



## City of Long Lake City Council Code of Conduct Policy

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**Date of Adoption:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2025

**Policy Revised:**

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**I. Purpose**

Long Lake residents and businesses deserve a fair, ethical and accountable local government which earns the public's full confidence. Proper and efficient operation of municipal government requires that its public officials be independent, impartial and responsible to citizens and property owners; that municipal governmental decisions and policy are made in accordance with the procedures established by the City; and that municipal public office is never to be used for personal gain. Recognizing these goals, this Code of Conduct is established by and for the members of the Long Lake City Council to reflect a shared responsibility for maintaining a professional environment; providing standards for conduct in city matters; fostering a culture of trust, respect, and candor as a Council; committing to eliminating conflicts of interest; and for promoting the public's confidence and faith in the integrity of their City government.

**II. Standards of Conduct**

Members of the City Council, whether elected or appointed, shall comply with all applicable federal laws, state laws, City ordinances and resolutions, and City policies in the performance of their public duties. City Council members shall be patient, respectful, polite and courteous to each other, as well as to the public and to members of the City's staff. Recognizing these goals, this Code of Conduct Policy is established for the City Council of the City of Long Lake to include the standards of ethical conduct and rules of law set forth in this section.

- a. **Authority.** In statutory cities, powers are granted to City Council members as a whole body, and not to individual members. Members may not represent a personal opinion or position as being that of the City Council or the City's government. City Council members cannot individually enforce City ordinances, resolutions or policies, and should refer any enforcement activities to appropriate City staff. Per Minn. Stat. 412.191, the Mayor is a full acting member of the City Council, but also acts as the presiding officer of Council meetings, represents the City ceremoniously, and executes official documents.
- b. **Incompatible Office.** Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 412.02, subd. 1a and as it may be amended, neither the Mayor nor any City Council member may be employed by the city. For purposes of this subdivision, "employed" refers to full-time permanent employment.
- c. **Conduct at Meetings.** To be effective, City Council members must come to meetings with an open mind, prepared to think strategically about City issues, and willing to delegate details of implementations to City staff. Members shall not use cell phones, laptops, or any

telecommunication device to communicate with others regarding any matters of City business during public meetings, and such devices shall be silenced. Council members may not encourage or participate in behavior or communications in a manner that may erode order and decorum at a meeting. Council members will not act in an insulting, bullying, belittling, patronizing or judging manner; and violence or the threat of violence will not be tolerated at any time.

- d. **Open Meeting Law.** Public deliberations and processes shall be conducted openly and in a transparent manner, subject to Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. Chapter 13D). City Council members may not violate the Open Meeting Law and/or make decisions outside of a public meeting.
- e. **Conflict of Interest.** A conflict of interest is when any member who has a "financial interest" in or who may receive a benefit as a result of any action, or if there is potential for the appearance of a conflict of interest. Members who have a potential conflict of interest, or for the appearance of a conflict of interest, shall disclose the conflict of interest to the Council and abstain from the Council's discussion, debate, and vote upon a matter under review.

*Contractual Conflict of Interest* (Minn. Stat. 471.87, Exceptions in Minn. Stats. 123B.195 and 471.88) – A public officer who is authorized to take part in any manner in making any sale, lease, or contract while in their official capacity shall not voluntarily have a personal financial interest in that sale, lease, or contract, or personally benefit financially therefrom.

*Non-Contractual Conflict of Interest* – Non-contractual matters may include such things as Council decisions on zoning, local improvements, and the issuance of licenses. Although not generally prohibited by state law, an interested Council member most likely should abstain from participating in the Council discussion and from voting on these issues.

- f. **Gifts / Donations.** Council members shall not use their public position for personal gain, or to solicit personal gifts or favors. Under Minn. Stat. 471.895, Council members may not receive gifts from any "interested person" in conjunction with their City Council duties. A "gift" is defined as money, real or personal property, a service, loan, a forbearance or forgiveness of debt, or a promise of future employment, that is given and received without the giver receiving something of equal or greater value in return. An "interested person" means a person, a representative of a person, or an association that has a direct financial interest in a decision that a City official is authorized to make. Council members are to remain mindful that virtually every resident or person doing business in the City could have a direct financial interest in a decision. Except as specifically permitted pursuant to Minn. Stat. 471.895, Council members may not accept or receive any gift of substance in any form and under any circumstance.

Gifts may be made to the City of Long Lake as a municipal government, but all such gifts must be accepted by resolution of the City Council adopted at a public meeting.

- g. **Disclosure of Information.** Council members may not disclose to the public any information that was gained through their position if the information was not classified as public data or was discussed at a closed session of the City Council; nor may any Council member disclose information received, discussed, or decided in conference or consult with the City's legal counsel that is protected by the attorney-client privilege unless a majority of the City Council has

authorized the disclosure.

- h. **Working With the Community.** The City Council's overarching principles for working with the community are to:
- Never grant any special consideration, treatment, privilege, or advantage;
  - Respect the sensitivity of personal information;
  - Be available to all parties on an equal basis and not advocate for a certain point of view;
  - Keep the common good as the highest purpose to focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit;
  - At Council meetings, honor the Council's rules regarding public comment or testimony, clearly communicate the rules, and listen to what the public has to say;
  - Be cautious not to prejudge or decide on an issue before the Council has had a chance to deliberate as a body; and to
  - Maintain awareness of the role of an individual Council member versus the City Council when participating in community meetings or events.
- i. **Intergovernmental Relations.** City Council members shall represent positions approved by the Council to the best of their ability when working with legislative bodies, federal or state agencies, the school board, Hennepin County, or other local governmental unit. If an individual member's opinion differs from the City's position, or differs from a matter agreed upon by the full Council, members shall explicitly state that they do not represent their City Council or the City of Long Lake, nor will they allow the inference that they do.
- j. **Fair Treatment for Employees.** Council members shall not cause City employees to suffer recriminations, abuse, or humiliation for acting in a forthright, proper, honest and candid manner in performing their duties. Council members shall treat employees with respect and not attempt to dictate the manner in which employees perform their duties.
- k. **City Logo.** City Council members shall not use the City's name or any City logo for personal or private benefit, or for the purpose of endorsing any particular business or political candidate. Members may not modify any City logo in any way.
- l. **Use of Public Property.** No Council member (or any other public official) shall request or permit the use of City-owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for personal convenience or profit, except when such items are available to the public generally or are provided by the City for the Council member's use while in the conduct of City business.

### III. **Compliance and Enforcement**

This Code of Conduct Policy expresses standards of ethical conduct expected by and for members of the Long Lake City Council. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure the public that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of their local government. Council members agree to hold themselves and each other accountable, and when there is a suspected violation of either the law or this Policy, any Council member may file a written complaint with the City Administrator alleging a violation has occurred. The complaint must contain supporting facts for the allegation. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the City Administrator shall engage the City's legal counsel to review the complaint and

offer and advisory opinion. The City Council may hold a hearing within 30 days after a written complaint has been received by the City Administrator or upon the Council's own volition. The person accused must have the opportunity to be heard at any such hearing. If, after a hearing, the City Council finds that a violation of law or standard has occurred or does exist, the Council may censure the member, refer the matter for criminal prosecution, request the City Council member not to participate in a decision, or other action as deemed appropriate in consultation with the City's legal counsel.

**IV. Policy Subject to Change**

This Policy is created at the discretion of the City Council and is subject to change or termination at any time by majority vote of the Long Lake City Council.

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