



# CITY OF DAHLONEGA Council Meeting Agenda

January 06, 2025, 6:00 PM

Gary McCullough Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

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In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision – Dahlonega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlonega, a City of Excellence, will provide quality services through ethical leadership and fiscal stability, in full partnership with the people who choose to live, work, and visit. Through this commitment, we respect and uphold our rural Appalachian setting to honor our thriving community of historical significance, academic excellence, and military renown.

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## CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

## PRAYER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

## PUBLIC COMMENT – FOUR MINUTE LIMIT

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Work Session Meeting Minutes - December 16, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk
- b. City Council Special Called Meeting - December 16, 2024  
Sarah Waters, Assistant City Clerk

## APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION:

1. Appointment of Jan Tolbert to Public Housing Authority  
JoAnne Taylor, Mayor
2. Margaret Owen 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Proclamation  
JoAnne Taylor, Mayor  
Strategic Priority - Communication

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CITY REPORTS:

## ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

## CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS:

## OTHER ITEMS:

3. HB 581  
Allison Martin, City Manager  
Strategic Priority - Communication
4. Mayor Pro Tempore  
Mayor JoAnne Taylor  
Strategic Priority - Communication
5. Appointment of City Clerk – Ms. Rhonda P. Hansard

Allison Martin, City Manager  
Strategic Priority - Communication

- 6. Consideration of City Council Code of Conduct
- JoAnne Taylor, Mayor
- Strategic Priority - Communication

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

- Clerk Comments
- City Manager Comments
- City Attorney Comments
- City Council Comments
- Mayor Comments

ADJOURNMENT

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Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlongega will be an open, honest, and responsive city that balances preservation and growth and delivers quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of its resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlongega commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare ...for ALL!

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# CITY OF DAHLONEGA

## Council Work Session Minutes

December 16, 2024, 4:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

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### OPEN MEETING

Mayor Taylor called the Council Work Session meeting to order at 4:40 P.M.

### PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor  
Councilmember Roman Gaddis  
Councilmember Johnny Ariemma  
Councilmember Ryan Reagin  
Councilmember Ross Shirley  
Councilmember Lance Bagley  
Councilmember Daniel Brown

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin to approve the agenda, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

### BOARD & COMMITTEES

1. Cemetery Committee - November 2024  
Mark Buchanan, City Engineer  
There were no updates.
2. Downtown Development Authority/Main Street Program - November 2024  
Ariel Alexander, Downtown Development Director  
Councilmember Bagley commented on how amazing the holiday lights looked. He requested that future reports include projects such as the lights to keep the council informed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AVAILABLE AT: <https://dahlonega.gov/category/department-reports/>

3. Community Development - November 2024  
Allison Martin, City Manager
4. City of Dahlonega Police Department - November 2024.

George Albert, Chief of Police.

Councilmember Shirley noted that the reported number of accidents in November was 39, but upon reviewing the statistics, he observed a total of 14 accidents. He requested clarification on the difference.

Councilmember Bagley commended the progress, stating that the team was doing an excellent job.

5. Public Works—November 2024

Mark Buchanan, PW Director/City Engineer

6. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report November 2024

John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director

Councilmember Shirley inquired if staff were seeking grants for generators.

7. Finance and Administration Department – November 2024

Kimberly Stafford, Finance Manager

APPOINTMENT, PROCLAMATION & RECOGNITION: ( Vote at Council Meeting)

8. Appointment of Erick Jones to DDA

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor expressed her enthusiasm for the appointments, highlighting their importance to the community.

There was no discussion. Mayor Taylor and the Councilmembers thanked Mr. Jones for volunteering.

9. Reappointment of Jan Tolbert to Public Housing Authority

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Strategic Priority - Communication

There was no discussion. Mayor Taylor and the Councilmembers thanked Ms. Tolbert for volunteering.

10. Appointment of Leigh Ann Gaddis to Public Housing Authority

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Strategic Priority - Communication

There was no discussion. Mayor Taylor and the Councilmembers thanked Ms. Gaddis for volunteering.

PRESENTATION

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

11. Resolution 2024-06 A Resolution to add membership in the PTSD fund of GIRMA

Allison Martin, City Manager

Mayor Taylor handed the meeting over to City Manager Martin.

City Manager Martin introduced Resolution 2024-06: A Resolution to Add Membership in the PTSD Fund of GIRMA. The Ashley Wilson Act, effective January 1, 2025, mandates that all employers of public safety officers, as defined by the legislation, provide state-mandated minimum PTSD coverage. This coverage includes two required benefits: a Lump Sum PTSD Diagnosis Benefit and a PTSD Disability Limit. The annual cost for this mandated coverage for the City of Dahlenega is \$740. She noted that this agenda item

is connected to the required application packet, which is included later in the agenda. This unfunded mandate was not included in the FY25 budget, but the expense will be absorbed in the FY25 budget and accounted for in future budget submissions.

**AGREEMENTS & CONTRACTS:**

**12. Morrison Moore Pedestrian Bridge & Sidewalk (PI 0016629) Vendor Selection**

Mark Buchanan, City Engineer

Mayor Taylor handed the meeting over to City Engineer Buchanan.

City Engineer Buchanan explained that staff is seeking approval to award the contract for the Morrison Moore Pedestrian Bridge and Sidewalk Project (PI0016629) to the selected vendor, Strickland and Sons. Additionally, staff requests approval of the Construction Agreement between the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the City of Dahlonega. This agreement formalizes GDOT's partial funding of the project through the Transportation Alternatives Program, which requires a 20% local match. Lumpkin County will also contribute to this local match. Staff recommends awarding the contract to the selected vendor based on the bid amounts and authorizing an additional amount equal to 10% of the contract total to cover potential quantity overruns and unforeseen items. Approval of the Construction Agreement's full execution is also recommended.

Councilmember Bagley asked about the timeline for approval and the expected construction duration.

Councilmember Ariemma asked about the amount of funding the County is willing to contribute to the project and whether an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) will be established.

**13. GIRMA First Responder PTSD Application and Participation Agreement**

Allison Martin, City Manager

As this item was previously discussed, there was no further discussion.

**OTHER ITEMS:**

**14. HB581 Post Election Discussion**

Allison Martin, City Manager

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor requested City Manager Martin to present the item for discussion.

City Manager Martin explained that on November 5, 2024, Georgia voters approved HR1022, which authorized the enactment of House Bill 581. This legislation introduces a floating homestead exemption for residential homestead properties. House Bill 581 also includes a provision allowing local governments that choose not to opt out to hold a referendum for enacting a one percent sales tax, known as a FLOST, with 100% of the proceeds designated for rolling back property taxes. School boards, however, are not eligible to participate in the FLOST. The council is being asked to determine whether to opt in or opt out of HB581. If the decision is to opt in, the council must also decide whether to support a referendum to enact the FLOST with the county should the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners wish to enact the tax.

Councilmember Ariemma inquired whether implementing the one percent sales tax would be beneficial if it resulted in the elimination of another program or funding source.

Mayor Taylor clarified for the public that the council's decision was solely about the homestead exemption contained in HB581 and not about an additional sales tax.

Councilmember Ariemma discussed changes to the existing senior homestead exemption.

Mayor Taylor clarified that the council was not discussing any changes to the existing senior homestead exemption as it did not relate to HB 581.

Councilmember Gaddis expressed support for voting in favor of the measure, citing the significant public approval reflected in the vote. He also asked whether it would be possible for one governing body to adopt the measure while another does not.

#### COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

There were no comments at this meeting.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor adjourned the meeting at 5:11 P.M.

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# CITY OF DAHLONEGA

## City Council Special Called Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2024, 4:30 PM

Gary McCullough Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

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### CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Taylor called the City Council Special Called Meeting to order at 5:11 P.M.

### PRESENT

Mayor JoAnne Taylor  
Councilmember Roman Gaddis  
Councilmember Johnny Ariemma  
Councilmember Ryan Reagin  
Councilmember Ross Shirley  
Councilmember Lance Bagley  
Councilmember Daniel Brown

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Taylor called for a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin to approve the agenda, Seconded by Councilmember Brown.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

### NEW BUSINESS

1. Appointment of Erick Jones to DDA

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Gaddis to approve the appointment of Erick Jones, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

2. Appointment of Leigh Ann Gaddis to Public Housing Authority

JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley to approve the appointment of Leigh Ann Gaddis, Seconded by Councilmember Gaddis.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

Mayor Taylor invited Ms. Gaddis to the front for the official swearing-in ceremony.

She then administered the oath of office, formally appointing Ms. Gaddis as a member of the Housing Authority.

3. Resolution 2024-06 A Resolution to add membership in the PTSD fund of GIRMA

Allison Martin, City Manager

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Brown to approve the minimal coverage, Seconded by Councilmember Shirley.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

4. GIRMA First Responder PTSD Application and Participation Agreement

Allison Martin, City Manager

Strategic Priority - Communication

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin to approve minimal coverage, Seconded by Councilmember Brown.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

5. Morrison Moore Pedestrian Bridge & Sidewalk (PI 0016629) Vendor Selection

Mark Buchanan, City Engineer

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Reagin to approve the award of the Morrison Moore Pedestrian Bridge & Sidewalk Project to Strickland & Sons in the amount specified in the bid document provided, Seconded by Councilmember Brown.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

Motion made by Councilmember Brown to approve staff to utilize up to 10% of the amount indicated in the bid for other projects, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

6. Alcoholic Beverage License Consumption on Premise - Dahlonga BBQ LLC dba North Georgia BBQ

Sarah Waters, Asst. City Clerk

Assistant City Clerk Waters stated that Dahlonga BBQ is requesting a Class E Retail Beer by the drink.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.



Motion made by Councilmember Brown to approve the alcohol license, Seconded by Councilmember Ariemma.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

7. Dahlonge Food and Gas INC dba/Gulf Food Mart - Retail Alcoholic Beverage License

Sarah Waters, Asst. City Clerk & Doug Parks, City Attorney

Assistant City Clerk Waters stated that Gulf Food Mart is requesting a Class B, Retail Beer Package License for stores up to 10,000 square feet and Class C, Retail Wine Package License for stores up to 10,000 square feet.

Mayor Taylor called for a motion.

Motion made by Councilmember Brown to approve the alcohol license, Seconded by Councilmember Ariemma.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Taylor adjourned the meeting at 5:21 P.M.

Motion made by Councilmember Shirley, Seconded by Councilmember Reagin.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Gaddis, Councilmember Ariemma, Councilmember Reagin, Councilmember Shirley, Councilmember Bagley, Councilmember Brown

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# City Council Agenda Memo

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**DATE:** 12/6/2024  
**TITLE:** Appointment of Jan Tolbert to Public Housing Authority  
**PRESENTED BY:** JoAnne Taylor, Mayor  
**PRIORITY:** Strategic Priority - Communication

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## AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION

Appointment of Jan Tolbert to Public Housing Authority

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## HISTORY/PAST ACTION

The council appointments members to the Public Housing Authority in accordance with HUD guidelines. Jan Tolbert has served many years on the Public Housing Authority as the resident representative. The authority wishes to reappoint her to this seat.

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## FINANCIAL IMPACT

n/a

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the authority and staff that Jan Tolbert be reappointed to the Public Housing Authority.

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## SUGGESTED MOTIONS

n/a

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## ATTACHMENTS

n/a

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# City Council Agenda Memo

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**DATE:** 1/3/2025  
**TITLE:** Margaret Owen 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Proclamation  
**PRESENTED BY:** JoAnne Taylor, Mayor  
**PRIORITY:** Strategic Priority - Communication

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## AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION

Margaret Owen 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Proclamation

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## HISTORY/PAST ACTION

Margaret Owen has been a fixture in Dahlonega since coming here with her husband Dr. John Owen. Along with supporting him during his twenty-two years as the president of North Georgia College, Mrs. Owen volunteered on countless committees and gave of her time and talents to many projects to enhance and preserve Dahlonega. As she prepares to celebrate her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, friends of Mrs. Owen have requested a proclamation from the city to honor her contributions to our town. Staff is currently working with the requestors to complete the proclamation.

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## FINANCIAL IMPACT

n/a

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## RECOMMENDATION

n/a

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## SUGGESTED MOTIONS

n/a

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## ATTACHMENTS

Draft will be provided once completed.

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# City Council Agenda Memo

**DATE:** 1/3/2025  
**TITLE:** HB 581  
**PRESENTED BY:** Allison Martin, City Manager  
**PRIORITY:** Strategic Priority - Communication

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## AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION

HB581 Post Election Discussion

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## HISTORY/PAST ACTION

On November 5, 2024, voters in Georgia approved HR1022 which authorized the enactment of House Bill 581. House Bill 581 provides a floating homestead exemption for residential homestead properties. The Bill allows local governments, including school boards, to opt out by March 1, 2025. If a local government, or school board, should choose to opt out of HB581, they are required to advertise and hold three public hearings. If a local government does not opt out there is no requirement in the law to have a formal vote to not opt out. A benefit of voting to not opt out is to let the public know the intentions of the local taxing authority. House Bill 581 also includes a provision for local governments that do not opt out of HB581 to hold a referendum to enact a one percent sales tax, known as a FLOST, that would use 100% of the proceeds to roll back property taxes. School boards are not eligible to participate in the FLOST. The council is being asked to consider whether to opt in or opt out of HB581. Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners voted at their December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, via a resolution, to opt in to the program. The Lumpkin County Board of Education has advertised for three public hearing to take input prior to making a decision.

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## FINANCIAL IMPACT

n/a

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## RECOMMENDATION

n/a

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## SUGGESTED MOTIONS

n/a

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## ATTACHMENTS

none

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# City Council Agenda Memo

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**DATE:** 1/3/2025  
**TITLE:** Appointment of City Clerk – Ms. Rhonda P. Hansard  
**PRESENTED BY:** Allison Martin, City Manager  
**PRIORITY:** Strategic Priority - Communication

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## AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION

Appointment of City Clerk – Ms. Rhonda P. Hansard

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## HISTORY/PAST ACTION

After a period of advertisement for a city clerk, accepting applications, and conducting an interview process, Rhonda P. Hansard is recommended to the council for the position of City Clerk. Ms. Hansard comes to us with six years of prior clerk experience in county government, is a certified clerk, and a certified public official. Ms. Hansard's experience and skills will be a great asset to the city and we look forward to working with her.

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## FINANCIAL IMPACT

none

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Ms. Hansard be appointed as City Clerk.

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## SUGGESTED MOTIONS

n/a

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## ATTACHMENTS

n/a

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# City Council Agenda Memo

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**DATE:** 12/30/2024  
**TITLE:** Consideration of City Council Code of Conduct  
**PRESENTED BY:** JoAnne Taylor, Mayor

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## AGENDA ITEM DESCRIPTION

A city council code of conduct is a set of guidelines outlining expected behaviors and ethical standards for elected officials on a city council. It emphasizes principles like integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect for the public while avoiding conflicts of interest and improper influence in their decision-making process.

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## HISTORY/PAST ACTION

No History.

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## FINANCIAL IMPACT

No Impacts.

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## RECOMMENDATION

There are no staff recommendations.

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## SUGGESTED MOTIONS

There are no suggested motions.

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## ATTACHMENTS

Code of Conduct outline

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A city council code of conduct is often a set of guidelines outlining expected behaviors and ethical standards for elected officials on a city council, emphasizing principles like integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect for the public, while avoiding conflicts of interest and improper influence in their decision-making process.

Key elements typically included in a city council code of conduct:

- **Integrity and ethics:** Acting with honesty, fairness, and avoiding personal gain from their position.
- **Conflict of interest disclosure:** Reporting any personal interests that could potentially influence their votes on city matters.
- **Respectful conduct:** Treating colleagues, staff, and the public with courtesy and professionalism.
- **Transparency:** Disclosing relevant information and decision-making processes to the public.
- **Public decorum:** Maintaining appropriate behavior during council meetings and public events.
- **Compliance with laws and ordinances:** Adhering to all applicable city regulations and legal requirements.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting sensitive information obtained during their official duties.
- **Campaign finance compliance:** Following all rules regarding campaign contributions and spending.