THE CITY OF WATERTOWN

ETHICS COMMITTEE AGENDA

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2026 AT 1:00 PM

MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 106 JONES STREET, WATERTOWN, WI 53094

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

   Each individual who would like to address the Committee will be permitted up to three minutes for their comments
3. **NEW BUSINESS**
   - A. Review and take action: Approve Ethics Committee meeting minutes from July 10, 2026
   - B. Review and take possible action: Recommended changes to the City of Watertown Statement of Economic Interest form
   - C. Review and take possible action: City of Watertown Code of Conduct Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials
   - D. Convene into closed session per §19.85(1)(h) to consider requests for confidential written advice from the elections commission under s. 5.05 (6a) or the ethics commission under s. 19.46 (2), or from any county or municipal ethics board under s. 19.59 (5) (R.S.)
   - E. Reconvene into open session
4. **ADJOURNMENT**

Persons requiring other reasonable accommodations for any of the above meetings, may contact the office of the City Clerk at cityclerk@watertownwi.gov phone 920-262-4000

A quorum of any City of Watertown Council, Committee, Board, Commission, or other body, may be present at this meeting for observing and gathering of information only

ETHICS COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes
Municipal Building
106 Jones Street, Room 2044
Watertown, WI 53094
Friday, July 10, 2026 at 1:00 PM

Members Present: Joe Kallas and Brenda Kujawski
Others Present: City Attorney Alexandra Panagopoulos

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
   Meeting called to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
   None.

3. **NEW BUSINESS**
   A. **Review and take action: approve Ethics Committee meeting minutes from April 10, 2026**

   Brenda Kujawski made a motion to recommend approval of the April 10, 2026 minutes, seconded by Joe Kallas. Unanimously passed.

   B. **Review and take possible action: Statement of Economic Interest form**

   Brenda Kujawski made a motion to amend the Statement of Economic Interest form to apply the following, seconded by Joe Kallas. Unanimously passes.

   Section B. Remove any reference to minor child(ren).
   Section C. Change the dollar amount from $5,000.00 to $3,000.00

   C. **Review and take action: approve Ordinance to Amend Section 65-8(F) Disclosure of Interest of the City of Watertown General Ordinances**

   Joe Kallas made a motion to recommend to Common Council approval of the ordinance, seconded by Brenda Kujawski. Unanimously passes.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**
   None.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**
   Brenda Kujawski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Joe Kallas. Unanimously passed.
   Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexandra Panagopoulos
City Attorney

Note: The minutes are uncorrected. Any correction made thereto will be noted in the minutes of the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 16, 2026

To: Ethics Board

From: Ali Panagopoulos, City Attorney

RE: Statement of Economic Interests form

At the July 21st Common Council meeting, the Council reviewed the Ethics Board's revisions to the City of Watertown's Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) form. During that discussion, several additional questions were raised that the Council requests the Ethics Board's input on before proceeding with final approval of the form.

The Council asks the Ethics Board to consider and provide guidance on the following items:

1. Should all references to minor children be removed from the SEI form? The Council seeks clarification on whether disclosure of financial interests related to minor children is necessary or appropriate.
2. Should the form include the name of a candidate's or appointed/elected official's spouse or partner? If so, the Council seeks guidance on the appropriate scope and purpose of such disclosure.
3. Is there a recommended ownership threshold, minimum value, or other trigger that should determine when stocks must be disclosed under Section B?
4. Should the SEI form require disclosure of leases or other forms of ownership interests in businesses located within the City of Watertown, regardless of whether those entities directly conduct business in the City?
5. Under Section D, should the disclosure area be expanded to include interests located within the area subject to the City's extraterritorial plat review authority?
6. Should the SEI form include an explicit statement explaining the extent to which the information provided is confidential, or whether it may be subject to public disclosure under applicable open records laws?

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CITY OF WATERTOWN, WISCONSIN
STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS

Certain information required to be disclosed on this form may not be applicable to you, your spouse, or your minor children. Where not applicable, please write N/A (meaning not applicable). All spaces must be filled with the required information or N/A. Leave no space blank. If the space provided is not sufficient, attach additional sheets, making sure that you indicate to which item the information pertains.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

City Position, Public Office held, Committee appointed to: _____

A. Name: _____ Name of Spouse: _____

Address: _____ Name(s) of Minor Children: _____

_____

_____

_____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Different names used in business, if any: _____

B. List all corporations or other entities which are or may do business with or receive funds from the City of Watertown in which you, your spouse ~~or minor children~~ own an interest in or serve on a board or committee for.

Name of Business Entity City and State	**Description of Interest** (Example: common stock, limited partnership, etc.) You need not report dollar value, number of shares or fractional interests.	**Held by Whom (Enter X)**	
		You	Spouse ~~or Minor Child~~

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Name: _____

$3,000.00

C. List the names of all employers or clients who have paid in excess of ~~$5,000.00~~ in the last year to you and your spouse:

Employer	**Brief Statement of Nature of Employment**	**You**	**Spouse**

D. List all parcels of real estate within the City in which you, your spouse or minor children beneficially own or control any interest, including an option to purchase.

Real Estate Parcels by Street Address or Legal Description	**Owned by You (Enter X)**	**Spouse or Minor Child (Enter X)**

I declare under penalties of law that I have examined this statement (including attached sheets) and to the best of my knowledge and belief it is true, correct and complete.

_____ _____

Signature of Person Required to File Date

_____

Date Finance Dept. Rec'd

Created 5/16/2022

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 16, 2026

To: Ethics Board

From: Ali Panagopoulos, City Attorney

RE: Elected/Appointed Officials Code of Conduct for the City of Watertown

Mayor Stocks previously directed the City Attorney's Office to draft an Elected/Appointed Officials Code of Conduct for the City of Watertown. In preparing the draft, staff reviewed comparable documents adopted by other Wisconsin municipalities, including Madison and Green Bay. Copies of the City of Madison Code of Conduct and the City of Green Bay Code of Conduct for Elected Officials are included with this memo.

At its October 6, 2026 meeting, the Common Council reviewed the draft City of Watertown Elected/Appointed Officials Code of Conduct and referred it to the Watertown Ethics Board for further review and comment. Following that meeting, staff made preliminary revisions to both the draft Code of Conduct and to Chapter 65 of the Watertown Municipal Code.

The Common Council requested that the Ethics Board address the following questions:

1. Does the Ethics Board have the authority to enforce the provisions set forth in the draft Code of Conduct? If yes, how? If no, who should enforce the Code of Conduct?
2. Which sections should remain in the draft Code of Conduct and are there additional sections that should be included?
3. What penalties or sanctions, if any, should apply in the event of a violation of the Code of Conduct?
4. Will any existing City ordinances need to be amended in order to enforce the Code of Conduct?

City of Watertown Code of Conduct
Elected and Appointed Officials
DRAFT – 10/7/26

Section 1: The City of Watertown Code of Conduct

It is the policy of the City of Watertown to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from its elected and appointed officials. Accordingly, members of the Common Council, the Mayor, Commission/Board/Committee members, the Municipal Court Judge and other appointed officials shall maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, trustworthiness, honest, and fairness in carrying out their public duties, avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants, comply with all applicable laws, and never use their City position or authority improperly or for personal gain.

The City of Watertown and its elected/appointed officials share a commitment to ethical conduct and service to the City of Watertown. This Code has been created 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 Watertown, and with all other private and governmental entities.

Section 2: Standards of Expected Conduct

City elected and appointed officials shall create and maintain a welcoming, courteous and inclusive environment in the performance of their duties. They shall not engage in abusive, violent, bullying, harassing, discriminatory, or other threatening or intimidating behaviors or language.

- Bullying is repeated, unwanted, aggressive physical or verbal behavior that hurts another individual, physically, mentally, or emotionally.
- Harassment is repeated or egregious unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive actions, words, jokes or comments based on any protected class status or statuses.
- Discrimination is unfair treatment of an individual or members of a group based on their protected class status or statuses.

Section 3: Elected/Appointed Official Conduct with One Another

The Common Council and Mayor (hereinafter the "Council") have a responsibility to set the policies for the City. Policy setting is a function of the legislative body (elected Alderpersons and Mayor), while the executive body (Mayor) assures policies, as set by the Council, are carried out with staff assistance. 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. Despite this diversity, all choose to serve in public office and, therefore, have the obligation to preserve and protect the well-being

of the community and its citizens. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged, and all officials must recognize that certain behavior is counterproductive, while other behavior will lead to success.

A. Use of Formal Titles. All officials shall try to refer to one another formally during public meetings as Mayor, Council President, Alderperson, Commission/Board/Committee Member, followed by the individual's last name.
B. Use 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, which should be respected by the other officials. Elected/appointed officials shall not be hostile, degrading, or defamatory when debating a contentious issue. Officials should assume the other members of the Council and/or Commission/Board/Committee have the appropriate motives and interest of the public in mind and should not criticize differing opinions because they believe them to be lacking in judgment or improperly motivated. However, this does not allow officials to make belligerent, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or personally disparaging comments in public meetings or during individual encounters. Shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening or demeaning will not be accepted. If an elected/appointed official is personally offended by the remarks of another official, the offended member should make a note of the actual words used and call for a "point of personal privilege" that challenges the other official to justify or apologize for the language used.
C. Honor the Role of the Chair in Maintaining Order. It is the responsibility of the Mayor, as Chair of the Council, to keep the comments of Council members on track during Council meetings. The same applies to the Chairperson during Commission/Board/Committee meetings. Elected/appointed officials should honor efforts by the Mayor and/or Chairperson to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Mayor/Chairperson's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following commonly recognized parliamentary procedure.

Section 4: Elected/Appointed Official Conduct with City Staff

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

A. Treat all Staff as Professionals. Elected/appointed officials should 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.

Elected/appointed officials 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. Elected/appointed officials shall never demean or personally attack an employee regarding the employee's job performance in public. All employee performance issues shall be forwarded to the employee's supervisor or the City Attorney through private correspondence or conversation.

C. Do not Supersede Administrative Authority. Unless otherwise provided in this Code, neither the Council nor any Commission/Board/Committee shall attempt to supersede the administration's powers and duties. Neither the Council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the Department Heads, either publicly or privately. The same applies for Commissions/Boards/Committees and their members. Elected/appointed officials shall not attempt to unethically influence or coerce City staff concerning either their actions or recommendations to the governing body about personnel, purchasing, awarding contracts, selection of consultants, processing of development applications, or the granting of City licenses and permits. Nothing in this section shall be construed, however, as prohibiting the Council or its Commissions/Boards/Committees while in open session from fully and freely discussing with or suggesting to the Department Heads anything pertaining to City affairs or the interests of the City.

D. Do not Solicit Political Support from Staff. Elected/appointed officials should not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, collection of petition signatures, collection of nomination signatures, etc.) from City staff. City staff may, as private citizens within their constitutional rights, support political candidates, but all such activities must be done away from the workplace. Photographs of uniformed City employees shall not be used in political ads.

Section 5: Elected/Appointed Official 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 should be evident on the part of individual Council or Commission/Board/Committee members toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony. Elected/appointed officials are expected to demonstrate, both publicly and privately, their honesty and integrity, and to be an example of appropriate and ethical conduct. All elected/appointed officials should convey to the public their respect and appreciation for 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 Council or a Commission/Board/Committee is a new and difficult experience. Under such circumstances, many are nervous. Elected/appointed officials are

expected to treat citizens with care and respect during public hearings. Officials should commit full attention to the speakers or any materials relevant to the topic at hand. Comments and non-verbal expressions should be appropriate, respectful, and professional.

B. Be Fair and Equitable in Allocating Public Hearing Time to Individual Speakers. The Mayor or Chairperson will determine and announce time limits on speakers at the start of the public hearing process if noticed on an agenda. For Council meetings, each speaker will generally be allocated three minutes. If many speakers are anticipated, the Mayor 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.

C. Ask for Clarification but Avoid Debate and Argument with the Public. Only the Mayor or Chairperson, not other Council/Commission/Board/Committee members, should interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, other officials may ask the Mayor or Chairperson for a point of order if the speaker is off topic or exhibiting behavior or language the official finds disturbing. Questions directed by officials to members of the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information, not to criticize or debate.

Outside Public Meetings

A. Make No Promise on Behalf of the City or Council in Unofficial Settings. Elected/appointed officials will frequently be asked to explain an action or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of City policy and to refer to City staff for further information. Overt or implicit promises of specific Council and/or Commission/Board/Committee action or promises that City staff will take some specific actions shall be avoided. Elected/appointed officials 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 or Commission/Board/Committee, unless the respective body has taken a vote on that issue and the official's is the same as the decision made by said body. Likewise, no elected/appointed official should state in writing their personal position in a way that implies it is the position of the entire City Council or Commission/Board/Committee. An elected/appointed official 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 Council or Commission/Board/Committee, but must always clarify that he/she is not speaking on behalf of the City, the Council, or a Commission/Board/Committee, unless explicitly authorized to do so by the body.

Section 6: Elected/Appointed Official Conduct with Public Agencies

A. Be Clear About Representing the City or Personal Interests. If an elected/appointed official appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the official must clearly state whether his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the City. Elected/appointed officials must inform the Council or

Commission/Board/Committee 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 elected/appointed official publicly represents or speaks on behalf of another organization whose position differs from the City's official position on any issue, the official must clearly communicate the organization upon whose behalf they are speaking and must withdraw from voting as a Council or 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. Elected/appointed officials serving on committees or boards as a City representative for outside entities or agencies shall properly communicate with other Council or Commission/Board/Committee members on issues pertinent to the City.

Section 7: Elected Official Conduct with Board and Commissions

A. Limit Contact with Board and Commission Members to Questions of Clarification. Council members shall not contact a Board or Commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or developer for personal gain. Council members may contact Board or Commission members in order to clarify a position taken by the Board or Commission or a member thereof. Council members may respond to inquiries from Board and Commission members. Communications should be for information only.

B. Attendance at Board or Commission Meetings. Council members may attend any Commission/Board/Committee meeting, which are always open to any member of the public. However, they should be sensitive to the way their participation is viewed, especially if it is on behalf of an individual, business, or developer, which could be perceived as unfairly affecting the process. Council members should provide prior notice of attendance at a Commission/Board/Committee meeting to the City Clerk, who can prepare a Batke notice when appropriate.

C. Be Respectful of Diverse Opinions. The primary role of Boards and Commissions is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Council with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Council members must be fair and respectful to all citizens serving on Boards and Commissions.

Section 8: Elected/Appointed Official Conduct with the Media

A. Expression of Positions on Issues. When communicating with the media, elected/appointed officials should clearly differentiate between personal opinions and the official position of the City. Each elected/appointed official represents one vote of many and until a vote on any issue is taken, Council and Commission/Board/Committee members' positions are merely their own.

B. Discussion Regarding City Staff. Elected/appointed officials should not discuss personnel issues or other matters regarding individual City staff in the media. Any issues pertaining

to City staff should only be addressed directly to the Department Head, the Human Resources Department, the Mayor, or City Attorney.

C. Discussions Regarding Closed Session Matters. Elected/appointed officials should hold in strict confidence all information concerning matters dealt with in closed session. Closed sessions may involve confidential or privileged information on litigation, records that cannot be disseminated under the Public Records Law, information significant to the competitive or bargaining position of the City, or privacy and reputation interests of individuals. Elected/appointed officials shall not, either directly or indirectly, release, make public, or in any way divulge any such information, or any aspect of the closed session deliberations to anyone, unless expressly authorized by Council or required by law to do so, or unless such information has already been made public or the reasons for holding closed session no longer apply.

D. Social Media Guidelines for Officials. Elected and appointed officials should use social media in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner when discussing City business, City officials or employees, and members of the community. Public officials should recognize that their comments and posts can reflect upon the City and should strive to promote civility, respect, and productive dialogue, even when there are differences of opinion.

E. Social Media Conduct for Officials. Elected and appointed officials should avoid personal attacks, disrespectful or inflammatory comments, and statements intended to embarrass, threaten, or discredit another individual on social media. Social media should be used as an opportunity to share information, encourage community engagement, and strengthen public trust in local government.

Section 9: Enforcement of this Code of Conduct

The investigatory body for violations of this Code of Conduct is the City of Watertown Ethics Board. Procedures regarding filing complaints and the complaint procedure are set forth in Section 65-7 of the Watertown Municipal Code.

A. False or Frivolous Complaints. A person who knowingly makes a false, misleading, or unsubstantiated statement in a complaint may be 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 under penalty of perjury, a City official who seeks to take civil action regarding any such complaint shall do so at his or her expense.

B. Penalties and Sanctions Policy. It is the intent of the Council to educate and, when necessary, discipline elected/appointed members who violate this Code. Discipline shall be progressive, from the least punitive to the most punitive measures, unless the Council believes that the progressive discipline does not provide the appropriate sanction because of 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.

a. Possible Penalties and Sanctions. Possible sanctions may include, but are not limited to:
    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. Imposition of a nonrefundable forfeiture of not less than $100 nor more than $1000, as determined by the Common Council.
    iv. Any other sanction available by law.

   After receiving a recommendation from the Ethics Board pursuant to Section 65-7(J) of the Watertown Municipal Code, the Common Council may impose penalties and sanctions as set forth in Section 65-9 of the Watertown Municipal Code and any other penalty permitted under law. The imposition of any of these penalties or sanctions will require an affirmative vote of 3/4 of the Council, other than an informal or formal censure which shall only require a majority vote of the Council. A violation of the penalties imposed by Council may constitute grounds for removal from office under Wisconsin Statute §17.12(1)(a).

b. Notice. The municipal clerk shall give notice of the Council's decision to the person charged.

CITY OF **MADISON**

Code of Conduct

Elected and Appointed Official Code of Conduct

Purpose and Guiding Principles

The City of Madison and its elected and appointed officials, including the mayor, alders, and members of City boards, commissions, and committees ("BCCs"), share a fundamental responsibility to serve the community with integrity, dignity, and accountability. Guided by the City's vision of being inclusive, innovative, and thriving, and its mission to provide exceptional service to residents and visitors alike, officials are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior in all aspects of public service.

The City's democratic process depends on participation from individuals with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. To sustain public confidence and ensure effective governance, City elected and appointed officials must conduct themselves with honesty, fairness, and civility, while avoiding impropriety and refraining from any behavior that undermines trust in public service.

Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to all elected and appointed City officials. It governs any conduct or interaction that occurs while the official is doing City business, whether on or off City premises, including at City-sponsored events or other events which the alder or BCC member attends in their official capacity. It governs any conduct in the workplace or in any setting reasonably considered an extension of the workplace, including but not limited to communications via telephone, voicemail, text message, video conferencing, social media, or other online platforms.

Implementation

All elected and appointed City officials will receive the Code of Conduct upon taking office and sign to acknowledge its receipt. Lack of signature does not exempt an official from its requirements. Any time the Code of Conduct is amended, the updated version shall be emailed to all City elected and appointed officials.
The City will provide ongoing training and resources to support compliance with the Code of Conduct and to promote an inclusive and effective City government.

Standards of Expected Conduct

City elected and appointed officials shall create and maintain a welcoming, courteous and inclusive environment in the performance of their duties. They shall not engage in abusive, violent, bullying, harassing, discriminatory, or other threatening or intimidating behavior or language.

- **Bullying** is repeated, unwanted, aggressive physical or verbal behavior which hurts another individual, physically, mentally, or emotionally.
- **Harassment** is repeated or egregious unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive actions, words, jokes, or comments based on any City protected class status or statuses referenced in the Madison General Ordinances or Administrative Procedure Memorandum (APM) 3-5 *PDF*.
- **Discrimination** is unfair treatment of an individual or members of a group based on their protected City protected class status or statuses as referenced in the Madison General Ordinances or Administrative Procedure Memorandum (APM) 3-5 *PDF*.

Bullying, harassment, and discrimination diminish public trust, damage relationships, and hinder effective governance.

Conduct Toward City Staff

Effective governance of the City depends on the collaboration between the elected and appointed officials who set policy and the City staff who implement it. Mutual respect, professionalism, and clear communication are essential to this relationship.

- City elected and appointed officials shall treat all staff as professionals with valuable expertise, experience, and contributions.
- Communication should be clear, honest, and measured.
- Concerns about staff behavior or performance must be raised privately and professionally with the staff member's direct supervisor. If unresolved, concerns may be referred to the relevant agency director or the Human Resources Director. Personnel matters shall not be discussed in public forums.

Nothing in this section prohibits discussion of City affairs by the Common Council or a BCC in a duly-convened meeting.

Conduct Toward Participants in Public Meetings

Public participation is a cornerstone of democracy. Elected and appointed officials play a key role in fostering an environment where all individuals feel welcome to engage.

- City elected and appointed officials shall treat members of the public with attentiveness during public meetings.
- Questions to members of the public should be used to seek clarification or expand on information, not to demean or interrogate.
- City elected and appointed officials should express appreciation for public input and ensure that meeting environments remain orderly and inclusive.
- If a participant strays from the topic, exceeds allotted time, or uses inappropriate language, any Common Council or BCC member may request the issue be addressed using appropriate parliamentary procedures.

Points of Order During Meetings

Violations occurring during a public meeting may be addressed by raising a point of order. The Chair shall rule on the point of order, subject to challenge and reversal by a majority of the members present.

Conduct Toward the Media and Press

When speaking with the media, elected and appointed officials must ensure statements do not misrepresent City policy or undermine public trust in City governance.

- Identify when they are speaking in their official role and avoid misrepresenting City actions or decisions.
- When speaking in a personal capacity, officials should make clear that their views are their own and not those of the City, while ensuring such statements do not undermine public trust or create a perception of acting in an official capacity. This is to avoid misrepresentation, not limiting opinions or statements of officials.
- Avoid discussing personnel matters or the performance of individual staff members with the media or press.

Sexual Harassment Complaints

If a person experiences or witnesses sexual harassment by an alder or member of a City BCC while such official is on City business, whether on or off City premises, including at City-sponsored events or other events which the alder or appointed individual attends in their official capacity, the Common Council encourages the following steps:

- If the person feels comfortable and safe, the person can address the matter informally with the alder or appointed individual.
- The person can report the matter to another alder; the alder will connect the person with the Common Council Chief of Staff, who will then connect the person with the appropriate personnel to file the complaint.
- The person can contact the Common Council Chief of Staff; the Chief of Staff will connect the person with the appropriate personnel to report their claim.

Prohibited Conduct Examples

Examples of actions that could constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Preferential treatment in return for submitting to or engaging in sexual conduct
- Making derogatory or demeaning comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity (including but not limited to consistently misgendering an individual)
- Name-calling or using slurs with a gender/sexual connotation
- Making sexual comments about appearance, clothing or body parts

- Rating a person's sexuality
- Asking for sex or sexual conduct
- Asking a person for dates in a coercive manner, or repeatedly asking for a date after having been turned down
- Staring in a sexually suggestive manner
- Unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against a person, making inappropriate sexual gestures
- Unwelcome sharing of sexual or lewd anecdotes or jokes
- Unwelcome sending of sexually suggestive communications in any format
- Sharing or displaying sexually inappropriate images or videos in any format not necessary for work purposes
- Attempted or actual sexual assault

Enforcement and Accountability

Communication, Informal Resolution and Reconciliation

When concerns arise, individuals are encouraged to seek timely and collegial resolution. Informal resolution and self-correction should be pursued whenever possible; formal action may be taken when other approaches are unsuccessful or inappropriate.

City elected and appointed officials who believe a violation has occurred should first attempt to resolve the matter privately and professionally. If unresolved, either party may seek assistance from the Common Council Chief of Staff or other appropriate City personnel to connect them with available resources or options for next steps.

Formal Sanctions

Violations of the Elected and Appointed Official Code of Conduct may result in formal sanctions, including:

- **Censure** by the Common Council or a BCC.
- **Removal of a BCC member from their body** by the appointing authority, or by the Common Council for cause.

- **Removal from office** of a Common Council member in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 17.001 for cause (inefficiency, neglect of duty, official misconduct, or malfeasance in office).

Censure Process

Any alder may draft and introduce a censure resolution regarding a Code of Conduct violation on the Common Council agenda. Adoption of a censure for a Code of Conduct violation requires a majority vote of the Common Council.

BCC members may censure a member of their body by making a motion to censure that individual. Such motion may be accompanied by a censure statement in a form equivalent to a Council resolution which, if passed, would be attached to the BCC minutes. If the motion receives a second, the BCC then votes on the motion. In this case as well, adoption of a motion to censure an individual requires a majority vote of the BCC members.

Complaint Reporting and Investigation

A person who feels that the Code of Conduct has been violated by an alder or an appointed individual while acting in their official capacity, and who has attempted informal resolution without success or determined that informal resolution is not appropriate, may report the matter to the organizer of the event or relevant meeting authority or the Common Council Chief of Staff. The organizer of the event or the meeting authority will be expected to take appropriate action by its applicable policies, regulations, and rules and shall notify the Common Council Chief of Staff.

Examples of appropriate action may include, but are not limited to:

- Requesting that the perpetrator stop the offending behavior immediately
- Indicating the behavior is unwelcome
- Conveying a complaint to the Common Council Chief of Staff

The Common Council Chief of Staff will connect the individual reporting the conduct with appropriate personnel in the Department of Civil Rights, Human Resources Department, and the City Attorney's Office. After talking to the complainant and, if different, the person who was the alleged subject of the Code of Conduct violation, the Department of Civil Rights, the Human Resources Department, and the City Attorney will decide if an internal

investigation or referral to an outside investigator is needed. Any action taken as a result of an investigation shall be under the applicable Federal, State or City law or applicable City procedure.

Debriefing

Upon completion of the investigation, and, in the case of an outside investigation, after being briefed by the outside counsel, the Department of Civil Rights, Human Resources, and the City Attorney shall debrief the complainant, the respondent, the Common Council President and the Common Council Chief of Staff on the findings of the investigation.

Release of Summary of Findings or Related Documents

After consideration of safety-related concerns and confidentiality needs related to the investigation, the Common Council President may issue a public summary of findings.

The City will ensure compliance with Wisconsin's Public Records Laws in release of any required documents, redacting such information as required by law.

Retaliation Prohibited

Threats, intimidation, or any other form of retaliation against a person who has made a complaint or provided information supporting a complaint are prohibited. An alder or appointed individual or any other entity responsible for Common Council or BCC events will take any reasonable and appropriate action to prevent and respond to retaliation per its applicable policy, regulations, and rules.

Amended: 11/25/25 (RES-25-00596)

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CITY OF GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR

ELECTED OFFICIALS

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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SECTION 1: The City of Green Bay Code of Conduct

It is the policy of the City of Green Bay to uphold, promote, and demand the highest standards of ethics from its elected officials. Accordingly, members of the Common Council and Mayor shall maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, trustfulness, honesty, and fairness in carrying out their public duties, avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants, comply with all applicable laws, and never use their City position or authority improperly or for personal gain.

The City of Green Bay and its elected officials share a commitment to ethical conduct and service to the City of Green Bay. This Code has been created 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 Green Bay, and with all other private and governmental entities.

SECTION 2: Elected Official Conduct with One Another

The Common Council and Mayor (hereinafter the "Council") have a responsibility to set the policies for the City. In doing so, certain types of conduct are beneficial while others are destructive. The Council has the responsibility to take the high road on Intra-Council conduct and to treat other Council members as they would like to be treated.

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

A. Use Formal Titles

The Council shall try to refer to one another formally during public meetings as Mayor, Council President, or Alderperson followed by the individual's last name.

B. Use 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 Council member has the right to an individual opinion, which should be respected by the other Council members. Council members shall not be hostile, degrading, or defamatory when debating a contentious issue. Council members should assume the other members of the Council have the appropriate motives and interest of the public in mind and should not criticize differing opinions because they believe them to be lacking in judgment or improperly motivated.

However, this does not allow Council members to make belligerent, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or personally disparaging comments in public meetings or during individual

encounters. Shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening or demeaning will not be accepted. If a Council member is personally offended by the remarks of another Council member, the offended member should make a note of the actual words used and call for a "point of personal privilege" that challenges the other Council member to justify or apologize for the language used.

C. Honor the Role of the Chair in Maintaining Order

It is the responsibility of the Mayor, as Chair of the Council, to keep the comments of Council members on track during Council meetings. Council members should honor efforts by the Mayor to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Mayor's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following commonly recognized parliamentary procedure. Likewise, the same responsibilities vested in the Mayor for Council meetings, are vested in the Committee Chair for Committee meetings.

SECTION 3: Elected Official Conduct with City Staff

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

A. Treat all Staff as Professionals

Council members should 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 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 members shall never demean or personally attack an employee regarding the employee's job performance in public. All employee performance issues shall be forwarded to the employee's supervisor or the City Attorney through private correspondence or conversation.

C. Do not Supersede Administrative Authority

Unless otherwise provided in this Code, neither the Council, nor any of its members, shall attempt to supersede the administration's powers and duties. Neither the Council nor any member thereof shall give orders to any subordinate of the Department Heads, either publicly or privately. Council members shall not attempt to unethically influence or coerce City staff concerning either their actions or recommendations to Council about personnel, purchasing, awarding contracts, selection of consultants, processing of development applications, or the granting of City licenses and permits.

Nothing in this section shall be construed, however, as prohibiting the Council while in open session from fully and freely discussing with or suggesting to the Department Heads anything pertaining to City affairs or the interests of the City.

D. Do not Solicit Political Support from Staff

Council members should not solicit any type of political support (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, but all such activities must be done away from the workplace. Photographs of uniformed City employees shall not be used in political ads.

SECTION 4: Elected Official 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 should be evident on the part of individual Council members toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony. The Council members are expected to demonstrate, both publicly and privately, their honesty and integrity, and to be an example of appropriate and ethical conduct. All Council members should convey to the public their respect and appreciation for 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 Council is a new and difficult experience. Under such circumstances, many are nervous. Council members are expected to treat citizens with care and respect during public hearings. Council members should commit full attention to the speakers or any materials relevant to the topic at hand. Comments and non-verbal expressions should be appropriate, respectful, and professional.

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

The Mayor will determine and announce time limits on speakers at the start of the public hearing process. Generally, each speaker will be allocated five minutes, with applicants and appellants or their designated representative allowed more time. If many speakers are anticipated, the Mayor 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 the public hearing unless the Council requests additional clarification later in the process. After the close of the public hearing, no additional public testimony will be accepted unless the Council 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, not other Council members, should interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, other Council members may ask the Mayor for a point of order if the speaker is off the

topic or exhibiting behavior or language the Council member finds disturbing. Questions directed by Council members to members of the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information, not to criticize or debate.

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 or Committee Chair, subject to the appeal of the full Council or Committee per Roberts Rules of Order. [GBMC 2.06(1)]

Outside Public Meetings

E. Make no Promise on Behalf of the City or Council in Unofficial Settings.

Council members will frequently be asked to explain a Council action or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of City policy and to refer to City staff for further information. Overt or implicit promises of specific Council action or promises that City staff will take some specific actions shall be avoided.

Council 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, unless the Council has taken a vote on that issue and the Council member's opinion is the same as the decision made by the Council. Likewise, no Council member should state in writing that Council member's position in a way that implies it is the position of the entire City Council. A Council 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 Council, but must always clarify that he/she is not speaking on behalf of the City or the Council unless authorized by the Council to do so.

SECTION 5: Elected Official Conduct with Public Agencies

A. Be Clear about Representing the City or Personal Interests
If a Council member appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the Council member must clearly state whether his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the City.

Council members must inform the Council 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 member publicly represents or speaks on behalf of another organization whose position differs from the City's official position on any issue, the Council member must clearly communicate the organization upon whose behalf they are speaking and must withdraw from voting as a Council 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 committees or boards as a City representative for outside entities or agencies shall properly communicate with other Council members on issues pertinent to the City.

SECTION 6: Elected Official Conduct with Boards and Commissions

A. Limit Contact with Board and Commission Members to Questions of Clarification
Council members shall not contact a Board or Commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or developer for personal gain. Council members may contact Board or Commission members in order to clarify a position taken by the Board or Commission or a member thereof. Council members may respond to inquiries from Board and Commission members. Communications should be for information only.

B. Attendance at Board or Commission Meetings
Council members may attend any Board or Commission meeting, which are always open to any member of the public. However, they should be sensitive to the way their participation is viewed, especially if it is on behalf of an individual, business, or developer, which could be perceived as unfairly affecting the process.

C. Be respectful of Diverse Opinions
A primary role of Boards and Commissions is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Council with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Council members must be fair and respectful to all citizens serving on Boards and Commissions.

SECTION 7: Elected Official Conduct with the Media

A. Expression of Positions on Issue

When communicating with the media, Council members should clearly differentiate between personal opinions and the official position of the City. Each Council member represents one vote of twelve and until a vote on any issue is taken, Council members' positions are merely their own.

B. Discussions Regarding City Staff

Council members should not discuss personnel issues or other matters regarding individual City staff in the media. Any issues pertaining to City staff should only be addressed directly to the Department Head or City Attorney.

SECTION 8: Enforcement of this Code of Conduct

A. Filing of Complaints

Any person who believes a Elected official, in his/her official capacity, 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) the name and position of the City official who is the subject of the complaint; (3) the nature of the alleged violation, including the specific provision of the Code allegedly violated, and (4) a statement of facts constituting the alleged violation and the dates on which, or period of time during which, the alleged violation occurred.

Attached to the complaint the person making the complaint shall provide all documents or other materials in the complainant's possession that are relevant to the allegation, 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, and 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 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 Code." 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. The 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 Ethics Board. If the complaint filing is determined incomplete, the City Clerk shall notify the complainant of the deficiency.

B. Time for Filing

A complaint under the Code must be filed no later than one year 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 or the appropriate staff member or agency. The delay in filing a complaint may be considered in determining the sanction to be imposed.

C. 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 under penalty of perjury. A City official who seeks to take civil action regarding any such complaint shall do so at his or her expense.

D. Complaint Procedure

(1) Hearing on Complaint- If the City Clerk determines that the complaint is complete he/she shall forward it to the Ethics Board to set a hearing to investigate the allegations within 45 days after filing of the complaint. The Ethics Board shall issue a summons signed by the City Clerk, commanding the individual so complained of to appear before the Ethics Board on a day and at a place named in such summons and show cause as to why the individual should not be subject to penalties and sanctions. Such summons shall be served at least seven days before the time in

which such person is commanded to appear, and shall include the complaint and any supporting documentation.

(2) Failure to Respond to Summons- If the individual charged does not appear as required by the summons, the Ethics Board may consider such failure to appear in its recommendation to Council. The Council may subsequently consider such failure to appear in its decision to issue penalties or sanctions.

(3) Parties Counsel- If the person charged appears as required by the summons and denies the complaint; both the complainant and the person charged may produce witnesses, cross-examine witnesses, and be represented by counsel. The person charged shall be provided a written transcript of the hearing at his or her expense.

(4) Recommendations- At the conclusion of the evidentiary hearing, the Ethics Board, following deliberation in open or executive 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 take into account with respect to the individual charged. The Ethics Board 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.

(5) Council Action- The Council shall determine whether the arguments shall be presented orally, in writing, or both. The Council shall consider and take action on the recommendation of the Ethics Board within 60 days after the Ethics Board adjourns the hearing. Upon review of the report and following a discussion, if the Council, by motion, concludes that there is a violation of the Code, the Council may impose a sanction or penalty. The Council may adopt, reject, or modify the recommendation made by the Ethics Board. In resolving the complaint, the totality of the circumstances shall be taken into consideration, including the intent of the person accused of the wrongdoing.

(6) Penalties and Sanctions Policy - It is the intent of the Council to educate and, when necessary, discipline Council members who violate this Code. Discipline shall be progressive, from the least punitive to the most punitive measures, unless the Council believes that the progressive discipline does not provide the appropriate sanction because of 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.

(7) Possible Penalties and Sanctions- Possible sanctions may include:

a. An informal censure by the Council, which would only be made as part of a motion in a public meeting. [GBMC 2.06(1)]
b. A formal censure by the Council, which would be made by motion in a public meeting and then published in the City newspaper. [GBMC 2.06(1)]
c. Mandatory community service. [Wis. Stat. 62.11(3)(e)]
d. Attendance at counseling or mediation sessions. [Wis. Stat. 62.11(3)(e)]
e. Imposition of a dollar fine of up to $500.00. [Wis. Stat. 62.11(3)(a) & (c)]

f. Any other sanction available by law.

The imposition of any of these penalties or sanctions will require an affirmative vote of 3/4 of the Council, other than an informal or formal censure which shall only require a majority vote of the Council. A violation of the penalties imposed by Council may constitute grounds for removal from office under Wisconsin Statute §17.12(1)(a).

(8) Notice- The municipal clerk shall give notice of the Council's decision to the person charged.