

CITY CODE OF ETHICS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Department of Law

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Introduction

Section 2.04.050 of the City Code sets out the code of ethics for City Council members. The ordinance has been in place for a number of years. The ethical guidelines in the City Code are in addition to the ethics provisions of state law.

Section 2.04.050 of the City Code

- Council members occupy positions of public trust.
- All business transactions of such elected officials dealing in any manner with public funds, either directly or indirectly, must be subject to scrutiny of public opinion both as to the legality and to the propriety of such transactions.

Section 2.04.050 of the City Code

- In addition to the matters of pecuniary interest, council members shall refrain from:
 - making use of special knowledge or information before it is made available to the general public;
 - making decisions involving business associates, customers, clients, friends and competitors;
 - repeated and continued violation of City Council rules;
 - appointing immediate family members, business associates, clients or employees to municipal boards and commissions;

Section 2.04.050 of the City Code

- influencing the employment of municipal employees;
- requesting the fixing of traffic tickets and all other municipal code citations;
- seeking the employment of immediate family members in any municipal operation;
- using their influence as members of the governing body in attempts to secure contracts, zoning or other favorable municipal action for friends, customers, clients, immediate family members or business associates.

Section 2.04.050 of the City Code

- Council members shall comply with all lawful actions, directives and orders of duly constituted municipal officials as such may be issued in the normal and lawful discharge of the duties of these municipal officials.
- Council members shall conduct themselves so as to bring credit upon the City as a whole and so as to set an example of good ethical conduct for all citizens for the community.

Section 2.04.050 of the City Code

- Council members shall bear in mind at all times their responsibility to the entire electorate, and
 - shall refrain from actions benefiting special groups at the expense of the City as a whole, and
 - shall do everything in their power to ensure equal and impartial law enforcement throughout the City at large,
 - without respect to race, creed, color or the economic or the social position of individual citizens.

Guidelines for Use of City Resources

City resources should only be used for City projects and purposes. These guidelines are intended to help understand the restriction on the use of City resources in common situations. The discussion below is general in nature and is not based upon specific ordinance requirements, but is based on public expectations observed over time. The core purpose is to prevent favoritism.

City officials should not use City resources for non-City purposes

City officials have access to city resources that members of the general public do not. For example, they may be provided with computers or other equipment to help them perform their official duties. The public has the right to expect that these resources – which they fund – are used only for legitimate city purposes. Except for reasonable personal use or certain uses for projects with community-wide benefit (as discussed below), City officials should not use city resources for non-city purposes.

What is a City resource?

Virtually every type of City property and information is considered a City resource. For example, all City equipment, such as copiers, facsimile machines, telephones (including cell phones), typewriters, computers, and motor vehicles are City resources. City premises, including City offices, conference rooms, and working areas are City resources. So are less tangible things such as computer software, information about employees and the City's e-mail address.

What is a reasonable personal use?

Using a City resource for personal convenience that is

- (1) for a brief time,
- (2) does not interfere with the productivity,
- (3) does not create an additional cost to the City, and
- (4) is not for business, financial or commercial purposes.

What are projects with a community-wide benefit?

There are non-profit and charitable organizations that sometimes rely on City support. When the Mayor or Council officially designates a particular non-profit or charity event or project as having a community-wide benefit, City resources may be used to support these groups.

Endorsements

City officials should not use their City positions or other City resources to endorse, promote or advertise any non-City product, service or business outside these approved non-profit or charity projects.

Endorsements

On occasion, City officials may be asked to give a testimonial for a commercial product or service. Typically, the testimonial will identify the person as a City officer. Generally, you should decline the request, because giving a testimonial that identifies your official City position creates the impression that you are giving an official City endorsement to the product or service.

Endorsements

This would be improper because you would be allowing City resources, which include your official City title, to give a special advantage to a non-City business. It also could potentially violate City Code 2.04.051 as an unauthorized representation of City position on a matter of policy.