

TOWN OF JUNO BEACH

TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

Goal Statement: Members of the Town Council shall serve as a model of leadership and civility in the community, inspire confidence in Town government, and demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement both during public meetings and when engaging with members of the community.

The Code of Conduct describes the way members of the Town Council should treat each other, members of Town staff, constituents, and others when representing the Town of Juno Beach. The objective of the Code of Conduct is to engender more trust in government, thereby promoting its effectiveness while advancing harmony within the community. The Code aims to establish norms of behavior for Council by which legitimate disagreements and different points of view that may arise are handled in a professional manner – one that promotes the public’s confidence in government and enhances the reputation of the Council and the Town.

The Code of Conduct represents aspirational goals that guide Councilmembers toward the highest principles of governance. Although this Code does not represent a body of enforceable rules, the Code should be considered by Councilmembers when arriving at an ethical course of action and course of behavior – each of which should be worthy of the public’s trust in government and the high office to which each Councilmember has been entrusted.

The consistent theme through this Code of Conduct is respect. Elected officials are called upon to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Demonstrating respect for each Councilmember and the Town’s constituents through words and actions is the “North Star” that guides Councilmembers to do the right thing, even in difficult situations.

A. Conduct During Public Meetings:

1. Members of the Town Council shall fully participate in all Town Council meetings and practice civility, professionalism, and respect in all discussions and debate.
2. Members of the Town Council shall prepare in advance of all Town Council meetings by reviewing agenda materials, speaking with the Town Manager and other members of Town Staff, speaking with constituents, and becoming familiar with issues.
 - a. When preparing for Town Council meetings, members of the Town Council should direct questions ahead of time to the Town Manager or Town Staff so that Staff can provide the desired information at the Council meeting.

- b. Members of Town Council should avoid asking questions that Town Staff will be unable answer on the spot or recognize that such questions may require additional time or research to formulate an answer.
 3. Members of the Town Council shall be respectful of other people's time, stay focused, and act efficiently during public meetings.
 4. Members of the Town Council shall honor and respect the role of the Mayor (or presiding officer) in maintaining order.
 5. Members of the Town Council shall make the public feel welcome and shall not demonstrate any signs of partiality, prejudice, discrimination, or disrespect toward an individual participating in a public meeting. To that end, members of the Town Council shall:
 - a. Actively listen to speakers;
 - b. Ask for clarification with the consent of the Mayor, but avoid debate and argument with members of the public; and
 - c. Be mindful of their tone and body language.
 6. Members of the Town Council shall refrain from personal comments, attacks, or innuendo directed toward other members of the Council or members of the public.
 7. Members of the Town Council shall ensure that all comments pertain to the topic under discussion.
 8. Members of the Town Council shall refrain from using cellular phones or any other type of audible device in a manner that would be disruptive to other members of the Council or members of the public.
 9. When attending meetings of other Boards, members of the Town Council shall refrain from commenting on quasi-judicial matters that will come before the Town Council for consideration. Furthermore, members of the Town Council shall clearly indicate on the record that any comments or questions are made in their capacity as a Town resident and not as a member of the Town Council.
- B. **Conduct** Outside of Public Meetings:
1. Members of the Town Council shall not make any promise or representation on behalf of the Town Council or Town Staff.
 2. Members of the Town Council shall not make derogatory personal comments about other members of the Council, **members of Town Staff**, members of the public, or members of any Town board, either orally or through the dissemination

of written materials, including newsletters. Newsletters issued by sitting members of the Town Council should take care not to insult or make demeaning, sarcastic, or disparaging statements about any Town resident because such conduct degrades the Council's reputation in the community, reduces the willingness of the public to engage with their government, and harms the trust that the residents have in government.

3. Members of the Town Council shall not make any representation or inquiry on behalf of the Council to any other public or private agency unless specifically authorized to do so by the Council. Any such representation or inquiry shall be made solely in the Councilmember's personal capacity without the use of the Councilmember's official title.
4. Members of the Town Council shall not publicly undermine the official Town Council position on any issue through the dissemination of written materials, including newsletters, unless such statement is included in official campaign materials relating to an upcoming Town Council election.
5. Members of the Town Council shall direct all questions or requests for additional information from Town Staff through the Town Manager, Department Heads, or the Town Attorney. Members of the Town Council shall be professional and courteous in their interactions with members of Town Staff and refrain from any public criticism.
6. Members of the Town Council shall comply with the following prohibitions set forth in Article IV, Section 6 of the Town Charter:
 - a. *Appointment and removals.* Neither the council nor any of its members shall in any manner dictate the appointment or removal of any town administrative officers or employees whom the manager or any subordinates are empowered to appoint, but the council may express its views and fully and freely discuss with the manager anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such officers and employees.
 - b. *Interference with administration.* Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations, the council or its members shall deal with town officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the manager solely through the manager, and neither the council nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee either publicly or privately. Nothing in the foregoing is to be construed to prohibit individual members of the council from closely scrutinizing all aspects of town government operations so as to obtain independent information. It is the express intent of this charter, however, that recommendations for improvement in town government operations by individual council members be made to and through the town manager, so that the manager may coordinate efforts of

all town departments to achieve the greatest possible savings through the most efficient and sound means available.

7. Members of the Town Council recognize that their Town e-mail is the appropriate mechanism for communicating with members of the public and further understand that they are personally responsible for maintaining records of all communications that are conducted on a platform other than their Town e-mail, including all text messages.
8. Members of the Town Council are free to take public positions on local, county, state, and federal political issues. Similarly, members of the Town Council are free to endorse candidates for local, county, state, and federal office.

Proposed language:

C. Enforcement:

1. Complaints for violations of the Code of Conduct may be filed with Mayor, the Town Manager, the Town Attorney, or the Town's Human Resources Department.
2. The Complaint shall be forwarded to the Town Council, and the members of the Town Council not named in the complaint shall determine whether to pursue the violation. A decision to pursue a violation requires a unanimous vote by the non-named members. If the Council votes to pursue the violation, the named Councilmember or Councilmembers shall be afforded an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
3. If warranted under the circumstances, the Town Council may direct the Town Attorney to initiate an investigation.
4. The Town Council reviews the complaint and response, as well as the results of the investigation, if any.
5. After reviewing the complaint and response, or the results of the investigation, the Council may take one of the following actions:
 - a. Admonishment: A reminder that a particular type of behavior is a violation of the Code of Conduct.
 - b. Written Warning: Formal Council action determining that a violation occurred.
 - c. Censure: Formal Council statement of official reprimand in the case of a serious violation of the Code of Conduct.