

ETHICS POLICY

for Elected and Appointed Officials - City of Kerrville, Texas

I. Purpose.

City Council has adopted this Ethics Policy as a way to encourage and ensure the highest standards of personal and public conduct during tenure in office. Adherence to this Policy will help maintain confidence and trust in the representatives and decision-makers for the City of Kerrville, Texas ("City"), each of whom must remain independent, impartial, and accountable to the citizens and businesses that they serve. In addition to this Policy, elected and appointed officials must adhere to state laws, the City Charter, and other City policies, which govern their conduct.

II. Goals.

The goals of this Policy are that both Councilmembers and City Officials:

- A. comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government;
- B. remain independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions; and
- C. use their respective office or position for the public good and not for personal gain.

III. Definitions.

The following terms when used in this Policy have the following meanings:

Board means a board, commission, or committee of the City, in whatever form and whether advisory or nonadvisory and temporary or permanent.

City Council means the legislative and governing body of the City consisting of the mayor and councilmembers.

City Official means City Council and any appointed member of a Board.

IV. Standards of Conduct.

A. *Act in the Public Interest:* Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, City Officials shall work for the common good of the whole City and not for any private or personal interest. Furthermore, each City Official shall assure fair and equal treatment of all persons and matters presented to them in their service to the City. City Officials are prohibited from using their positions to influence any City-government decision in which they have a personal interest. Under the City Charter, City Council assumes the duties of office without party or partisan mark or designation.

B. *Comply with Laws:* City officials shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of Texas, and the City in the performance of their public duties. These laws include the United States and Texas constitutions; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, open government; and the City Charter, ordinances, and policies. City officials acknowledge that most information created by a City Official, regardless of whether it

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is created on a personal electronic device or with a personal email account, is subject to public disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act.

C. *Civility*: The professional and personal conduct of City Officials must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. City Officials shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of the public or other City Officials and employees. Each Official should strive to promote and maintain courtesy, civility, and collegiality.

D. *Respect the Process*: City Officials shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council, which govern the public deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City staff.

E. *Meeting Attendance*: City Officials are obligated to attend meetings and come prepared with an awareness and a fairly good and well-informed understanding of the agenda issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand. City Officials shall refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or to otherwise interfere with the orderly conduct of meetings, all of which is in accordance with Council's applicable meeting rules and procedures.

F. *Decisions Based on Merit*: City Officials should review the agenda material, participate in public discussion, and base all decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

G. *Communication*: Prior to taking final action on a matter under consideration, City Officials shall publicly share any substantive information, which they may have received from sources outside the public decision-making process that is relevant to such action by the Council or Board.

H. *Conflicts of Interest and Disclosure*: City Officials shall familiarize themselves and adhere to the following conflicts of interest and disclosure statutes and principles:

a. Ch. 171, Tx. Local Gov't Code – requires City Council and some City Officials to file an affidavit disclosing a substantial interest in a business or property that would be beneficially affected by a decision of the Council or Board and thereafter abstaining from participation in discussion and a vote. Once disclosure is made, the City Official shall leave the meeting to ensure their presence does not hinder the discussion of the item or influence the vote.

b. Ch. 176, Tx. Local Gov't Code – requires City Council to file a conflicts disclosure statement disclosing any business relationship with a person or business doing business with the City or being considered by the City for a business relationship.

c. Section 176.003(a)(2)(B), Tx. Local Gov't Code – requires the disclosure of gifts of an aggregate value of more than \$250.00 in a twelve (12) month period, other than gifts of food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment and accepted as a gift.

d. Sections 553.001-553.003, Tx. Gov't Code – requires the filing of an affidavit before the date the City will acquire a property in which a public servant has an interest.

e. Penal Code provisions concerning corruption, including Section 36.02 prohibiting bribes, Section 36.08(d) prohibiting illegal benefits, Section 36.09 prohibiting receipt of prohibited gifts, Section 39.02 concerning abuse of official capacity, and Section 39.06(a) concerning misuse of official information.

I. *Advocacy*: City Officials shall not utilize the City's name or logo for purposes of endorsing any political candidate or business. City Officials shall only represent the official policies or positions of the City Council or Board to the best of their ability, and such representation may only occur upon receiving the specific approval of City Council or Board. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, City Officials shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City nor will they allow any inference that they do.

J. *Confidential Information*: City Officials shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning City property, personnel, or proceedings of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization nor use such information to advance their personal interests.

K. *Use of Public Resources*: City Officials shall not use public resources generally unavailable to the public, such as City staff time, equipment, supplies, or facilities for private gain or personal purposes.

L. *Representation of Private Interests*: In keeping with their role as stewards of public interests, City Officials shall not appear on behalf of private interests of third parties before the Council or Board.

M. *Policy Role of City Officials*: City Officials shall respect and adhere to the City's governmental structure as outlined in the City's charter, policies, and procedures. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with information, analysis, and advice provided by the public, Boards, and staff. City Officials therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of the City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

N. *Independence of Boards*: Because of the value of the independent advice of Boards to the public decision-making process, City Officials shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of Board proceedings.

O. *Positive Workplace Environment*: City Officials shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses interacting with the City. City Officials shall recognize their special role in dealing with City employees and refrain from creating the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

V. Implementation.

As an expression of the expected standards of conduct for City Officials, the Policy is self-enforcing. It therefore is most effective when City Officials are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. Ethical standards will be included in the orientation for new Councilmembers and new Board members. City Officials entering office must sign the attached statement affirming that they have read, understood, and agree to follow this Policy. City Council shall periodically review this Policy and consider any revisions.

VI. Compliance and Enforcement.

The Policy expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for City Officials. City Officials have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met and that the public maintains full confidence in the integrity of City government. Councilmembers, as well as Board members, have the responsibility to intervene when a City Official's actions appear to be in violation of the Policy and such actions or inactions are brought to their attention. The City Council may impose sanctions, such as reprimand, formal censure, or loss of assignment on a City Official whose conduct does not comply with this Policy. The City Council also may act to remove members of Boards from office.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
Ethics Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials - City of Kerrville, Texas

As a member of the Kerrville City Council or a City board, commission, or committee, I agree to uphold the Policy and conduct myself by the following model of behavior. I will:

- Recognize the worth of City Officials and employees and appreciate their individual talents, perspectives, and contributions;
- Help create an atmosphere of respect and civility where the public, City Officials, and City staff are free to express their ideas and work to their full potential;
- Conduct my personal and public affairs with honesty, integrity, fairness and respect for others;
- Respect the dignity and privacy of individuals and organizations;
- Keep the common good as my highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for public benefit;
- Avoid and discourage conduct which is divisive or harmful to the best interests of the City;
- Treat all people with whom I come in contact in a manner I wish to be treated;
- Before speaking or acting, I will ask myself the following questions:
 1. Is it the truth?
 2. Is it fair to all concerned?
 3. Will it build goodwill and better relationships?
 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

I affirm that I have read and that I understand, accept and support the Policy.

Name; Position; Council, Board, etc.

Signature

Date

CITY OF KERRVILLE, TEXAS
RESOLUTION NO. 40-2013

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING AN ETHICS POLICY FOR ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS – CITY OF KERRVILLE, TEXAS; PROVIDING A PURPOSE, GOALS, STANDARDS OF CONDUCT, IMPLEMENTATION, COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT; AND A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

WHEREAS, City officials of the City of Kerrville, Texas, should conduct public business in a way that encourages and ensures the highest standards of personal and public conduct during their time in office; and

WHEREAS, as a way of meeting these standards, City Council has discussed and reviewed a policy that will be applicable to all City Officials and which Council believes will better define in one policy document the standards of conduct that are applicable to such officials; and

WHEREAS, Council now acts to adopt the *Ethics Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials – City of Kerrville, Texas* (the “Policy”), as a way of maintaining the public’s confidence and trust in their elective officials, representatives, and decision-makers for the City, each of whom must remain independent, impartial, and accountable to the citizens and businesses that they serve; and

WHEREAS, the City Council for the City of Kerrville, Texas, finds that its adoption of the Policy will serve and promote the public interest;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KERRVILLE, KERR COUNTY, TEXAS:

The *Ethics Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials – City of Kerrville, Texas*, as attached at Exhibit A, is adopted and is effective immediately.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON this the 8th day of October A.D., 2013.

ATTEST

Brenda G. Craig
Brenda G. Craig, City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Michael C. Hayes
Michael C. Hayes, City Attorney

Jack Pratt, Jr.
Jack Pratt, Jr., Mayor

Resolution
40-2013