



Subject: Recommendation for Adoption of the City of Willard Disciplinary Policy

Purpose

This memorandum provides an overview of the proposed **City of Willard Disciplinary Policy** and its importance in establishing a structured, fair, and transparent approach to employee discipline. The policy is designed to ensure consistency in handling performance and conduct issues while aligning with the City's broader goals for accountability, professionalism, and operational efficiency.

Background

Currently, the City of Willard does not have a formalized disciplinary policy that outlines a structured process for addressing employee performance and conduct violations. Without a clear framework, there is a risk of inconsistent disciplinary actions across departments, potential legal exposure, and difficulty in managing employee performance effectively.

The proposed **Disciplinary Policy** establishes a **progressive discipline framework**, ensuring employees have opportunities to correct behavior while providing clear guidelines for supervisors on how to document and administer disciplinary actions fairly and consistently.

Key Features of the Policy

1. Progressive Discipline Structure

- The policy introduces a **four-step** disciplinary process:
 - **Step 1: Verbal Warning (Informal Correction)**
 - **Step 2: Written Warning (Formal Notice)**
 - **Step 3: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) or Suspension**
 - **Step 4: Final Disciplinary Action (Termination or Demotion)**
- This structure ensures that minor infractions are addressed constructively while providing a clear path for escalating serious violations.

2. Consistency and Fairness

- Establishes **uniform disciplinary procedures** across all departments.
- Requires **HR oversight** for disciplinary actions at Step 2 and above.
- Ensures supervisors are trained annually before administering discipline at Step 2 or higher.



3. Merit Raise Eligibility Tied to Discipline

- Employees receiving a **Step 2 or higher disciplinary action** will be ineligible for a merit raise during that performance cycle.
- Employees who receive a **Step 1 (Verbal Warning)** may remain eligible **if they correct the issue and do not receive additional disciplinary action for the same issue within the rating period.**
- Multiple unrelated Step 1 infractions **may** result in merit ineligibility upon HR review and approval by the City Administrator.

4. Employee Rights & Appeals Process

- Provides employees the **right to respond** to any disciplinary action.
- Establishes an **appeals process** where employees may request a review of disciplinary actions beyond a verbal warning.

5. Department Head Termination Approval Requirement

- Department heads **may not be terminated without Mayoral approval**, unless immediate action is required to prevent significant harm (e.g., criminal activity, ongoing violence, or other serious threats to City operations or safety).

6. Training & Compliance

- Supervisors must receive **annual training** on administering discipline, documentation, and handling performance concerns.
- Supervisors who **have not completed training** will not be permitted to issue disciplinary actions at Step 2 or above.

Benefits of Adoption

- **Protects the City from Liability:** Establishing a formal disciplinary process reduces the risk of inconsistent disciplinary actions, grievances, or legal claims related to unfair treatment.
- **Promotes Accountability & Performance:** Encourages a work culture where employees understand expectations and have opportunities for improvement before facing severe consequences.

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- **Ensures Budget Alignment:** By tying merit raises to discipline, the policy ensures that pay increases are reserved for employees who demonstrate professionalism and accountability.
- **Supports Effective Management:** Provides supervisors with clear guidelines and necessary training to address performance and conduct issues constructively.

Options for the Board

1. **Adopt the Policy as Written**
 - Fully implements the proposed disciplinary framework, providing immediate consistency and structure across all departments.
2. **Approve with Modifications**
 - If there are concerns regarding specific provisions (e.g., appeals process, merit eligibility, or termination procedures), the Board may approve the policy with adjustments.
3. **Take No Action**
 - The City would continue to operate without a formalized disciplinary framework, relying on practices with limited policy support and application that may vary between departments.

Recommendation

I strongly recommend that the Board **adopt the Disciplinary Policy as written**. Implementing this policy will provide the City with a structured, legally sound approach to employee discipline while ensuring fairness, consistency, and alignment with the City's Merit Evaluation and Performance Policy.

If the Board wishes to propose modifications, I recommend discussing these **before the first reading** to allow for necessary revisions.

Next Steps

If approved, the policy will take effect immediately, with:

- **HR-led training for supervisors** on policy implementation.
- **Review and distribution** of policy guidelines to all employees.
- **Incorporation into City employee handbooks** and onboarding materials.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wesley Young', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Wesley Young, MPA, CPM
City Administrator
City of Willard