



Memorandum

To: Mayor Nelson and Members of the City Council

From: Daniel R. Buchholtz, MMC, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer

Date: January 4, 2023

Subject: Statement of Values Policy

The City Council adopted a Statement of Values policy in 2018 to commit itself to “promote and maintain the highest standards of personal professional conduct in the City’s government.” I felt it was important for the City Council to review this policy for any potential amendments.

Civility in local government is important. It is important that we, as local officials, cultivate civility. In a 2016 blog post on ICMA¹, Julie Novak, President of the Novak Consulting Group, outlined four reasons why civility is important for local government:

- *It’s our “brand”.* Our elected and appointed officials are tasked with the fiduciary responsibility to look out for the best interest of the city. Part of that is to protect our brand. Citizens, business leaders and economic development professionals are watching. What do we want them saying about our organization?
- *Talent is mobile.* Talent is difficult to attract. With our City Council meetings available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, it is easy for potential candidates to research our political environment and know our “brand” before deciding to apply for or accept a position. If we want the best talent, we should create an environment that is deserving of that talent.
- *Leaders are role models.* If it is ok for Councilmembers to act in an uncivil or unprofessional way, you are essentially giving permission to the public to do the same. You set the example for others.
- *Incivility breeds apathy.* According to a 2010 study on civility by the Center for Political Participation at Allegheny College (Pennsylvania), incivility “pushes people away from politics and from paying attention to politics, and lessens their willingness to be engaged.” Civility is important so that we do not push the public away at the very time we ask for their engagement.

I have included the Statement of Values policy with this memorandum. Please review the policy in advance of our worksession. I look forward to a productive discussion.

¹ <https://icma.org/blog-posts/cultivating-civility-local-government>.