meal to a City P-Card while traveling. It is important to note that this policy is in place to prevent an employee from paying for meals on the City's P-Card and also seeking reimbursement through a per diem; however, in this instance the Mayor did not seek any per diem for this trip.
- Phillip Perry –
 - The original receipt for the hotel indicated no room charge for 10/14 but a room charge for 10/16. This was a mistake and Phillip Perry was able to obtain and provide a corrected copy reflecting the correct dates.
- Ed Randolph –
 - There were some slight differences in the initial submittal with conversion rate amounts being calculated slightly different than City policy. These items are unique to Ed Randolph because he is the only one that used a personal credit card and sought reimbursement. The updated amounts reflect this correction.
- Alex Alston –
 - There were two separate hotel rooms on the travel packet for the night of 10/18. Per the Department, the full hotel reservation was made in London prior to knowing that one night in the middle of the trip needed to be in another city due to a business meeting. We were informed it was too late to change the initial reservation. We would ultimately have to defer to the Department as to whether he could have checked out for that night and then checked back in the following night upon returning. At the very least, steps need to be taken to avoid this type of situation in the future.
 - There was a charge for one meal on the credit card that has been classified as a business meal. As mentioned above, the City P-Card policy prohibits the use of a City P-Card for meals while traveling. It is important to note that a per diem was not requested for this meal.
 - There was an attestation for lost receipts that had to be completed; however, it is important to note that each of the items was on a City P-Card where the amounts and purpose could be substantiated. Also, some of them did have the invoices and receipts of some form.

Background on Review Steps

We requested the travel packet for each employee of the Mayor's delegation from the Mayor's Office. We were informed that there were four employees (shown on the previous table) and that they would pull together the requested information.

We then received an initial summary (Exhibit 2) with some support from the Mayor's Office. It was mentioned in the initial summary from the Mayor's Office that three of the four employees brought spouses on the trip and that no City funds were spent on any of the three spouses. It was further explained that one of the spouses, who is also a City employee, was on leave during the entire trip. During our review we confirmed that those statements were accurate.

With the initial summary there was some support provided; however, we did need some additional information. In the end, we reviewed itineraries to support the days in the United Kingdom for each employee, receipts for the items being reimbursed or paid for with a City P-Card, the conversion rate used for reimbursements to employees to ensure it complied with City Policy, and any other applicable information to determine whether there appeared to be any issues with compliance with City Policy.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Updated Summary of London Trip 2024 – Compiled by Council Auditor's Office

Exhibit 2 – Summary of London Trip 2024 – Provided by Mayor's Office on November 5

Exhibit 1

**Updated Summary of London Trip 2024
City Costs for Mayor's Delegation**

As of 11/14/24, no payments to reimburse employees have been processed besides P-Cards. Also, the original amounts were in some instances not the final amounts submitted as noted in the memo.

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Phillip Perry	2,961.77	2,693.31	(268.46)	Original summary had slight conversion difference and included the City paying JAXUSA for two meals.
Ed Randolph	9,541.15	9,327.75	(213.40)	Original summary had some differences for per diem and conversion rates.
Alex Alston	7,253.36	8,371.36	1,118.00	Original summary did not include per diem costs.
	<u>\$ 22,734.46</u>	<u>\$ 23,191.79</u>	<u>\$ 457.33</u>	

Exhibit 1**Summary of Costs for Mayor Deegan**

Description	Payment Type	British Pounds	US Dollars
Hotel - 4 nights (10/12-10/15) at £509.25 per night	City P-Card	£ 2,037.00	\$ 2,769.88
Conversion Fee - City P-Card	City P-Card	N/A	29.49
			<u>\$ 2,799.37</u>

Comments

(1)	The mayor did not request reimbursement for airline tickets or per diem for meals based on documentation provided. Additionally, the Mayor is reimbursing the City for incidental charges of \$178.81 (or £131.50) that were originally included in the P-Card charge for the hotel. This included a meal (£105), internet charge (£20), and minibar charge (£6.50).
(2)	The Mayor had items on her calendar starting the morning of 10/13 through evening of 10/15, which lines up with the hotel nights.

Exhibit 1**Summary of Costs for Phillip Perry**

Description	Payment Type	British Pounds	US Dollars
Hotel - 4 nights (10/12-10/15) at £509.25 per night	City P-Card	£ 2,037.00	\$ 2,666.64
Conversion Fee	City P-Card	N/A	26.67
			<u>\$ 2,693.31</u>

Comments

(1)	Did not request reimbursement for airfare or a per diem for meals based on documentation provided.
(2)	Had the same schedule as the Mayor and had items scheduled that lined up with the days in London.
(3)	Original receipt for hotel indicated no room charge for 10/14 but a room charge for 10/16. This was a mistake and Phillip Perry was able to obtain and provide an updated copy.

Exhibit 1**Summary of Costs for Ed Randolph**

Description	Payment Type	British Pounds	US Dollars
Airfare	City P-Card	N/A	1,197.90
Luggage Fees	Reimbursement	N/A	200.00
Hotel - 9 nights (10/12-10/20) at £509.25 per night	Reimbursement	£ 4,583.25	5,979.95
Transportation from Hotel to Airport	Reimbursement	105.00	137.03
Ubers in London - Paid in GPB	Reimbursement	50.89	66.43
Ubers in London - Paid in Dollars	Reimbursement	N/A	27.49
Airport Parking	Reimbursement	N/A	138.95
Per Diem (Portions of 10/11-10/21 at \$160/day)	Reimbursement	N/A	1,580.00
			<u>\$ 9,327.75</u>

Comments

(1)	There were items scheduled on the itinerary that line up with the days in London.
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Exhibit 1

Summary of Costs for Alex Alston

Description	Payment Type	British Pounds	US Dollars
Airfare	City P-Card	N/A	\$ 1,550.80
Luggage Fees	City P-Card	N/A	\$ 100.00
Luggage Fees	City P-Card	£ 76.00	\$ 99.26
Hotel - 7 nights (10/14-10/20) at £495.40 avg. per night	City P-Card	3,467.83	\$ 4,529.33
Hotel - 1 night (10/18) - Halston	City P-Card	155.00	\$ 202.65
Business Meeting Meal on 10/15 - No per diem	City P-Card	123.43	\$ 167.19
Ubers/Taxis in London	City P-Card	277.87	\$ 363.54
Transportation in Jax	City P-Card	N/A	\$ 24.96
Currency Conversion Fees	City P-Card	N/A	\$ 53.63
Per Diem (Portions of 10/13-10/21 at \$160/day)	Reimbursement	N/A	\$ 1,280.00
			<u>\$ 8,371.36</u>

Comments

(1)	There were items scheduled on his itinerary that lined up with the days there.
(2)	There were two separate hotel rooms on the travel packet for the night of 10/18. Per the Department, the full hotel reservation was made in London prior to knowing that one night in the middle of the trip needed to be in another city due to a business meeting. We were informed it was too late to change the initial reservation. We would ultimately have to defer to the Department as to whether he could have checked out for that night and then checked back in the following night upon returning. At the very least, steps need to be taken to avoid this type of situation in the future.
(3)	The hotel rate per night was different from the other travelers because the room was not booked through JAXUSA.
(4)	There was a charge for one meal on the credit card that has been classified as a business meal. As mentioned above, the City P-Card policy prohibits the use of a City P-Card for meals while traveling. It is important to note that a per diem was not requested for this meal.
(5)	There was an attestation for lost receipts that had to be completed; however, it is important to note that each of the items was on a City P-Card where the amounts and purpose could be substantiated. Also, some of them did have the invoices and receipts of some form.

Exhibit 2

2024 London Trade Mission

EXPENSES

Total City Cost: \$22,734.46

- Mayor Deegan: \$2,978.18
 - Her London hotel stay (10/12-10/16) was the only city expense. She paid for her own flights and meals like she did last year. Mayor Deegan also paid for her personal vacation after London.
- Phillip Perry: \$2,961.77
 - His London hotel stay (10/12-10/16) and two business meals were his only city expenses.
- Ed Randolph: \$9,541.15
 - London hotel stay (10/12-10/21), flight, taxi/uber, parking, business meals, per diem, luggage fee, business meals
- Alex Alston: \$7,253.36
 - London hotel stay (10/14-10/21), flight, taxi/uber, parking, business meals, luggage fee, business meals
- Joshua Hicks: \$0.00
 - Joshua was on personal leave for vacation. No taxpayer dollars were spent on him. He is personally paying JAXUSA for two business meals and a Jaguars game ticket.

Spouses: Mayor Deegan, Phillip Perry, and Ed Randolph had a spouse attend. No taxpayer dollars were spent on spouses.

Hotel: The hotel rooms were part of a room block negotiated by JAXUSA for the entire delegation. City employees stayed in the same hotel for proximity to the delegation and business meetings. The room costs would have been the same regardless of the presence of spouses.

Jaguars Tickets: All city employees are personally paying JAXUSA for Jaguars game tickets.

SCHEDULE

The mayor was in London from October 12-15. She participated in the UK government's International Investment Summit, met with multiple banking and fintech companies, met with the US Ambassador to the UK and embassy staff, and gave economic development interviews. All these efforts were geared to bring jobs and businesses back to Jacksonville.

Mayor Deegan also had a pre-planned vacation to Italy starting October 16, which she personally paid for. JAXUSA was aware of this and arranged the most important meetings and events on the days she was always scheduled to be in London. Phillip Perry was also on a personal vacation that he paid for during the same time as Mayor Deegan.

The full delegation schedule for the week has been provided as a separate attachment.

IMPACT

Last year's trip yielded Primark opening a 550,000 square foot distribution center in Jacksonville, the UK Secretary of Business and Trade signing the MOU with Florida in Jacksonville, and the Association of British HealthTech Industries conducting its own delegation trip to Jacksonville. Previous trips have also yielded Paysafe establishing its North American headquarters in Jacksonville with 600 jobs and \$51.5 million capital investment. SmartStream Technologies also opened a Jacksonville office with 20 jobs and \$110,000 capital investment.

It's our hope that companies we met with will expand operations or move their company to Jacksonville in the future. In future trips, we will aim to bring more businesses and jobs to Jacksonville, continuing to elevate the Jacksonville brand on the global stage, and securing a London direct flight when Boeing's plane backlog is filled.