

City of Winters Code of Conduct

Councilmembers shall sign this Code of Conduct upon assuming office and upon reelection to that office as a symbol of each Councilmember's continuing commitment to abide by the principles of this Code of Conduct.

Preamble

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial and accountable to the people they serve. This Code of Conduct is designed to promote communication, understanding, fairness, and trust among the members of the City Council and staff concerning their roles, responsibilities, and expectations for management of the business of the City of Winters. This Code of Conduct is designed to describe the manner in which Councilmembers should treat one another, city staff, constituents, and others they come into contact with while representing the City of Winters. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the City's government. Because we seek public confidence in the City's services and public trust of its decision-makers, the City Council adopts and pledges to follow this Code of Conduct:

The theme throughout the Code of Conduct is respect. Elected officials are called upon to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Demonstrating respect for each individual through words and actions can help guide Councilmembers to do the right thing in even the most difficult situations.

Form of Government

The City of Winters operates a council-manager form of government. Under this form of government, the Council provides legislative direction, sets City policy, and monitors its execution by the City Manager and staff. Key provisions of the Winters Council-Manager form of government are as follows:

- Prohibit interference of the City Council with the City Manager's execution of his or her powers or duties.
- The Council shall not interfere with the City Manager's appointment of any of the department heads or any person to any office or employment.
- The Council shall not interfere with the City Manager's power to remove any of the department heads or employees of the City.
- Except for purposes of inquiry, the Council shall coordinate with the City Manager with respect to the administrative services of the City.
- Council shall not give orders to any subordinate of the City Manager, either publicly or privately.
- Requests to assign a project to staff should be requested during public meetings with the concurrence of three Councilmembers.

- Requests for information regarding project updates, policy matters, constituent concerns should be directed to the City Manager for follow-up.
- Councilmembers must not attempt to influence City staff on the making of appointments, awarding of contracts, selecting consultants, processing of development applications, granting of City licenses and permits, or any other City administrative matter. The Council makes policy; the City Manager directs City employees.
- Councilmembers should not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters, political buttons or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from City staff. City staff may, as private citizens with constitutional rights, support political candidates, but all such activities must be done away from the workplace and never in their official capacity as a city employee or by use of City resources.

Fairness

- All Council members shall:
 - Be fair and impartial.
 - Be respectful of other people's time, stay focused and act efficiently during public meetings.
 - Support the public's right to know and promote meaningful public involvement.
 - Support each other in health, wellness, work-life balance, and foster mindfulness by treating each other with care and compassion.
 - Treat all persons, claims and transactions in a fair and equitable manner.
 - Make decisions based on the merits of the issue.

Honesty and Integrity

- All Council members shall:
 - Inspire public confidence in City government.
 - Serve as a model of civility and leadership in the community.
 - Demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement.
 - Be prepared to make unpopular decisions when the public's best interest requires it.
 - Take responsibility for actions, even when it is uncomfortable to do so.
 - Be open, honest and transparent in communications.

Responsibility

- All Council members shall act in a responsible manner and:
 - Be respectful of other people's time, stay focused, and act efficiently during public meetings.
- Not use public resources, such as agency staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.
- May use City letterhead when the Councilmember is representing the City and the City's official position. A copy of official correspondence should be circulated and retained as part of the permanent public record in the City Clerk's office. City letterhead is not to be used for correspondence of Councilmembers representing a personal point of view, or a dissenting point of view from an official position.
- Praise in public, criticize in private. Councilmembers should never express concerns about the performance of a City employee in public or to the employee directly. Comments about staff performance should only be made to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation.
- Develop strong relationships with the community, and encourage collaboration with City residents, businesses, representatives and staff.
- Make decisions after prudent consideration of the financial impact, considering the long-term financial needs of the agency, especially its financial stability.
- Refrain from accepting gifts, favors, or promises of future benefits that might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.
- Not disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization nor use such information to advance their personal, financial, or private interests.
- Come to meetings prepared and ready to contribute thoughtfully.

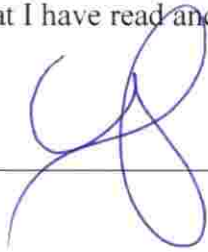
Respect

- Councilmembers shall respect one another and the public and:
 - Treat one another and the public with patience, courtesy and civility, even when there is disagreement.
 - Avoid personal comments that could offend other Councilmembers. One can disagree without being disagreeable.
 - Honor the role of the Mayor in maintaining order during public meetings.

- Focus on the merits in discussions of issues, not personalities, character or motivations.
- Share ideas freely, be open-minded and value others' ideas and opinions, and listen to suggestions before making a decision.
- Demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches and strive to find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole.
- Work to build trust with one another and the community to foster an inclusive, supportive and open environment.

I affirm that I have read and understand the City of Winters City Council Code of Conduct.

Signature



Date

