

# **WINSTON-SALEM GOVERNING BODY**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

*Adopted: February 3, 2025*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The intent of the Code of Conduct is to encourage fair, ethical, and accountable local government in the City of Winston-Salem. The community expects its elected officials, specifically the Mayor and City Council, to be objective and thoughtful in their judgment and actions and to conduct City business openly and in an atmosphere of respect and civility. Additionally, officials are expected to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws of the United States of America, the State of North Carolina, the Winston-Salem City Code of Ordinances, and adopted City policies.

The attitudes, words, and actions of the Mayor and City Council should demonstrate, support, and reflect the principles identified in the Code of Conduct. While it is not possible to anticipate and provide a Code of Conduct that addresses all the situations public officials may face, this Code of Conduct is designed to provide a framework that guides officials as they perform their duties.

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1. The Mayor and members of the Winston-Salem City Council (hereafter denoted as “Governing Body”) will be truthful and forthright with colleagues, City staff, and all others as they make decisions that are in the best interest of the City and its residents.
2. Members of the Governing Body have no individual authority and will refrain from making promises, decisions, or commitments that the elected body has not authorized. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, individual members shall explicitly state they do not represent the entire Winston-Salem Governing Body. In their capacity as appointed members of other boards, (e.g. PTRC), Governing Body members are permitted to vote on routine matters which impact that specific board. However, prior approval from the Governing Body is necessary if a member will vote on significant items directly involving or impacting the City.
3. Members of the Governing Body shall comply fully with the State of North Carolina State Government Ethics Act (G.S. Chapter 138A) and will not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office, which are not available to the public in general. Governing Body members shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors, or promises of future benefits which might compromise their ability to make fair decisions or give the appearance of being compromised.
4. The Governing Body shall respect the confidentiality of information specified as such and acknowledge that information shared in a closed session shall remain confidential, unless otherwise authorized by the full Governing Body.
5. The professional and personal conduct of the Governing Body must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Governing Body, City staff, or the public.

6. Members of the Governing Body shall regularly attend and prepare for each Council and committee meeting and review the information provided by City staff.
  7. Public resources, including City staff time, equipment, and supplies or facilities, that are not available to the public in general shall not be used by Governing Body for private gain or personal purposes.
  8. It is expected that the Governing Body will listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body and focus on the business at hand. Members of the Governing Body agree to treat all persons, statements, and transactions in a fair and equitable manner, giving due consideration to the merits of the issue before making a decision.
  9. The Governing Body will, through its actions and performance, contribute to a strong organization that exemplifies transparency and open communication.
  10. The Governing Body and its individual members will practice the governance role and focus on developing a vision and establishing policies. The daily management of the City's departments is delegated to the City Manager, as prescribed by the Governing Body.
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The Code of Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing and is most effective when members are familiar with and agree upon its provisions.