



UNITED STATES
CIVILIAN BOARD OF CONTRACT APPEALS

June 26, 2019

CBCA 6430-RELO

In the Matter of JOSEPH P. PIECHOTA

Joseph P. Piechota, APO Area Europe, Claimant.

Clint E. Lock, Civilian Personnel Officer, 86th Airlift Wing, Department of the Air Force, APO Area Europe, appearing for Department of the Air Force.

ZISCHKAU, Board Judge.

Claimant, Joseph P. Piechota, seeks reimbursement of \$740 incurred as a result of a \$10 per-night pet fee at his lodgings in Germany, as part of his temporary quarters subsistence allowance (TQSA) reimbursement. The agency contends that fees associated with lodging pets are not reimbursable. We agree with the agency and deny the claim.

Background

From October 5 through December 17, 2018, Mr. Piechota stayed at an inn located in Germany while he searched for housing. The inn offered a per-night rate of \$63 plus an additional \$10 per night for pets. Mr. Piechota points out that he could have stayed in a hotel charging about \$150 per night, which would have permitted him to keep his pet for no additional charge. During his stay, Mr. Piechota was accompanied by his family and their pet. Upon concluding his stay at the inn, Mr. Piechota received a bill for \$5402 for seventy-four nights. Of the \$5402 total, \$740 is attributable to the pet fee.

On December 19, 2018, Mr. Piechota submitted a TQSA worksheet in which he listed a total of \$73 per night as his lodging rate, consisting of \$63 for the standard room rate and \$10 for the daily pet fee. The following day, Mr. Piechota was notified by the agency that the \$10 per-night rate for his pet was not reimbursable under TQSA regulations. This was reiterated in a January 16, 2019, memorandum to Mr. Piechota from the agency that stated, “[T]he cost of the pet fee stated on your lodging bills cannot be paid as TQSA or be considered in the TQSA reconciliation.”

On March 28, 2019, Mr. Piechota filed this claim challenging the agency's decision to deny reimbursement of the pet fee. Responding to Mr. Piechota's appeal, the agency argues that it correctly concluded that the \$740 pet fee is not reimbursable pursuant to section 125 of the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR).

Discussion

Section 121 of the DSSR defines TQSA as “an allowance granted to an employee for the reasonable cost of temporary quarters, meals and laundry expenses incurred by the employee and/or family members.” Section 125 provides that TQSA may be granted for “reasonable and necessary expenses for the employee and family members for meals, including tax, service charges and tips, laundry/dry cleaning and temporary lodging.” Moreover, the definition of “family” or “family member” found in section 040(m) of the DSSR does not include pets. We have addressed this issue before and have held that pet lodging fees are not reimbursable. *See Shawnie M. Peters*, CBCA 5520-RELO, 18-1 BCA ¶ 36,952, at 180,063 (concluding that the applicable travel regulations do not allow for reimbursement of the expense for keeping pets in a hotel room); *Mary Sue Hay*, GSBCA 16104-RELO, 03-2 BCA ¶ 32,355, at 160,061 (denying a claim for reimbursement of expenses related to boarding dogs at an animal hospital); *Felicia H. Peterschmidt*, GSBCA 15843-RELO, 02-2 BCA ¶ 31,988, at 158,090 (concluding the Government is not required to reimburse the cost of lodging pets as a temporary quarters subsistence expense). Finally, while the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) allows for reimbursement of costs “normally associated with the transportation and handling of dogs, cats, and other house pets” as miscellaneous expenses, it does not provide for the reimbursement of pet lodging or boarding fees. 41 CFR 302-16.2(b) (table) (2018). Similarly, although the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) allow for the reimbursement of pet quarantine expenses, such expenses do not include lodging expenses incurred for an employee's pet. JTR 054103.

Neither applicable regulation nor Board precedent provides for the reimbursement of expenses incurred for pet lodging. In addition, the fact that Mr. Piechota may have saved the government money does not justify payment of an expense that is otherwise unauthorized. *Charles J. Shedrick*, CBCA 5066-RELO, 16-1 BCA ¶ 36,566, at 178,102. Therefore, Mr. Piechota is not entitled to be reimbursed for the \$740 expense incurred for lodging his pet.

Jonathan D. Zischkau

JONATHAN D. ZISCHKAU

Board Judge