



UNITED STATES
CIVILIAN BOARD OF CONTRACT APPEALS

July 22, 2020

CBCA 6781-TRAV

In the Matter of MYLES A. ALEXANDER

Myles A. Alexander, Claimant.

Jenny Bender, Team Lead, Civilian Permanent Duty Travel, Air Force Financial Services Center, Air Force Global Strike Command, Ellsworth Air Force Base, SD, appearing for Department of the Air Force.

CHADWICK, Board Judge.

Myles A. Alexander, a civilian employee of the Department of the Air Force, sought our review of the agency's refusal to reimburse him for the expenses of a househunting trip (HHT) preceding a permanent change of station. The agency properly denied the claim because Mr. Alexander did not return to his former duty station at the end of the trip.

Mr. Alexander transferred from a position at an Air Force base to a position in another state. He and his spouse spent February 10–15, 2020, looking for a home near the new job. He then reported to his new position on February 16.

The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) authorizes agencies to issue “procedures” that employees “must follow” to claim househunting expenses, FTR 302-5.5 (41 CFR 302-5.5 (2019)) and to establish “conditions” for such claims. FTR 302-5.6(d). The Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) applicable to defense employees address this exact situation. If a civilian employee “reports for duty at the new” duty station “instead of returning to the old” duty station after a trip, “HHT subsistence . . . is not payable” for the trip, but temporary quarters subsistence expenses (TQSE), “if authorized, [are] payable instead.” JTR 054006. Any days that are converted from HHT to TQSE under this regulation count against the employee’s authorized days of TQSE. *Id.*; see *Debra K. Armstrong*, CBCA 3712-RELO, 14-1 BCA

¶ 35,676 (citing JTR C5630 (2014)); *see also Richard P. Crane*, GSBCA 15782-RELO, 02 BCA ¶ 31,996 (“It is unfortunate that Mr. Crane apparently was not effectively advised that his house hunting trip would operate to limit his entitlement to TQSE . . .”).

The record indicates that the agency paid Mr. Alexander his expenses of traveling to his new duty station plus “fixed TQSE.” As discussed, TQSE must replace househunting expenses in this situation. Mr. Alexander states in his notice of claim to the Board that he “will be filing a separate travel voucher” for hotel expenses incurred from February 16 to March 15, 2020. Mr. Alexander may seek our review of that claim separately if he is dissatisfied with the agency’s response. *See* Board Rule 401(c) (48 CFR 6104.401(c) (2019)) (“The agency shall initially adjudicate the claim.”).

Decision

The claim for househunting expenses is denied.

Kyle Chadwick

KYLE CHADWICK

Board Judge