

**To: The Budget and Finance Committee**

**From: George Goodrich**

**April 3, 2009**

**This is to request that section 3.b and 4.b of the Fiscal Policy be adjusted:**

**Request:** That the rates for meal reimbursement be adjust to the U.S. General Services Administration per diem rates for Montana, and particularly for Bozeman. These USGA per diem rates are as follows:

Breakfast: \$7.00 (no change from YP allocation)

Lunch: \$11.00 (change from \$9.00)

Dinner: \$18.00 (Change from \$12.00)

Incidentals \$3.00 (this added: tip, etc. as USGA defined)

Per Day USGA rate for meals is the total of the above, or \$39.00.

Also it is reasonable request that when someone travels to another state, the USGA rates for reimbursement be applied as appropriate to the cost of living in that state.

Rationale:

1. I am finding that I am running over the current allowance for a regular lunch and dinner, especially when a tip is included. If I am, others may, too. For example: yesterday, I took one of our clergy to lunch on CoM business. The cost of our lunch at MacKenzie River Pizza was over the presbytery rate, especially with tip – and yet under the USGA rate with tip.
2. Breakfast seems to be an okay rate.
3. This is not a major issue for me as my expenses for meals are on the Presbytery credit card and not reimbursed. Also according to section 4.0, I was able to finish my meal budget for 2008 under budget with a \$244.38 surplus on a \$944.38 line item. So this should not involve adjusting budget figures.

**This is to request that section 4.d Air Travel be adjusted** to read: “A 21-day advanced purchase of the airline tickets is required except for unforeseen events as may be approved by the Moderator of Budget and Finance and the General Presbytery.” The phrase “and a Saturday night stay over is required,” would be eliminated.

You might also include something to indicate that efforts will be made to secure the most economical rate. And travel is only to be in the economy class, unless the employee wants to pay the difference.

Rationale:

1. Normally, the requirement for a 21-day pre-purchase is easily met. However, I can foresee events when there might be an emergency flight adjustment needed.
2. The over Saturday night stay may not always be the most economical, or practical, especially if the GP is scheduled to be present in a local church on Sunday morning. Some Synod meetings, the travel to which we must pay, meet mid-week. It would probably cost more to stay over a Saturday night in lodging and meals, etc.
3. Economy Class? This stipulation is not clear in the policy. Someone could go first class.