



MEETING DATE: December 9, 2025

FROM: Jon Kennedy

RE: Adoption of Updated Code of Conduct for City Council Members

BACKGROUND:

The City of Isleton's existing Code of Conduct for City Council Members was adopted in 2008 and has not been updated since. The 2024-25 Grand Jury Report recommended that the City review and revise the policy to reflect current expectations, clarify council-staff boundaries, and strengthen provisions related to appropriate use of information and interactions with staff.

Staff has reviewed the 2008 document, evaluated areas in need of modernization, and incorporated updates based on best practices in council-manager governance, recent organizational experience, and findings identified in the Grand Jury report. The resulting revised Code of Conduct clarifies behavioral expectations, strengthens protections against misuse of information, and better delineates the roles of individual councilmembers versus the City Manager and staff.

DISCUSSION:

The updated Code of Conduct maintains foundational principles from the 2008 version while adding clearer standards for:

- Use of information obtained through official capacity
- Councilmember involvement in administrative or staff-related matters
- Expectations for respectful and professional interactions
- Enforcement procedures and accountability mechanisms

The revisions are intended to improve transparency, reinforce council-manager governance, and provide clearer guidelines for consistent and fair application.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the updated Code of Conduct for City Council Members as presented

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. PROPOSED CODE OF CONDUCT 2025
- B. CURRENT CODE OF CONDUCT COUNCIL MEMBERS

CITY OF ISLETON

Code of Conduct for City Council Members

Effective Date: 12/09/2025

Adopted by City Council: 12/09/2025

1. Acts in the Public Interest

City Council Members will work for the common good of the people of Isleton and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the City Council.

2. Dedicated Service in Compliance with the Law

City Council members will not exceed their authority, breach the law or City policy, nor ask others to do so. They will work in cooperation with each other, other public officials, and staff.

3. Fair and Equal Treatment

Preferential consideration upon the request or petition of any individual shall not be given. No person shall receive special advantages beyond that which are available to any similarly situated citizen or staff member. The City Council will fully comply with all City policies regarding the fair treatment of staff, including the City's policy on the prevention of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, at all events where City Council members and staff may be present.

4. Use of Information and Avoidance of Personal Advantage

City Council members shall not use, disclose, or distribute any information, whether confidential or non-confidential, obtained through their official role, for personal, political, financial, or professional gain.

Council members shall not use such information to provide special benefits or disadvantages to themselves or to any individual, business, or organization.

5. No Discrimination in Appointments

No person shall be appointed to, removed from, or in any way favored or discriminated against with respect to any appointive administrative office because of race, color, national origin (including language), age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, medical condition, or marital status, as defined by applicable state or federal laws, if otherwise qualified for the position or office.

6. Democratic Process

During City Council meetings, City Council members will listen attentively and courteously to all public discussions and avoid interrupting other City Council members, staff, or other speakers, except as may be permitted by established rules of order. City Council members will focus on the business at hand and refrain from making personal comments that are not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.

7. Respectful Relationships

The professional and personal conduct of City Council members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. City Council members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or attacks upon character, motives, ethics, or morals of other members of the Council, City staff, or members of the public.

8. Policy Role of Members

Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of city government. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information, and analysis provided by the public, city staff, and any committees established by the City Council.

Members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

Members should refrain from:

- Disrupting staff from the conduct of their jobs
- Involvement in administrative functions, except when explicitly authorized by a majority vote of the City Council
- Attending staff meetings unless requested by staff

9. Constructive Workplace Environment

City Council members support the maintenance of a constructive work environment for staff, the public, and businesses dealing with the City. Council members should recognize their special role in dealings with staff and the public, and will avoid any conduct that creates the perception of inappropriate direction. Council members will not express concerns about the performance of a staff member in public, to the staff member directly, or to the staff member's manager. Concerns about staff member performance will only be made to the City Manager through private conversation or correspondence. Members of the City Council will use a closed session to evaluate the work performance of their appointees: the City Manager and the City Attorney.

10. Implementation

The City is committed to maintaining a healthy, fulfilling, and respectful workplace. To that end, every Council member is expected to observe the foregoing policies and rules when engaged in City business. Council members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they have read and understood this Code of Conduct. This Code shall be reviewed annually by the City Council and Council members shall sign a statement at that time re-affirming that they have read and understand the current Code of Conduct.

11. Enforcement

Complaints alleging a violation of this Code of Conduct by a Council member should be directed to the City Manager or the City Attorney for purposes of determining an appropriate course of action.

The goal of enforcement of this Code of Conduct is corrective, rather than penal, and a progressive approach to curing violations shall be employed, beginning with informal methods and proceeding to more formal methods as necessary. If appropriate, informal counseling and instruction shall be utilized to correct the member's behavior prior to recommending imposition of sanctions, which would need to be ratified by a majority of the City Council.

Should less drastic measures fail, the City Council may in a public meeting impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- Reprimand
- Condemnation
- Censure
- Travel or expense reimbursement restrictions
- Loss of committee or liaison assignments

- Removal from an appointed commission or board
- Other penalties as may be applicable under the circumstances

12. Social Media and Public Communications

City Council members recognize that statements made on social media may be interpreted as official City positions, may influence staff or the public, and may raise concerns under the Brown Act.

Council members shall:

- Refrain from engaging in discussions, comments, or “likes” on social media that relate to matters within the City’s jurisdiction and that may later come before the Council for action;
- Avoid responding to, endorsing, or amplifying posts by others in a way that may constitute a serial meeting under the Brown Act;
- Not use social media to criticize or direct City staff, influence administrative processes, or pressure staff responses;
- Not share information obtained through their official role, whether confidential or non-confidential, for personal, political, or financial advantage;
- Maintain professional, respectful communication consistent with the Council’s role as policy makers and the City Manager’s role in administration.

Council members may share general information, public notices, or personal opinions, provided such communication does not interfere with City operations or compromise the integrity of Council proceedings.

I affirm that I have read and understand the City of Isleton Code of Conduct for City Council Members.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

City of Isleton
Code of Conduct for City Council Members

Effective Date: 01/24/2008

Adopted by City Council: 01/23/2008

1. **Acts in the Public Interest:**
City Council Members will work for the common good of the people of Isleton and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the City Council.
2. **Dedicated Service in Compliance with the Law:**
City Council members will not exceed their authority, breach the law or City policy, nor ask others to do so. They will work in cooperation with each other, other public officials, and staff.
3. **Fair and Equal Treatment:**
Preferential consideration upon the request or petition of any individual shall not be given. No person shall receive special advantages beyond that which are available to any similarly situated citizen or staff member. The City Council will fully comply with all City policies regarding the fair treatment of staff, including the City's policy on the prevention of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, at all events where City Council members and staff may be present.
4. **No Disclosure of Confidential Information:**
No City Council member shall willfully or knowingly disclose to any other person confidential information acquired by him or her in the course of and by reason of his or her official duties. Nor shall any City Council member use any such confidential information for the purpose of personal or political interests, or pecuniary gain.
5. **No Discrimination in Appointments:**
No person shall be appointed to, removed from, or in any way favored or discriminated against with respect to any appointive administrative office because of race, color, national origin (including language), age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, disability, medical condition, or marital status, as defined by applicable state or federal laws, if otherwise qualified for the position or office.
6. **Democratic Process:**
During City Council meetings, City Council members will listen attentively and courteously to all public discussions and avoid interrupting other City Council members, staff, or other speakers, except as may be permitted by established rules of order. City Council members will focus on the business at hand and refrain from making personal comments that are not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.

7. **Respectful Relationships:**

The professional and personal conduct of City Council members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. City Council members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or attacks upon character, motives, ethics, or morals of other members of the Council, City staff, or members of the public.

8. **Policy Role of Members:**

Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of city government. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information, and analysis provided by the public, city staff, and any committees established by the City Council.

Members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

Members should refrain from:

- Disrupting staff from the conduct of their jobs
- Involvement in administrative functions, without the approval of a majority of the Council
- Attending staff meetings unless requested by staff

9. **Constructive Workplace Environment:**

City Council members support the maintenance of a constructive work environment for staff, the public, and businesses dealings with the City. Council members should recognize their special role in dealings with staff and the public, and will avoid any conduct that creates the perception of inappropriate direction. Council members will not express concerns about the performance of a staff member in public, to the staff member directly, or to the staff member's manager. Concerns about staff member performance will only be made to the City Manager through private conversation or correspondence. Members of the City Council will use a closed session to evaluate the work performance of their appointees: the City Manager and the City Attorney.

10. **Implementation:**

The City is committed to maintaining a healthy, fulfilling, and respectful workplace. To that end, every Council member is expected to observe the foregoing policies and rules when engaged in City business. Council members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they have read and understood this Code of Conduct. This Code shall be reviewed annually by the City Council and Council members shall sign a statement at that time re-affirming that they have read and understand the current Code of Conduct.

11. Enforcement:

Complaints alleging a violation of this Code of Conduct by a Council member should be directed to the City Manager or the City Attorney for purposes of determining an appropriate course of action.

The goal of enforcement of this Code of Conduct is corrective, rather than penal, and a progressive approach to curing violations shall be employed, beginning with informal methods and proceeding to more formal methods as necessary. If appropriate, informal counseling and instruction shall be utilized to correct the member's behavior prior to recommending imposition of sanctions, which would need to be ratified by a majority of the City Council.

Should less drastic measures fail, the City Council may in a public meeting impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- Reprimand
- Condemnation
- Censure
- Travel or expense reimbursement restrictions
- Loss of committee or liaison assignments
- Removal from an appointed commission or board
- Other penalties as may be applicable under the circumstances

I affirm that I have read and understand the City of Isleton Code of Conduct for City Council Members.

Signature

Date