



## MEMORANDUM

Date: November 1, 2021

To: City of Franklin Appointed/Elected Officials

From: Peggy Steeno  
Director of Administration

RE: City of Franklin Code of Conduct and Ethics for Elected and Appointed Officials

Attached is a copy of the City of Franklin Code of Conduct and Ethics document that was approved by the Common Council at their meeting of October 5, 2021. This document is for all elected and appointed officials of the City of Franklin and was put in place to ensure that all City officials have clear guidelines for carrying out the responsibilities they are charged with, while maintaining high standards of integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, and fairness.

Please read, sign/date, and return your original Code of Conduct and Ethics document to the Department of Administration as soon as possible. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 414-427-7504.

/lh

**CITY OF FRANKLIN CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS**  
**ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS**  
**October 5, 2021**

**SECTION 1: PURPOSE**

It is the policy of the City of Franklin to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from its elected and appointed officials. Accordingly, the Mayor; Common Council Members; Commission/Board/Committee Members; and Appointed Officials shall maintain the standards of personal integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties, avoid improprieties in their roles as public servants, comply with all applicable laws, and shall not use their City position or authority improperly or for personal gain.

This Code of Conduct exists to ensure that all officials have clear guidelines for carrying out their responsibilities in their relationships with each other, with the City staff, with the citizens of Franklin, and with all other private and governmental entities. It is understood that all City Officials aspire to maintain these standards. In the event that these shared objectives are not met, self-correction is the goal, with enforcement occurring when necessary.

All officials recognize that an action may be legal but may also be unprofessional, inappropriate, or perceived as a form of harassment or abuse.

This Code of Conduct works in conjunction with the City of Franklin Municipal Code and State of Wisconsin Statutes.

**SECTION 2: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCT WITH ONE ANOTHER**

The Common Council and Mayor (hereinafter the "Council") have a responsibility to set policy for the City. In doing so, certain types of conduct foster positive debate while other types do not. The Council is responsible for treating one another as they wish to be treated. The same expectation is in place for Commission/Board/Committee Members.

The Council, as well as Commissions/Boards/Committees, is composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Understanding the diversity which exists, all who choose to serve in public office have the obligation to preserve and protect the well-being of the community and its citizens. In all cases, this common goal is to be acknowledged, and all officials must recognize that certain behavior will lead to success while other behavior is counterproductive.

**A. Use of Formal Titles**

All officials will make every effort to refer to one another and City staff formally during public meetings as Mayor, Council President, Alderperson, Board/Commission/Committee Member, followed by the individual's last name.

**B. Use of Civility and Decorum in Discussions and Debate**

Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of free democracy in action. Every official has the right to an individual opinion, without interruption, which is to be respected by the other officials. Officials shall not be hostile, degrading, or defamatory when debating a contentious issue. Each official is to work under the premise that all other officials are acting with appropriate motives

and keeping the interest of the public in mind, and are not to be criticized for differing opinions because they believe them to be lacking in judgment or are improperly motivated.

However, this does not allow any official to make belligerent, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or personally disparaging comments in public meetings or during individual encounters. Shouting, attacking, or other actions that could be construed as threatening or demeaning will not be tolerated. If an official is personally offended by the remarks of another official, the offended official should voice the concern promptly and afford the other official the opportunity to either explain the comment or apologize. If that is not successful, the offended official should call for a "point of personal privilege".

C. Honor the Role of the Chair in Maintaining Order

It is the responsibility of the Mayor, as Chair of the Council, as well as Commission/Board/Committee Chairs, to keep the discussion of all members on track during meetings. Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members are to respect the efforts by the Mayor/Chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Mayor's/Chair's actions, those objections are to be voiced respectfully and with reason, following commonly recognized parliamentary procedure.

D. Dissemination of Information

Out of courtesy to all Council Members, important safety matters, as determined by the Mayor, will be communicated to the Council Members as soon as practicable once they become available/known. In addition, new information regarding appropriate City Business/Communications will be disseminated to the Body prior to disseminating on social media.

E. Use of Electronic Devices

Respect for one another, constituents, and those appearing before the Council and Commissions/Boards/Committees is paramount, and full attention to the matters before the Body is the purpose of meetings. The use of electronic devices to communicate regarding City business during meetings is prohibited since it presents an opportunity for violation of open meetings and open records laws. Personal use (i.e. use not related to City Business) of electronic devices is strongly discouraged and is to be reserved only for urgent situations. However, it is acknowledged that occasional use of electronic devices occurs for business purposes within the context of meetings and is acceptable.

F. Social Media

Social media presence by those officials covered under this code is to be informative in nature and positively reflect on the community and City staff, and promote local activities. All officials shall avoid expressing opinions or bias regarding City business or issues that may come before the Council/Commission/Board/Committee when it may be construed that they are acting on behalf of the City.

In the use of social media, all officials are to abide by the following:

- Refrain from making belligerent, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or personally disparaging comments;
- Ensure that they do not participate in discrimination or harassment, even if the identified behavior is not targeting a protected class, consisting of unwelcome conduct, sexual or otherwise, whether verbal, physical, or visual. Harassing conduct includes, but is not

limited to: slurs or negative stereotyping; bullying, threatening, intimidating or other hostile acts; degrading jokes and display or circulation of graphic material that degrades or shows hostility; and physical touching;

- Shall never demean or personally attack an employee regarding the employee's job performance in public; and
- Are to demonstrate their honesty and integrity, and to be an example of appropriate and ethical conduct.

#### G. Newsletters by Council Members

Council Members are allowed to create newsletters; however, all Council Members must ensure that in expressing their own opinion, they do not mislead any reader/listener into believing that their individual opinion is that of the entire Council/Commission/Board /Committee unless the Council/Commission/Board/Committee has taken a vote of the Body on that specific issue and the Member's opinion is the same as the result of the vote of the Body on the matter.

#### H. Discrimination and Other Harassment

The Council is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, even if the identified behavior is not targeting a protected class. Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, sexual or otherwise, whether verbal, physical, or visual. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: slurs or negative stereotyping; bullying, threatening, intimidating or other hostile acts; degrading jokes and display or circulation of graphic material that degrades or shows hostility; and physical touching.

### **SECTION 3: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCT WITH CITY STAFF**

Governance of the City relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials who set policy and City staff who implement and administer the Council's policies. Therefore, every effort is to be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each other for the good of the community.

The City of Franklin, through its form of government and Municipal Code, charges the Mayor as the responsible person for all staff in the City, except as may be otherwise provided by law pursuant to the Wisconsin Statutes.

The Common Council, upon recommendation from individual Council Members, professional staff, and volunteer Boards/Commissions/Committees, authorizes various aspects of personnel management including policies, pay plans, benefit plans and other related items. On Council direction, the Mayor is charged with implementing these items while working with the executive team. This provides for a single manager to direct our staff.

Members of the Common Council must be diligent in maintaining this "chain of command". Council Members shall not engage in directing employees in their tasks and/or injecting themselves into tasks and projects. Council Members are encouraged to get to know and support the City's 240+ employees, and treat them with respect and professionalism.

Should an individual Council Member see a deficiency, need a project or task performed, have a special request for service, or any other directive for staff, he/she is to communicate that, in writing, including the specific issue as well as a requested resolution, to the Mayor or Director of Administration. (This does not include Council Members' need for additional information needed for

Council agenda items or issues relevant to their districts, which is covered in the Rules of the Common Council.) In the event that the matter is not resolved within a reasonable amount of time after communications with the Mayor and the Director of Administration, the matter may be discussed at a Council or Committee of the Whole Meeting at the call of two Council Members by filing a written request with the Clerk.

All elected and appointed officials must constantly be aware of their impact on the morale and reputation of our employees in their statements and interactions.

A. Treat Staff as Professionals

Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members shall treat all staff as professionals. Clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual is expected. Poor behavior toward staff is not acceptable. Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members should refer to staff by their title followed by the individual's last name in public meetings when first introduced.

B. Never Publicly Demean or Personally Attack an Individual Employee

Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members shall never demean or personally attack an employee regarding the employee's job performance in public. All employee performance issues shall be directed to the Mayor or the Director of Administration through private correspondence or conversation.

C. Do not Supersede Administrative Authority

Unless otherwise provided in this Code, neither the Council, nor any of Commission/Board/Committee Members, shall attempt to supersede the administration's powers and duties. Neither the Council nor any Commission/Board/Committee Member thereof shall give orders to any of the Department Heads or their subordinates, either publicly or privately. Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members shall not attempt to unethically influence or coerce City staff concerning either their actions or recommendations to awarding contracts, selection of consultants, processing of development proposals, the granting of City licenses and permits, or any other similar City function.

Nothing in this section shall be construed, however, as prohibiting a Council Member or Commission/Board/Committee Member in an open meeting from fully and freely discussing with or suggesting to the Department Heads anything pertaining to City affairs or the interests of the City. And, it is also noted that there may be limited occasions when Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members need to communicate with staff outside public meetings, not related to questions on agenda matters.

D. Do Not Solicit Political or Business Support from Staff

Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members shall not solicit any type of political support, including: financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, collection of petition signatures, etc., from City staff. City staff may, as private citizens within their constitutional rights, support political candidates, however all such activities must be done away from the workplace and be the will of the staff member. Photographs of uniformed City employees shall not be used in political ads.

Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members should refrain from soliciting personal business, i.e. services, patronage, etc. that are not offered to the general public, from staff.

## **SECTION 4: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCT TOWARDS THE PUBLIC**

### **In Public Meetings**

Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice, or disrespect are to be evident on the part of individual Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort is to be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony or input. All Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members are to demonstrate, both publicly and privately, their honesty and integrity, and to be an example of appropriate and ethical conduct. And, all Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members are to respect and appreciate the public's participation, input, and opinions.

#### **A. Be Welcoming to Speakers and Treat Them with Care and Respect**

For many citizens, speaking in front of a governing body is a new and difficult experience; under such circumstances, many are nervous. Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members are expected to treat citizens with care and respect. (See section 2 D.) All Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members are to commit full attention to the speakers or any materials relevant to the topic at hand. Comments, when appropriate, and non-verbal expressions are to be respectful and professional.

#### **B. Be Fair and Equitable in Allocating Public Hearing Time to Individual Speakers**

The Mayor/Chair will determine and announce time limits on speakers at the start of the Public Hearing. Generally, each speaker will be allocated three minutes, with applicants, appellants, or their designated representatives allowed additional time. If a substantial number of speakers are anticipated, the Mayor/Chair may shorten the time limit and/or ask speakers to limit themselves to new information and points of view not already covered by previous speakers.

Each speaker may only speak once during a Public Hearing unless the Body requests additional clarification later in the process. After the close of the Public Hearing, no additional public testimony will be accepted unless the Body reopens the Public Hearing for a limited and specific purpose.

#### **C. Ask for Clarification, but Avoid Debate and Argument with the Public**

Only the Mayor/Chair (no other Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members), shall be allowed to interrupt a speaker during a presentation if needed to clarify, keep on topic, or similar. Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members may ask the Mayor/Chair to have the speaker repeat or clarify if there is an audio issue, hallway noise, or other similar matter. And, Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members may ask the Mayor/Chair for a point of order if the speaker is off the topic, exhibiting behavior or language that the Member finds disturbing or out of line, or if there are inaccurate statements made that the Member would like corrected. Member questions, regarding public input, to seek, clarify, or expand information are to be directed to the Mayor/Chair.

#### **D. Follow Parliamentary Procedure in Conducting Public Meetings**

The City Attorney serves as advisory parliamentarian for the City and is available to answer questions or interpret situations according to parliamentary procedures. Final rulings on parliamentary procedure are made by the Mayor, subject to the appeal of and to the Council, per Robert's Rules of Order.

## **Outside Public Meetings**

### **A. Make No Promise or Statement on Behalf of the City or Common Council in an Unofficial Setting**

Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members will frequently be asked to explain a Council/Commission/Board/Committee Action or to provide their opinion regarding an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to provide a brief overview of City Policy and to refer the constituents to City staff or the Mayor for further information. Overt or implicit promises of specific Council/Commission/Board/Committee Action or promises that City staff will take some specific action shall be refrained from.

All Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members must ensure that in expressing their own opinions, they do not mislead any listener into believing that their individual opinion is that of the entire Council/Commission/Board/Committee unless the Council/Commission/Board/Committee has taken a vote on that specific issue and the Member's opinion is the same as the result of the vote of the Body on the matter. Likewise, no Council/Commission/Board/Committee Member shall state in writing that Member's position in a way that implies it is the position of the entire Body. A member has the right to state a personal opinion and has the right to indicate that he/she is stating such as a member of the Body but must always clarify that he/she is not speaking on behalf of the City or the Common Council/Commission/Board/Committee unless specifically authorized by that Council/Commission/Board/Committee to do so.

## **SECTION 5: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCT WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL PUBLIC AGENCIES AND OFFICES**

Since Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members act as a single Body during official City Meetings, such members should curb individual communications with other agencies. Any such interactions would simply be as a citizen, NOT as a Council/Commission/Board/Committee Member. Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members may state their office position with the City, but shall also state that the Member has not been authorized by the Council/Commission/Board/Committee and is not appearing or communicating with the agency on the specific subject matter(s) with Council/Commission/Board/Committee direction to do so (unless the Council/Commission/Board/Committee has so authorized and directed the Member to do so); Council/Commission/Board/Committee may then otherwise state the reason for appearing or communicating with the agency and/or office. Common Council Members may use their respective City email accounts to so communicate in addition to other methods of communication.

All Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members must remember that, at most times, they are perceived in public as a representative of the City and should act and speak with that responsibility in mind.

### **A. Be Clear about Representing the City or Personal Interests**

If a Council/Commission/Board/Committee Member appears before another governmental agency or organization to provide a statement on an issue, the Member must clearly state whether his or her statement reflects a personal opinion or is the official position of the City.

All Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members must inform the applicable Body of their involvement in an outside organization if that organization is or may become involved in any issue within the City's jurisdiction. If an individual Council/Commission/Board /Committee Member publicly represents or speaks on behalf of another organization whose position differs from the City's official position on any issue, the Member must clearly communicate the organization upon whose behalf he/she is speaking and must withdraw from voting as a Council/Commission/Board/Committee Member upon any action that has bearing upon the conflicting issue.

B. Representation of the City on Intergovernmental Commissions and Other Outside Entities

Council Members serving on Boards, Commissions, or Committees as a City Representative for outside entities or agencies shall properly communicate with all other Council Members on issues pertinent to the City.

C. Conflict of Interest

Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members are encouraged to request a Conflict of Interest Opinion from the City Attorney if unsure whether a personal conflict exists on specific matters.

D. Mayor's Role Representing the City

The Mayor is charged with representing the City, speaking on its behalf, and communicating with the Council regarding these matters when appropriate.

**SECTION 6: ELECTED OFFICIALS CONDUCT WITH COMMISSIONS/BOARDS/COMMITTEES**

A. Attendance at Commission/Board/Committee Meetings

Council Members may attend any City of Franklin Commission/Board/Committee Meeting which is open to the public.

B. Assigned Commission/Board/Committee Duties

Council Members are assigned to Boards/Commissions/Committees to provide a line of communication between the specific Commission/Board/Committee and the Common Council. As such, Council Members are to fully participate in the activities and meetings of the Commission/Board/Committee.

Regular attendance at meetings and activities is expected.

Council Members, along with City staff, shall advise the Commissions/Boards/ Committees that they serve on regarding policies and procedures of the City, and proper conduct of meetings.

C. Be Respectful of Diverse and Opposing Opinions

A primary role of Commissions/Boards/Committees is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Council with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns, experience, and perspectives. Council Members must be fair and respectful to all citizens serving on Commissions/Boards/Committees without regard to their backgrounds, residence, and political views.

D. Closed Session Participation

Out of courtesy for the Commission/Board/Committee, Council Members not on such Commission/Board/Committee shall inform the Commission/Board/Committee Chair of their attendance in closed session in advance of attending such closed session whenever possible.

**SECTION 7: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONDUCT WITH THE MEDIA**

A. Expression of Positions on Issue

When communicating with the media, all Council/Board/Commission/Committee Members must clearly state that their comments are the official position of themselves alone, and not from the Council/Commission/Board/Committee unless specifically authorized by that Council/Commission/Board/Committee. Each Council/Board/Commission/Committee Member represents one vote of the total and until a vote on any issue is taken, Council /Board/Commission/Committee Members' positions are merely their own. Council/Board /Commission/Committee Members recognize that the Mayor, or his/her designee, is the only authorized voice for the City.

B. Discussions Regarding City Staff

Council/Commission/Board/Committee Members shall not discuss personnel issues or other matters regarding individual City staff in public or with the media. Any issues pertaining to City staff shall only be addressed directly to the Mayor or the Director of Administration.

**SECTION 8: ENFORCEMENT OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

A. Filing of Complaints (Excluding Ethics, which is addressed in **Section 9** and contains separate remedies)

Any person who believes a City Official has violated a requirement, prohibition or guideline set out herein may file a sworn complaint with the City Clerk identifying: (1) the complainant's name, address and contact information; (2) position of the City official who is the subject of the complaint; (3) the nature of the alleged violation, including the specific provision of Municipal Code, Policy, Rule allegedly violated, and (4) a statement of fact constituting the alleged violation and the dates on which, or period of time during which, the alleged violation occurred.

The person making the complaint shall provide the following with the complaint: (1) all documents or other materials in the complainant's possession that are relevant to the allegation, (2) a list of all documents or other materials relevant to the allegation that are available to the complainant but not in the complainant's possession, (3) a list of all other documents or other materials relevant to the allegation but unavailable to the complainant, including the location of the documents if known, and (4) a list of witnesses, what they may know, and information to contact those witnesses.

The complaint shall include an affidavit at the end of the complaint stating that the "information contained in the complaint is true and correct, or that the complainant has good reason to believe and does believe that the facts alleged are true and correct and that they constitute a violation of the Municipal Code, Policy, or Rule". If the complaint is based on information and belief, the complaint shall identify the basis of the information and belief, including all sources, contact information for those sources, and how and when

the information and/or belief was conveyed to the complainant by those sources. The complainant shall swear to the facts by oath before a notary public, or before the City Clerk. A notary public or City Clerk shall verify the signature.

If a complaint filing is determined to be complete by the City Clerk, the City Clerk shall forward the matter to the Mayor or the Mayor's Designee. If the complaint filing is determined incomplete, the City Clerk shall notify the complainant of the deficiency. If the complaint is filed against the Mayor, the City Clerk shall submit the complaint filing to the Council President to work with the appropriate parties to process the complaint appropriately on behalf of the City.

**B. Confidential Nature of Complaint**

While complete confidentiality cannot be maintained, each complaint will be considered judiciously and as discreetly as possible, respecting both the complainant and the accused, throughout the investigation.

**C. Time for Filing**

A complaint under this Code must be filed no later than sixty (60) days from the date of discovery of the alleged violation. However, anyone having information on which a complaint is based is encouraged to file the complaint as soon as the information is obtained so that immediate action may be taken by the Council, the appropriate staff member or agency. The delay in filing a complaint may be considered in determining the sanction to be imposed.

**D. False or Frivolous Complaints**

A person who knowingly makes a false, misleading, or unsubstantiated statement in a complaint is subject to criminal prosecution for perjury and possible civil liability. If, after reviewing a complaint, it is determined that a sworn complaint is groundless and appears to have been filed in bad faith or for the purpose of harassment, or that intentionally false or malicious information has been provided, the subject shall be referred to the Chief of Police for referral to the District Attorney's Office for prosecution under penalty of perjury or as the District Attorney may determine. A City Official who seeks to take civil action regarding any such complaint shall do so at his or her expense.

**E. Complaint Procedure**

**(1) Investigation**

If the complaint is complete, it will be investigated by the City through its representative which may be the City's Risk Provider, Outside Counsel, or other appropriate party acting as the Investigative Officer, in a reasonable period of time.

**(2) Failure to Comply**

All City Officials, whether elected and appointed, are required to cooperate with any such investigations. Failure to cooperate in an investigation, or making false statements, could subject the Official to sanctions or removal from office/position.

**(3) Recommendations**

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Investigating Officer, following deliberation in open or closed session, shall submit a report to the Council, including findings of

fact, conclusions of law, and a recommendation as to what action, if any, the Council should consider with respect to the individual charged. The Investigating Officer shall provide the complainant and the individual charged with a copy of the report. Either the complainant or the person charged may file an objection to the report and shall have the opportunity to present arguments supporting the objection to the Council.

#### (4) Council Action

The Council shall consider and take action on the recommendation of the Investigating Officer within sixty (60) days after the Investigating Officer provides its findings. Upon review of the report and following deliberation, if the Council, by motion, concludes that there is a violation of the Code, the Council may direct mediation or impose a sanction or penalty. The Council may adopt, reject, or modify the recommendation made by the Investigating Officer. In resolving the complaint, the totality of the circumstances shall be taken into consideration, including the intent of the person accused of the wrongdoing.

#### (5) Penalties and Sanctions Policy

It is the intent of the Council to educate and, when necessary, discipline City Officials who violate this Code. Discipline shall be progressive, from the least punitive to the most punitive measures, unless the Council believes that progressive discipline does not provide the appropriate sanction due to the gravity of the offense, or because the Council does not believe the sanction would deter future misconduct. In all instances, the totality of the circumstances shall be taken into consideration in resolving the matter, including the intent of the one accused of wrongdoing.

#### (6) Possible Penalties and Sanctions

- i. An informal censure by the Council, which would only be made as part of a motion in a public meeting.
- ii. A formal censure by the Council, which would be made by motion in a public meeting and then published in the City newspaper.
- iii. Mandatory community service. [Wis. Stat. § 62.11(3)(e)]
- iv. Attendance at counseling or mediation sessions. [Wis. Stat. §62.11(3)(e)]
- v. Imposition of a dollar fine of up to \$500.00. [Wis. Stat. §§ 62.11(3)(a) &(c)]
- vi. Removal from Office. [Wis. Stat. § 62.11]
- vii. Discipline, up to and including termination (for Appointed Officials).
- viii. Any other sanction available by law.

The imposition of any of these penalties or sanctions will require an affirmative vote of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all Members of the Council (with six (6) voting Council Members,  $\frac{3}{4}$  is calculated as  $6 \times .75 = 4.5$ , rounded up to 5 votes).

#### (7) Notice

The Mayor, or his/her designee, shall provide notice of the Council's decision to the person charged within ten (10) days of decision.

### **SECTION 9: ETHICS**

The state ethics code applicable to local government officials is found in Wisconsin Statutes § 19.59. *(This is affirmed by the CHARTER ORDINANCE change that was passed on March 1, 2005. Ordinance 2005-1835 repealed the Code of Ethics of the Municipal Code and provided*

*for the filing of financial disclosure statements by elected officials, candidates and other specified officials of the City.)* Many of the terms used therein are defined in Wisconsin Statutes § 19.42.

The state ethics code establishes minimum standards of ethical conduct that prohibit local public officials from using their public office to benefit or enrich themselves, their immediate families, or organizations with which they are associated. Local officials must understand these standards to avoid violations of the law. Specifically, this code prohibits local public officials from engaging in the following conduct:

- Using their office to obtain financial gain, any type of employment including consulting or similar roles, or anything of substantial value for the private benefit of themselves, their immediate families, or organizations with which they are associated.
- Receiving “anything of value” if it could be reasonably expected to influence the local public official’s vote, official action or judgement, or could reasonably be considered as a reward for any official action or inaction.
- Taking official action substantially affecting a matter in which the official, an immediate family member, or an organization with which the official is associated has a substantial financial interest or using his or her office in a way that produces or assists in the production of a substantial benefit for the official, an immediate family member, or an organization with which the official is associated.
- Offering or providing influence in exchange for campaign contributions.

An official who is uncertain about a potential conflict with this section may want to seek advice from the City Attorney.

The state ethics code is enforced by the local district attorney (in Milwaukee County, this is Corporation Counsel) upon verified complaint of any person. If the district attorney fails to commence an action within twenty (20) days after receiving such complaint or refuses to commence an action, the person making the complaint may petition the attorney general to act on it.

The ethics code provides civil and criminal penalties for violations. A local official who intentionally violates any part of § 19.59, except § 19.59(1)(br), may be fined not less than \$100 nor more than \$5,000 or imprisoned not more than one year in the county jail or both. In the alternative, a civil forfeiture of up to \$1,000 may be imposed against a local official for violating any part of the state ethics code. Intentional violation of § 19.59(1)(br), offering or providing influence in exchange for campaign contributions, is a Class I felony.

### **Acknowledgement Statement / Signature Required**

By signing below, the Elected Official/Commission, Board, Committee Member/Appointed Official agrees to the principles and rules set forth in this document and will abide by them to the best of his/her abilities throughout his/her term of office/employment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Official Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office Held by Official