



## **CAMAS CITY COUNCIL PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Camas community is entitled to a fair, ethical and accountable local government. The general public should have full confidence that their elected and appointed officials:

- Are good stewards of the public's trust and committed to serving in the best interest of the Camas community;
- Comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of city government;
- Are independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
- Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- Conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless required by law to be confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

This document represents the Professional Code of Conduct for City Councilors. It describes core values: the traits and qualities that represent our highest priorities. These values are the fundamental forces that define our behavior. The Council has previously adopted by Resolution 20-003 a Code of Ethics policy which largely mirrors the state law requirements as well as a Resolution 23-008 which adopted a Civility and Belonging Agreement. Both Resolutions shall continue in full force and effect. The purpose of the Code of Conduct as set forth herein is to provide additional guiding principles as well as provide for certain measures to be utilized for enforcement as necessary.

As Councilors for the City of Camas, we are committed to these core values:

### **UNDERSTANDING THE COUNCIL ROLE**

I understand that my role is to serve as policy maker – to represent the values, beliefs, and priorities of the Camas community while serving in the community's best interest. My responsibilities include developing and adopting a vision and goals for the city, and aligning plans, policies, agreements and budgets in furtherance of this vision.

I understand that the Mayor is responsible for undertaking and accomplishing the policy objectives of the council and for the day-to-day operations of the city. I will recognize that the Mayor and their staff have subject matter expertise, and utilize their knowledge and experience to guide and inform decision-making. I will strive to be informed about the issues facing the city and be prepared to ask questions of staff and colleagues. To that end, I will endeavor to engage with staff during Council meetings in a respectful manner and, to the extent possible, provide advance notice to staff of anticipated questions to be raised during any meeting.

### **STEWARDSHIP AND PUBLIC TRUST**

I understand that public trust is the cornerstone of a healthy city government and that a public office is a public trust. When elected, I was entrusted with public power by the people to be used only for their benefit and never for personal benefit. I further understand that public trust is not fixed, it can be improved or damaged and that stewardship of the public interest must be my primary concern. I will act to promote the public good and protect the public trust with: *humanity* by demonstrating

empathy and true care for the wants and needs of the Camas community, *transparency* by openly sharing information and inviting public engagement, *capability* by creating high-quality short and long-term plans, and *reliability* by delivery on promises – all the time - with competence and good intent.

- Making the Public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process.
- In Meetings, Members should be welcoming to speakers and should address them with respect.  
Members should not debate or engage in argument with Public Commenters.
- If needed, Members may ask the presider for a point of order.
- Questions by Members to the Public and Staff should seek to clarify or expand information, never to appear to challenge or belittle; and never engage in personal attacks of any kind, under any circumstances.

## INTEGRITY

I will strive for integrity in the broadest sense to guide my actions in all decisions and relationships, including those with constituents, employees and other Councilors. I will demonstrate sound moral and ethical principles on a daily basis. I will tell the full truth, keep promises, and will avoid misrepresenting facts..

To that end:

- Except as required by law, I will not disclose or use privileged, confidential or propriety information obtained in executive session or otherwise in the course of duties.
- I will refrain from creating an appearance of impropriety in my actions and decisions. I will not use my official position to influence council decisions in which I have a material financial interest, an organizational responsibility or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest, or a strong personal bias.
- I will not use my political position to advance private interests.
- I will not use my position or City resources for personal, family, or financial gain.
- I will ensure that the public interest comes first, and that I do not advance my personal interests at the expense of the public.
- I will respect the will of the majority on Council decisions.

## PROFESSIONALISM AND RESPECT

Members should refrain from publicly criticizing a Staff individual and concerns about the performance of the individual should not be directly voiced in public or to the individual directly. Comments about Staff performance are to be directed to the Administrator and kept private and vice versa.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Personal accountability is the basis of my commitment to the community. I will strive to meet or exceed expectations; accept responsibility for my behavior and disclose the results in a transparent manner. I will have the courage to admit mistakes and the limitations of my knowledge and to take responsibility to find solutions.

Members should keep in mind any communication is treated as public communication.

Be mindful in conversations to clarify when Members are stating their own opinions, versus when it is the opinion of Council as a whole.

## **EFFECTIVE MEETINGS**

Effective open public meetings are central to democratic-republic decision-making. I will prepare in advance to assure meetings are organized, questions and discussions are focused, and good decisions can be made. I will adhere to meeting protocols and processes. I will honor the public's participation and use public meetings for information sharing and decision-making. I will be respectful of other Councilors, the public and everyone's time.

It is the responsibility of the Presider to keep the comments of the Members germane during all Meetings. Members will honor the efforts of the Presider to focus discussions on current items. If there is a disagreement about the agenda or the Presider's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following a procedure consistent with parliamentary process.

## **VIOLATIONS**

Any Councilmember who has information that a Councilmember may have violated the Code of Conduct shall provide that information in writing to the City Council and the Mayor. Complaints should be of such substance as to justify the opening of the proceedings as provided and not be used for the purpose of harassment or to unjustifiably delay Council consideration of City matters. The written complaint must be based substantially upon the personal knowledge of the complainant and signed by the person filing the complaint. No action will be taken on any complaint which is filed later than 30 days after knowledge of violation of the Code of Conduct is alleged to have occurred.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Mayor shall provide it to the City Attorney. The City Attorney shall promptly review the information, and in writing determine whether the complaint, on its face, alleges facts that, if true, would substantiate a violation of the Code of Conduct, and provide information to Council within 30 days. The City Attorney may advise referral to an outside agency or legal counsel for such determination in their discretion, resulting in the 30 day timeline not being met. The City Attorney will then present this issue to the Council for an extension. If such a determination is made, then the Mayor and City Attorney or other agency/counsel shall jointly gather all information necessary for the City Council to determine whether a violation has occurred.

Within 30 days of receipt of the information from the Mayor, Council will determine, by majority vote, whether a violation has occurred. The accused member of City Council does not vote on any

matter involving that member. Deliberation by the Council may be in executive session; however, upon request of the person complained against, the meeting shall be open to the public.

In the event that the City Council members agree that one or more violations occurred, the City Council will determine, by majority vote whether any of the following actions, taking into account the seriousness of the offense and/or the degree to which the offense has caused the City or Council to be held in disrepute, should be taken to assure that the violation does not recur. Please note the following sanctions should be prepared in conjunction with the City Attorney.

(i) Admonition. An admonition shall be a verbal nonpublic statement made to the individual by the Mayor Pro Tem as the ranking member of the Council with the City Attorney in attendance.

(ii) Reprimand. A reprimand shall be administered to the individual by letter. The letter shall be approved and signed by the City Council. The action of the City Council shall be final and not subject to further review.

(iii) Censure. A censure is a measure governed by Robert's Rules of Order and shall be a written statement administered personally to the individual as follows:

- Council will provide notice of at least 20 days for the individual to appear at a specific time and place to receive the censure. The notice shall include a copy of the proposed censure.
- Within five days of receipt of the notice, the individual may file a request for review of the content of the censure and request revisions. The City Council shall review the proposed censure and determine whether or not any revisions should be made. The action of the City Council shall be final and not subject to further review. If no such request is received, the censure shall be administered at the time and place set.
- The censure shall be given publicly, and the individual shall not make a statement for any reason. A censure shall be deemed administered at the time it is scheduled whether or not the individual appears.