



CITY OF STRAWBERRY POINT
THE SWEETEST PLACE TO GROW

Code of Ethics

Citizens and businesses of the city are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government, which has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. In keeping with the City's Commitment to Excellence, the effective functioning of democratic government therefore requires that:

Public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government; public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions; public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

1. Act in the Public Interest

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims and transactions coming before the City Council.

2. Comply with the Law

Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of Iowa and the City in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and Iowa constitutions; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government; and City ordinances and policies.

3. Conduct of Members

The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, boards and commissions, the staff or public.

4. Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City staff.

5. Conduct of Public Meetings

Members shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers; making personal comments not germane to the business of the body; or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.

6. Conflict of Interest

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship, which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In accordance with the law, no member shall participate in the disposition of any matter in which he or she is interested. For purposes of this section "interested" includes any direct or indirect financial or personal interest held by a member or member of his/her family. Before any matter is heard, a member having an interest shall state it and withdraw from participation, or he/she may disclose the facts involved and request a determination by the Council of whether a conflict of interest exists. Any question of the existence or non-existence of a conflict of interest sufficient to disqualify a member from participating in the disposition of any matter shall be decided by a majority vote of the other members of the Council. In case of a tie, the member shall be disqualified.

7. Gifts and Favors

Members shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office that are not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits, which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

8. Confidential Information

Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or affairs of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.

9. Use of Public Resources

Members shall not use public resources not available to the public in general, such as City staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.

10. Representation of Private Interests

In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any board, commission or proceeding of the City.

11. Advocacy

Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City, nor will they allow the inference that they do.

12. Policy Role of Members

Members shall respect and adhere to the mayor-council structure of city government as outlined by the Chapter 372.4 of Iowa Code. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards and commissions, and City staff.

The City Administrator/Clerk shall be directly responsible to the Council for the administration of municipal affairs as directed by that body. All departmental activity requiring the attention of the council shall be brought before the body by the Clerk and all Council involvement in administration initiated by the Council must be coordinated through the Administrator/Clerk.

13. Independence of Boards and Commissions

Because of the value of the independent advice of boards and commissions to the public decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board and commission proceedings.

14. Positive Work Place Environment

Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with City employees to in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

15. Implementation

As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the City, the Code of Ethics is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions.

For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for City Council and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they read and understood the City Code of Ethics. In addition, the Code of Ethics shall be annually reviewed by the City Council and the City Council shall update it as necessary.

16. Compliance and Enforcement

The Code of Ethics expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for members of the City Council. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government.

City Council members who intentionally and repeatedly do not follow proper ethical standards may be reprimanded or formally censured by the Council. It is the responsibility of the Council to initiate action if a Council member's behavior may warrant censure. Council members should point out to the offending Council member infractions of the Code of Ethics.

If the offenses continue, then the matter should be referred to the Mayor in private. If the Mayor is the individual whose actions are being challenged, then the matter should be referred to the Mayor Pro-Tem. It is the responsibility of the Mayor to initiate action if

a Councilmember's behavior may warrant censure. If no action is taken by the Mayor, the alleged violation(s) can be brought up with the full Council in a public meeting.

If violation of the Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct is outside of the observed behaviors by the Mayor or Council members, the alleged violation should be referred to the Mayor. The Mayor should ask the City Administrator and/or the City Attorney to investigate the allegation and report the findings to the Mayor. It is the Mayor's responsibility to take the next appropriate action. These actions can include, but are not limited to discussing and counseling the individual on the violations or recommending censure to the full Council to consider in a public meeting.

A violation of this Code of Ethics shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Council decision so long as the decision would otherwise be valid under Iowa Law.

I affirm that I have read and understood the City of Strawberry Point Code of Ethics.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Office