

# Lino Lakes City Council

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### *Purpose*

To establish a code of conduct and associated remedies that Councilmembers 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, Councilmembers shall work for the common good of the people of Lino Lakes and not for any private or personal interest. Councilmembers will treat all persons, claims, and transactions in a fair and equitable manner.

**Preparation** – Councilmembers 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 Councilmembers per procedures established in the city code.

### *Standards of Conduct*

**Staff Direction** – The Mayor and Councilmembers 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 they feel 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 Councilmember 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** – Councilmembers 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** – Councilmember duties shall be performed in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council and in accordance with the City Charter.

**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 Councilmembers for private, personal or political purposes.

**Advocacy** – Councilmembers shall speak with one voice in representing the official policies and positions of the City Council. When presenting their personal opinions or positions, councilmembers shall take precaution to not identify themselves as a city official.

**Improper Influence** – Councilmembers 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 a Councilmember's service on the City Council is coming to an end by means of not seeking re-election, resignation, or the results of an election, that Councilmember shall not subject the city to unnecessary travel expenditures.

### ***Communication***

**Sharing of Information** – It is the responsibility of Councilmembers to publicly share information with all other Councilmembers when they have received it from sources outside of the public decision-making process. Whenever possible, new information or data obtained by Councilmembers will be distributed through the city administrator to other councilmembers.

**Request for Information** – All Councilmembers shall receive the same information at the same time when deemed ready for distribution by city staff. If a Councilmember requests information in advance of other Councilmembers, the information shall be distributed to all members of the Council.

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

**Citizen Questions** – When Councilmembers receive questions or concerns from citizens, staff will provide the necessary information before a response is given. Councilmembers can refer questions and concerns from citizens to the City Administrator or appropriate department director for resolution. City staff should report back to the City Council on the resolution in a timely fashion.

**Confidential Information** – Councilmembers are subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practice Act as are city staff and, as such, 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 Councilmember has knowledge or reason to believe there will be a large or emotionally-charged gathering of residents in 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.

**Conflict of Interest** – In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the public good, Councilmembers or members of a board or commission shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a financial interest or where they have an

organizational responsibility or a personal relationship that would present a conflict of interest under applicable State law.

Except as permitted by law, a councilmember or member of a board or commission must disclose a potential conflict of interest for the public record and refrain from participating in the discussion and vote when a matter comes before that person which: (1) Affects the person's financial interests or those of a business with which the person is associated, unless the effect on the person or business is no greater than on other members of the same business classification, profession, or occupation; or (2) Affects the financial interests of an organization in which the person participates as a member of the governing body, unless the person serves in that capacity as the City's representative.

**Social Media** – The City requires Councilmembers and board or commission members to act in a prudent manner with regard to postings on social media sites.

### ***Implementation***

**Orientation** – This Code of Conduct shall be included in the regular orientation for new Councilmembers. Following each election, the new council shall ratify this Code of Conduct by resolution.

**Compliance and Enforcement** – Councilmembers are responsible for assuring that the Code of Conduct is understood and followed, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of the Lino Lakes city government.

### ***Remedies***

The City Council is responsible for policing 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 by majority vote whether:

- 1) A letter is sent to the offending Councilmember stating that he/she failed to observe the Code of Conduct and requesting that the inappropriate behavior be redressed; or,
- 2) The Councilmember is formally sanctioned by resolution at a Council Meeting.

*Resolution 06-58 adopting this Code of Conduct was approved by the Lino Lakes City Council on April 10, 2006. This Code of Conduct was amended November 22, 2010, October 8, 2018, and February 12, 2024.*