

# *Warren City Council – Code of Conduct*

## *Purpose*

To establish a code of conduct and associated remedies that council members agree to abide by in carrying out their duties as elected officials. This code of conduct does not supersede any existing or future statutory or constitutional rights, but simply outlines appropriate council expectations, behavior and interactions with each other, city staff, citizens and all other groups encountered as a result of city business, so as to efficiently and effectively develop and carry out the mission, vision, goals and established policies of the city.

## *Roles/Responsibilities*

**Meetings** – By Charter, the mayor presides over meetings of the city council. Speakers, including council members, do not speak until recognized by the mayor.

**Act in the Public Interest** – Recognizing that service to our citizens must be our primary concern; council members shall work for the common good of the people of Warren and not for any private or personal interest. Council members will treat all persons, claims and transactions in a fair and equitable manner.

**Preparation** – Council members are expected to be prepared for city council meetings and work sessions.

**Agenda Preparation** – The city administrator directs preparation of draft meeting agendas. The final agenda is determined by the city council prior to the meeting. At the council meeting, agenda items may be added or deleted by council members per procedures established in the city code.

## *Conduct of Members*

**Staff Direction** – The mayor and city council members direct city staff, contract employees and consultants only through the city administrator, as determined by majority vote. At work sessions, the mayor will state the concerns of the council or specific directions provided by the council to the staff. The city administrator will request further clarification if he feels it is required so that there is a clear understanding of what the council's expectations are in terms of the actions to be taken by staff.

**Respect for Staff Time** – If a council member is utilizing an inordinate amount of staff time, the city administrator is required to bring this to the attention of the city council for resolution.

**Interactions** – Council members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the city council, boards, commissions, committees, staff or the public.

**Respect for Process** – Council member duties shall be performed in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the city council.

**Use of Public Resources** – Public resources not available to the general public (e.g., city staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities) shall not be used by council members for private, personal or political purposes.

**Advocacy** – To the best of their ability, council members shall speak with one voice in representing the official policies and positions of the city council. When presenting their personal opinions or positions, members shall explicitly state that they do not represent the council or the city.

**Improper Influence** – Council members shall refrain from using their position to improperly influence the deliberations or decisions of city staff, boards, commission or committees.

**Positive Work Environment** – Council members shall support a positive, efficient and effective environment for residents, businesses and city employees.

**Steward of City Funds** – When the end of a council member's service on the city council has been determined by means of not seeking re-election, resignation, or the results of an election, that council member shall not subject the city to unnecessary travel and/or tuition costs.

### *Communication*

**Sharing of Information** – It is the responsibility of council members to publicly share information with all other council members that they have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process, which pertains to a topic under consideration. Whenever possible, new information or data obtained by council members, pertinent to a topic being discussed, will be distributed through the city administrator to the city council members. Upon reviewing the “new information” the council may adopt a motion to postpone further consideration of the information until all members have had time to review and interpret this new information.

**Focused Discussions** – Council members shall work to keep discussions and debates focused on the item under discussion without introducing extraneous or irrelevant information.

**Request for Information**- All council members shall receive the same information at the same time when deemed ready for distribution by staff. If an elected official requests information in advance of others on the city council, the matter shall be resolved by a majority of the city council.

**Coordination with City Staff** – City staff should be involved when council members meet with officials from other agencies and jurisdictions to ensure proper staff support as needed and to keep staff appropriately informed.

**Citizen Questions** – Elected officials should refer questions and concerns from citizens to the city administrator or appropriate department director. City staff should report back to the city council on the resolution of the referral.

**Confidential Information** – Council members shall respect and preserve the confidentiality of non-public, protected non-public, private, and confidential information provided to them concerning matters of the city. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or private interests.

**Notice of Attendance** – If any council member has knowledge or reason to believe that there will be a large or emotional attendance at an upcoming council meeting or work session, they have an obligation to inform the city administrator as soon as they become aware of the potential situation.

### *Implementation*

**Orientation** – This Code of Conduct shall be included in the regular orientations for new city council members.

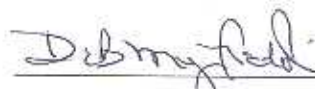
**Compliance and Enforcement** – Council members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that the code of conduct is understood and followed and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of the Warren city government.

### *Remedies*

It is the responsibility of the city council to police its members. When inappropriate behaviors are observed, any member of the council can intervene. If inappropriate behavior is observed, the city council will discuss the behavior at a council work session. By direction of the council, it will be determined whether:

- a. A letter is sent to the offending council member stating that they have been found operating outside the established code of conduct, requesting them to correct the behavior identified as inappropriate; or
- b. The council member is formally sanctioned by resolution at a council meeting.

*Resolution #12132011-02 adopting this Code of Conduct was adopted by the Warren City Council on December 13, 2011.*



Deb Myrfield, Mayor