



## Agenda Item Report

**Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole & Common Council**

**Meeting Date: May 19, 2026**

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**Item Title:** Conflict of Interest Policy

**Submitted By:** Matt Amundson, City Administrator

### Detailed Description of Subject Matter:

There has been recent discussion about concerns over conflict of interest on various city boards and commissions. I think the first step to address this concern is to determine what a conflict of interest is. The policy included has been crafted utilizing state statutes including Wis. Stat. § 19.59 (local code of ethics) and Wis. Stat. § 946.13 (private interests in public contracts) as well as applicable provisions of Wis. Stat. § 19.81-19.98 (open meeting laws).

Consistent with §19.59(1)(a), no member may:

1. Use their public position for private benefit
  - A member may not use their office to obtain financial gain or anything of substantial value for:
    - Themselves
    - Immediate family
    - An associated organization
2. Take official action where a substantial financial interest exists
  - A member must not take action on a matter in which they, their immediate family, or an associated organization has a substantial financial interest.
3. Accept items of value that could influence decisions
  - Consistent with §19.59(1)(b), members shall not accept anything of value if it could reasonably be expected to influence their official actions.

For purposes of this policy (consistent with §19.59):

- Immediate family includes: spouse, domestic partner, and dependent children
- Associated organization includes any organization in which the member or immediate family member:
  - Is an officer, director, or employee
  - Holds a significant ownership interest

## **Relatives Employed by the City**

### Service and Disclosure

Individuals who have immediate family members employed by the City may serve on boards and commissions, subject to the following:

- The relationship must be disclosed in writing upon appointment and when relevant matters arise
- The member is subject to all requirements under §19.59 regarding conflicts of interest

## **Required Abstention (Recusal)**

Consistent with §19.59(1)(a)2, a member shall not participate in any official action when:

- The action may result in a direct or substantial financial benefit to:
  - The member
  - An immediate family member employed by the City
- The matter involves:
  - Compensation, discipline, or employment status of the relative
  - Contracts, budgets, or decisions that would uniquely affect the relative's department or position beyond general policy impacts

When such a situation arises:

- The member **must publicly disclose the conflict**
- The member **must abstain from discussion and voting**
- The abstention **shall be recorded in the minutes**

## **Appointments Creating Inherent Conflicts**

The appointing authority (Mayor/Common Council) may determine that an individual is ineligible for appointment if:

- The relationship creates a continuing or pervasive conflict of interest that cannot be effectively managed through recusal
- The board or commission exercises direct authority or oversight over the relative's employment, such as:
  - Personnel or disciplinary authority
  - Contracting authority directly involving the department

## **Public Contracts (Wis. Stat. §946.13)**

Members are prohibited from:

- Participating in the making of a contract in which they have a private pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly
- Violations of §946.13 may constitute a criminal offense

If such a situation arises:

- The member must fully abstain
- The matter should be reviewed by the City Attorney

## **Appearance of Impropriety**

Consistent with the intent of §19.59, members should avoid situations that may:

- Create a reasonable perception of bias
- Undermine public confidence

When in doubt, disclosure and recusal are required.

**List all Supporting Documentation Attached:**

Draft Conflict of Interest Policy

**Action Requested of Council:**

Consider and take possible action on Conflict of Interest Policy