

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



94-00060

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Honorable Martha A. Elrod
City Clerk
City of Gadsden
Box 267
Gadsden, AL 35999

Associations - Municipalities
- Dues - Funds

The city council may expend public funds for membership dues in professional organizations related to their public duties and may pay the actual expenses incurred by councilmembers in attending official functions of those organizations.

Dear Ms. Elrod:

This opinion is issued in response to your request for an opinion from the Attorney General.

QUESTION

May the City of Gadsden expend public funds for the membership fee of a councilmember in the Alabama Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, including expenses incident to meetings of that organization?

FACTS AND ANALYSIS

In the Attorney General's opinion to Louis C. Rutland, dated August 2, 1983, A.G. No. 83-00417, the Attorney General wrote that county commissions were authorized by Code of

Alabama 1975, §§ 11-1-11 and 11-1-15 to expend funds from the general fund to pay dues of commission members in the Alabama Association of Black County Commissioners. In that opinion the Attorney General wrote that, if the county commission so approved, it could expend public funds for councilmembers' memberships or dues in more than one state or national association. Section 11-1-11, Code, allows public funds to be expended for all expenses that are incurred by the commissioners in their attendance at official functions of their state organizations.

In addition, the Attorney General's Office has written at least two other pertinent opinions. In the opinion to District Attorney Jimmy Evans, dated October 19, 1979, A.G. No. 80-00022, the Attorney General wrote that public funds could be used to pay dues in professional organizations for employees. In the opinion to Mayor G. William Noble, dated March 3, 1982, A.G. No. 82-00224, it was held that the Gardendale City Council was authorized to pay membership dues for its members who belonged to the Alabama State Fireman's Association.

CONCLUSION

The city council may expend public funds for membership dues in professional organizations related to their public duties and may pay the actual expenses incurred by councilmembers in attending official functions of those organizations.

I hope this sufficiently answers your question. If our office can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

JIMMY EVANS
Attorney General
By:


JAMES R. SOLOMON, JR.
Chief, Opinions Division