Chartered Scout Organizations – Use of a Parish Credit Card

As with all parish and school organizations that benefit from the tax-exempt status of the parish, Scouts are subject to the full range of internal controls required at each parish and school. Please see the policy for Related Organizations which can be found online at https://www.policy.archbalt.org/fiscal-services/109-internal-control-policies-for-related-organizations/.

We understand that Scouts place on-line reservations that require on-line payment for monthly camping trips, summer camp, High Adventure trips, specialized rentals (buses, kayaks etc.), and large equipment purchase. Since there is no National BSA policy prohibiting individual unit leaders using their personal credit cards or cash to pay for unit expenses followed by reimbursement to them from the unit account, we recommend this reimbursement procedure be used as often as is possible and practical.

Debit cards are prohibited as they do not have the same controls as a credit card (i.e., transaction/credit limits, etc.). This is true for all Archdiocesan parishes, schools, and related organizations. ***All Debit cards in use must be returned to the pastor, effective immediately.***

Given that The Baltimore Area Council and the National Council do not recommend the use of unit credit cards (not personal cards) for reservations etc., credit cards opened under the Federal Tax ID of the parish may be approved in special circumstances, in the event the unit leader cannot use his/her personal credit. In order to establish a parish credit card, the following internal controls stipulations must be in place:

- Request for a credit card should be reviewed by the pastor, internal audit, and regional controller to ensure that the internal controls are currently in place to monitor additional credit card use. The following considerations must be made and documented prior to the establishment of a credit card:
    - All credit card statements (if separate from the main parish account) must be mailed directly to the parish office.
    - Determine who is responsible for matching all receipts to the statement and verifying that all receipts have been approved and submitted. (*Note: The cardholder is responsible for the timely submission of all receipts. The Pastor, or his delegate should be notified of any missing receipts).*
    - Determine who is responsible for timely payment of the bill to avoid interest charges and late fees.
    - Determine if this places more work for parish business office staff and if that is acceptable.

- The Credit Card must be maintained at the parish by a staff member. It must be signed out for a specified period of time to be used to make the on-line reservations or for the purchase of scouting materials and returned accordingly. The card that is used will be monitored by the staff member who acts as the liaison between the chartered Scout organization and the parish.

- Each individual with access to the credit card should sign the Credit Card Policy acknowledging the terms. (See policy attached here). Note: All credit cards must be in one individual's name and maintained at the parish office when not in use. Multiple cards are not allowed as it multiplies the inherent loss risk.

- An annual budget must be submitted to include a list of planned activities and the associated costs (this will ensure that the appropriate credit limit is assigned to the credit card). Because all credit cards are required to be in an individual's name, the cards must be limited to only a few individuals in the scouting community and must be pre-approved by the pastor.

- All expenditures must be approved by the pastor, or his delegate and a designated scout official prior to payment. This authorization must be in writing.

- Credit card users must ensure that cards are used only for pre-approved expenditures and detailed receipts and/or supporting documentation are submitted at the time of purchase (upon return of the credit card).

- The Pastor or his delegate should review all credit card activity to ensure that all disbursements have been approved and processed according to the guidelines.

- **As with all Parish credit cards, personal use of the credit card is not permitted. Credit card privileges will be revoked if it is used for any personal expenses. In addition, f*ailure to submit credit card receipts on a timely basis with proper documentation will result in a temporary suspension of your card. Repeated failure will result in the account being closed.***