

COUNCIL POLICY			
Subject: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILMEMBERS, AND BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS	Policy Number	Effective Date	Number of Pages
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BACKGROUND:

The City of Santa Rosa is interested in establishing a framework for day-to-day actions and decision making by Councilmembers, and Board and Commission members.

PURPOSE:

To establish a Code of Conduct to:

- a. To increase public confidence in City government; and
- b. To assist Councilmembers, and Board and Commission members with decision-making; and
- c. To encourage high standards of behavior by Councilmembers, Board and Commission members.

POLICY:

CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA

A. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Comply with the Law. Councilmember and Board and Commission members shall comply with all applicable laws in the performance of their public duties.
2. Conduct of Councilmembers, Board and Commission members. The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid the appearance of impropriety. While it is understood that Councilmembers, and Board and Commission members enjoy First Amendment rights, they should refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Council, Boards, Commissions, staff, or the public that is intended to disrupt and not further the City's business.
3. Respect for Process. Councilmembers, and Board and Commission members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by Council governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the Council by City staff.

Reaffirmed by Resolution No. 28485-B
Adopted by Resolution No. 26482

Dated: June 10, 2014
Dated: February 7, 2006

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4. Decisions based on Merit. Councilmembers and Boards and Commission members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand, rather than on unrelated considerations.
5. Gifts and Favors. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall follow the laws that apply to the acceptance of gifts or favors by a public official.
6. Confidential Information. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or legal 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.
7. Use of Public Resources. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall not use public resources, such as staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities for private gain or personal purposes.
8. Advocacy. Councilmember and Board and Commission members shall represent the official policies or positions of the Council, Board or Commission to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall explicitly state they do not represent the position of the entire Council, the Board or the Commission.
9. Positive Work Place Environment. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City staff, private citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall recognize their roles in individual dealings with City staff.

B. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COUNCILMEMBERS AND BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

All members of the Council, including those serving as Mayor and Vice Mayor, and Board and Commission members have equal votes. No Councilmember, nor Board or Commission member has more power than any other, and all shall be treated with respect. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members shall:

1. Demonstrate honesty and integrity.

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2. Work for the City's best interest and not personal interest.
3. Prepare in advance of Council, Board or Commission meetings, and be familiar with issues on the agenda.
4. Fully participate in Council, Board or Commission meetings and other public forums while demonstrating respect, consideration, and courtesy to others.
5. Become familiar with Council Rules of Procedure and this Code of Conduct.
6. Be responsible for the highest standards of respect, Council Policies, civility, and honesty in ensuring the effective maintenance of intergovernmental relations.
7. When communicating with representatives of other governmental entities or constituents, indicate, if appropriate, that the views are their own, and may not represent those of the entire Council, Board or Commission.

C. COUNCILMEMBERS AND BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS CONDUCT WITH ONE ANOTHER

Councils, Boards and Commissions are composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. All have chosen to serve in public office in order to improve the quality of life in the community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even as Council, Boards or Commissions may "agree to disagree" on contentious issues.

1. In Public Meetings:

- a. Practice 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 a free democracy in action. Be respectful of diverse opinions.
- b. Honor the role of the Mayor or Chair in maintaining order and equity. Respect the Mayor or Chair's efforts to focus discussion on current agenda items. Objections to the Mayor or Chair's actions should be voiced politely and with reason.
- c. Demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members have a public forum to show how individuals with different points of view can often find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole. Councilmembers and Board and Commission members are role models for residents, business people and other stakeholders involved in public debate.

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- d. Be respectful of other people's time. Stay focused and act efficiently during public meetings.
2. In Private Encounters:
Treat others with respect to maintain public confidence in governmental affairs.

D. PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Commit not to politicize procedural issues (e.g. minutes approval or agenda order) for strategic purposes.
2. For Councilmembers, endeavor to submit questions to the City Manager on Council agenda items ahead of the meeting so that staff can be prepared to respond at the Council meeting. For Board and Commission members, endeavor to submit questions to assigned City staff ahead of the meeting so that staff can be prepared to respond at the Board or Commission meeting. Any clarifications or technical questions that can be readily answered should be handled before the meeting.
3. The Mayor will work with the City Manager and City Attorney at the agenda meetings. The purpose shall be: (a) to allow for an orderly agenda; (b) to identify any issues or questions that may need greater staff preparation for the meeting; and (c) to discuss future agenda meetings.

- E. ENFORCEMENT.** Councilmembers and Board and Commission members have the primary responsibility to assure that this Code of Conduct is followed, so that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government. As an expression of the standards of conduct expected by the City for Councilmembers and Board and Commission members, the Code of Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing. It will be most effective when Councilmembers and Board and Commission members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. In addition, the Code of Conduct shall be reviewed and updated as necessary.