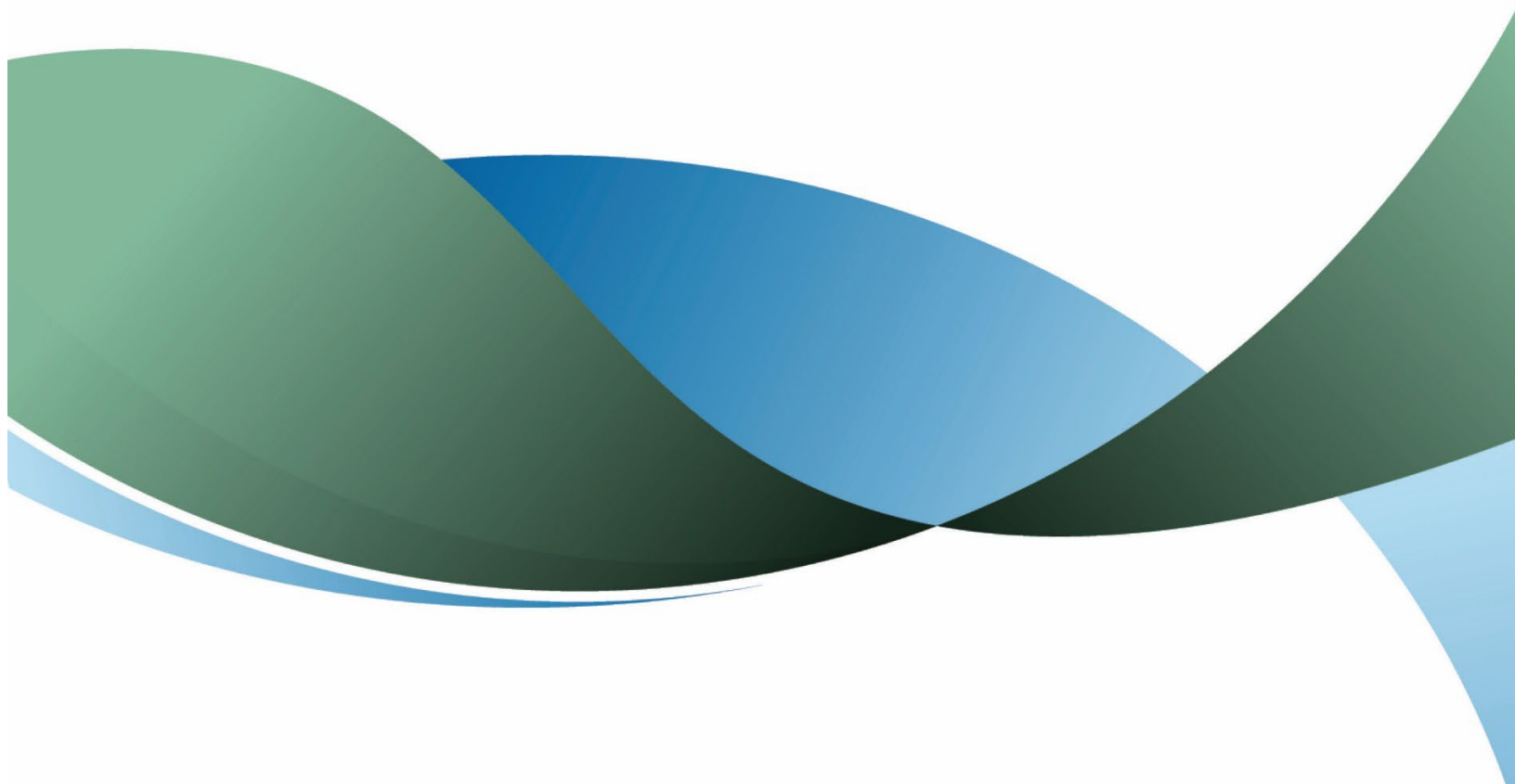




City of Cottonwood
Code of Conduct
for City Officials

January 21, 2025



PREAMBLE

The residents and businesses of the City of Cottonwood (“City”) are entitled to a fair, ethical, and accountable City government. Such a government requires that a City Official:

- Comply with both the letter and the spirit of all laws and policies affecting operations of the City.
- Be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions.
- Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain.
- Conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

To this end, the City Council has adopted this Code of Conduct to build public confidence in the integrity of the City’s Elective and appointed officials and ensure the fair and effective operation of the City’s government.

Elected and appointed officials shall agree to and sign this Code of Conduct at the time of their appointment to public office.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Each City Council Member, City Manager, City Attorney, City Magistrate, and Board/Commission Member (each a “City Official,” collectively “City Officials”) shall adhere to the following principles:

1. ACT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their principal concern, a City Official shall work for the common good of the City and not for any private or personal interest and shall endeavor to treat all persons, claims, and transactions in a fair and equal manner.

2. COMPLY WITH ALL LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND CITY POLICIES

A City Official shall comply with the laws of the United States, the State of Arizona, and the City in the performance of their public duties. These laws include but are not limited to: The United States and Arizona constitutions, the City of Cottonwood Municipal Code, and City ordinances and policies.

3. CONDUCT BUSINESS IN A MANNER THAT IS RESPECTFUL

A City Official shall refrain from abusive conduct, verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the City Council, Boards, Commissions, Committees, staff, and the public.

4. RESPECT THE PROCESSES ESTABLISHED BY THE CITY COUNCIL

Duties shall be performed in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council.

5. FULLY PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC MEETINGS WHEN PRESENT

A City Official shall inform themselves of public issues, listen attentively to public discussions before the body, and focus on the business at hand.

6. MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON MERIT

A City Official's decision shall be based upon the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

7. COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND RESPECTFULLY

A City Official shall share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration. When disagreements or differing opinions arise, a City Official shall present their disagreement or opinion in a professional manner.

8. DISCLOSE KNOWLEDGE OF CORRUPTION

Each City Official shall take an oath upon assuming office, pledging to uphold the constitution and laws of the City, state, and federal government. As part of this oath, a City Official commits to disclosing to the City Council, City Attorney, and/or City Manager any behavior or action that may qualify as corruption, abuse, fraud, bribery, or other violations of the law.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the public good, a City Official shall not use their official position to influence government decisions in which they have a financial interest as defined in Arizona Revised Statutes § 38-503, or where they have an organizational responsibility or a personal relationship that would present a conflict of interest under applicable state laws, regulations, or Attorney General Opinions.

10. NOT ACCEPT GIFTS OR FAVORS THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC

A City Official shall not take advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain by virtue of their public offices that are not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting gifts, favors, or promises of future benefits that might compromise their independent judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

11. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

A City Official shall respect and preserve the confidentiality of information provided to them concerning the confidential 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.

12. NO REPRESENTATION OF THIRD-PARTY PRIVATE INTERESTS

In keeping with their role as stewards of the public's trust, a City Official shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of a third-party before the City Council or any board, commission or committee or proceeding of the City, unless expressly permitted to do so by law.

13. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD

A City Official is a representative of the City of Cottonwood, and when in public, shall conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. To the best of their ability, a City Official shall represent the official policies and positions of the City Council. When presenting personal opinions or positions, a City Official shall explicitly state that those personal opinions or positions do not represent the Council or the City.

14. REFRAINING FROM IMPROPER INFLUENCE

A City Official shall refrain from using their position to improperly influence the deliberations or decisions of the Council, City staff, boards, commission, or committees.

15. COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

City Officials shall respect and adhere to the Council-Manager form of government of the City.

City Council shall:

- Hire, Fire, and supervise City Manager
- Set the strategic direction for the City
- Consider and approve budget and monitor performance relative to those items
- Consider and approve policy decisions
- Consider and approve variances and rezoning requests
- Appoint citizens to citizen advisory boards and commissions

City Council shall not:

- Hire and fire staff
- Direct the activities of staff, other than the City Manager
- Individually approve policies and projects
- Individually commit City resources or staff to specific causes
- Individually enforce policies and City Code
- Individually speak or prepare official correspondence on behalf of the City unless authorized by the City Council

16. PROMOTION OF A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

City Officials shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive environment for residents, businesses, and City employees.

17. IMPLEMENTATION

These standards shall be included in the regular orientations for City Officials. All members shall sign a statement affirming they read and understand the City's Code of Conduct

18. COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

It is the intent of the City Council to educate, and if necessary, impose disciplinary measures on a Council member who violates the Code of Conduct. Each City Official has the responsibility to adhere to and hold their colleagues accountable regarding this Code of Conduct, recognizing that the ethical standards established herein are essential to building and maintaining the public's confidence in the integrity of City government.

City Council does not have the authority to remove another member. At the discretion of the Council, sanctions may be imposed for violating the Code of Conduct or engaging in other misconduct. These actions may be applied individually or in combination. They include, but are not limited to:

- a. Public Admonishment — A reproof or warning directed to a Council Member about a particular type of behavior that violates City policy.
- b. Revocation of Special Privileges — A revocation of a Council Member's Council Committee assignments, including standing and ad hoc committees, regional boards and commissions, and community-generated board/ committee appointments. Other revocations may include temporary suspension of official travel, conference participation, and ceremonial titles.
- c. Censure — A formal statement or resolution by the Council officially reprimanding a Council Member.

19. COMPLAINT AND RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Each City Official will hold themselves and each other accountable and when there is a suspected violation of the Code of Conduct, will discuss with the City Manager and/or the Mayor.

If further action is required, the recommended steps are as follows:

- a. A complaint regarding a violation of the Code of Conduct may be filed with the Mayor, the City Manager, or the City Attorney through the City Clerk.

- b. Upon receiving a complaint, the person receiving the complaint, in conjunction with the City Attorney, may conduct a preliminary investigation before recommending any action.
- c. Following such a preliminary investigation into the complaint, the Investigator may then either take no action or place the matter on a future City Council agenda with a recommendation for consideration.

This Code of Conduct shall be considered to be a summary of ethical conduct required of City Officials.

**CITY OF COTTONWOOD
CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CITY OFFICIALS
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

I, _____, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the **City of Cottonwood Code of Conduct for City Officials**.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Date: _____

“Inspiring a Vibrant Community”