



Administrative Policy

Title: Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials					
Administered By: Management Services (City Council)					
Policy No.	Issue Date	Revision Date	Dept. Head Approved	City Manager Approved	Mayor Approved
07400.009	05-18-22	N/A	DocuSigned by: <i>Jacob Ellis</i> DS <small>8CB6AE0895944B4...</small>	DocuSigned by: <i>Jacob Ellis</i> <small>8CB6AE0895944B4...</small>	DocuSigned by: <i>Wes Speake</i> <small>01041F1BC3B5463...</small>

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE

Section 1.1 General Purpose

This policy is adopted pursuant to, and implements the provisions of, Chapter 2.09 of the Corona Municipal Code. The purpose of this policy is to assure that all elected and appointed officials conduct themselves in a manner that will instill public confidence and trust in the fair operation and integrity of Corona's City government. Except to the extent expressly provided for herein, this policy shall apply to all elected positions, including members of the City Council and the elected City Treasurer, and all persons appointed by the City Council to the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees.

Section 1.2 Superseded Policies

This policy supersedes and replaces the following policies, which are hereby eliminated in their entirety and are of no further force and effect:

- None, though it does supersede Section 2.09.050 (Proper Conduct and Professionalism) of the Corona Municipal Code.

ARTICLE II - DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

Section 2.1 Definitions

Unless the context specifically indicates otherwise, the meaning of the terms used in this policy shall be as provided for in Chapter 2.09 of the Corona Municipal Code.

Section 2.2 General Scope

Unless otherwise stipulated herein, this policy applies to all City elected and appointed officials as defined herein.

Section 2.3 Exemptions from Scope

None.

ARTICLE III – CODE OF CONDUCT

Section 3.1 Conduct Among Officials

1. *In Public Meetings:*

- a) *Use of formal titles* –During public meetings, officials should refer to one another using appropriate titles such as Mayor, Vice Mayor, Council Member, Chair, Commissioner, or Board Member followed by the individual’s last name.
- b) *Practice civility and decorum in discussions and debate*– Officials shall practice rules of decorum during public meeting deliberations in compliance with Chapter 2.12.020 of the Corona Municipal Code. For example, officials should refrain from making personal, irrelevant, slanderous or profane remarks which disrupt the meeting; utter loud, threatening or abusive language which disrupts the meeting; or engage in any other disorderly conduct which disrupts the meetings.
- c) *Respect the role of the presiding officer in maintaining order* –officials are expected to abide the efforts by the presiding officer to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is a disagreement about the agenda or the presiding officer’s actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason. Differences of opinion of what constitutes appropriate versus inappropriate shall be resolved by consensus of the full body conducting the meeting.
- d) *Prepare for public meetings* – City officials are expected to have read and understand, to the best of their ability, agenda items presented to them at public meetings and be prepared to vote on items as presented.

2. *In Private Encounters:*

- a) *Continue respectful behavior in private* – The same level of respect and consideration in differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for public discussions should be maintained in private conversations.
- b) *Written communication should be treated as public documents* - Written notes, voicemail messages, social media posts, and emails should be written as if they will be read publicly.
- c) *Private conversations in Public* –officials must conduct themselves at all times in a manner reflective of the trust placed in them by the public.

Section 3.2 Conduct With City Staff

1. *Be professional in communication with staff* – Communications from officials to staff should be respectful, considerate, and professional. Insulting, disrespectful, rude, or unprofessional behavior toward staff is inappropriate and unacceptable.
2. *Appropriately direct questions/inquiries:*
 - a) *General* – Officials’ communications with City staff should be limited to normal City business hours unless special circumstances warrant otherwise.
 - b) *Requests for information.* – Questions of City staff by Council Members, and/or requests for additional information or research on an issue, should be directed to the City Manager who will determine the appropriate individual or department to fulfill the request.
 - c) *Routine informational inquiries* – Council Members may contact the Department Directors for simple, clarifying, routine information that is available to the general public. Under these circumstances, the Council Member will be treated no differently than the general public and the Council Member shall not use their elected status to secure preferential treatment.
3. *Do not disrupt City staff from their jobs* – Officials should avoid in person visits or phone calls that disrupt City staff from performing their day-to-day job functions.
4. *Never publicly criticize an individual staff member* – Officials should never express concerns about the performance of an individual city staff member in public, to the staff member directly, or to the staff member’s manager. Comments about the performance of an individual staff member should only be made to the City Manager, or City Attorney as appropriate, through private correspondence or conversation.
5. *Do not get involved in administrative functions* – Officials must not attempt to influence City staff’s opinions or recommendations on hiring, awarding of contracts, selecting of consultants, processing of development applications, writing staff reports, making presentations, or the granting of City licenses and permits.
6. *Inquire with City staff before corresponding with the public on operational issues* – To prevent conflicting statements or duplications, before corresponding on an operational issue, Council Members should check with the City Manager to see if an official City response has already been sent or is in progress.
7. *Limit requests for additional staff support* – Basic administrative support for routine issues is provided to Council Members. Requests for additional staff support, even in high priority or emergency situations, should be made to the City Manager.
8. *Do not solicit political support from staff* – Officials should not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support lists,

etc.) from City staff. City staff may, as private citizens with constitutional rights, support political candidates, but all such activities must be conducted away from the workplace.

Section 3.3 Conduct With The Public

1. *In Public Meetings:*
 - a) *Be welcoming to speakers and actively listen* – In the interest of courtesy and decorum, officials should listen patiently to various opinions from all members of the public. It can be disconcerting to speakers to have officials not look at them when they are speaking. It is okay to look down at documents or take notes, but reading for a long period of time or looking around the room gives the appearance of disinterest and may unintentionally offend the speaker. As a public official, it is important to be aware of facial expressions, especially those that could be misinterpreted.
 - b) *Be fair and equitable in allocating public comment time to individual speakers* – Public comment provides the opportunity for the public to provide input and feedback to city officials on issues that are of importance to them. No speaker will be turned away unless he or she exhibits inappropriate behavior in violation of Section 2.12.020 of the Corona Municipal Code.
 - c) *Maintain an open mind* – City officials should seek to maintain an open mind about issues for consideration and should refrain from sharing opinions or inclinations about upcoming votes until after public comment is received.
 - d) *Ask for clarification but avoid debate and argument* – City officials may ask clarifying questions to better understand an issue, but should refrain from debating or arguing with speakers.
 - e) *No personal attacks* – City officials should refrain from any kind of questioning or comments that may be construed as personal attacks on a speaker.
2. *In Unofficial Settings (Including on Social Media):*
 - a) *Make no promises on behalf of the City Council, board, commission, or city* – It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise action on behalf of the City Council, board, commission, or city, or to promise that city staff will do something specific.
 - b) *Make no personal comments about other city officials* – It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other city officials, their opinions, and actions.
 - c) *Exhibit professional conduct and civility* – City officials' behaviors and comments serve as a model for proper conduct in the City. Honesty, civility, professionalism, and respect for others should be reflected in the words and actions taken by city officials. It is a serious and continuous responsibility.

Section 3.4 Conduct With Other Public Agencies

1. *Be clear about representing the City or personal interests* – When representing the City, officials must support, advocate, and vote the official city position on an issue, not a personal viewpoint. When representing another organization whose position is different from the City, officials should vote in a manner that is consistent with the City’s official position and should withdraw from publicly advocating the other agency’s position if it is contrary to the City’s interest. Officials should be clear about which organizations they represent, or if they are representing their own personal opinion, and inform the Mayor and City Council of their involvement.
2. *Correspondence should be equally clear about representation* – City letterhead may be used when officials are representing the City and the City’s official position. A copy of the official correspondence should be given to the City Manager’s Executive Assistant to be filed as part of the permanent public record. City letterhead should not be used for non-City businesses nor for correspondence of officials representing a personal point of view, or a dissenting point of view from an official city position. Personal stationary paid for by the official and reflecting the individual official’s office, is appropriate.
3. *Be professional and respectful when interacting with officials from other public agencies* – When representing the City, city officials should show the same civility towards officials from other agencies as they would to officials in their own organization.

Section 3.5 City Council Conduct With Boards and Commissions

1. *If attending a board or commission meeting*– Council Members may attend board or commission meetings as authorized by the Brown Act or other applicable laws. However, they should be sensitive to the way any active participation by them could be viewed. When appropriate to be made, any public comments by a Council Member should be clearly made as an individual opinion and not a representation of the position of the City or City Council.
2. *Limit contact with board and commission members to questions of clarification* – It is inappropriate for a Council Member to contact a board or commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual business or developer, and vice versa, or unduly influence on behalf of a specific issue in a way that violates the law or erodes public trust.
3. *Remember that boards and commissions serve the community, not individual Council Members* – The City Council appoints individuals to serve on boards and commissions, and it is the responsibility of boards and commissions to follow policy established by the entire City Council. Board and commission members do not report to individual Council Members, nor should Council Members feel they have the power or right to threaten board and commission members with removal if they disagree about an issue. Appointment and re-appointment to a board or commission should be based on such criteria as expertise, ability to work with staff and the public, and commitment to fulfilling official duties.

4. *Be respectful of diverse opinions* – The primary role of commissions and boards is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Council with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Council Members may have a closer working relationship with some individuals serving on commissions and boards but must be fair and respectful of all citizens serving on commissions and boards.
5. *Keep political support away from public forums* – Commission and board members may offer political support to a Council Member, but not in a public forum while conducting official duties. Conversely, Council Members may support commission, committee or board members who are running for office, but not in an official forum in their capacity as a Council Member.

Section 3.6 Conduct With The Media

1. *High Profile Media Inquiries* – The Mayor or City Manager, or designee, shall be the City’s spokesperson on high profile media inquiries. If an official is contacted by the media on a high-profile issue, the official should consult with the City Manager to ensure accuracy and consistency with city messaging.

Section 3.7 Responsibilities and Enforcement

City officials themselves have the primary responsibility to ensure they understand and adhere to ethical standards, and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the public’s confidence in the integrity of government. The Mayor and Council Members have additional responsibility to intervene when actions of city officials that appear to be in violation of this Code of Conduct are brought to their attention. To this end, therefore, this policy shall be enforceable pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 2.09 of the Corona Municipal Code.

PRIOR VERSIONS

ISSUED: 05-18-22

REVISED: N/A