

## CODE OF ETHICS

### PREAMBLE

The residents and businesses of Paso Robles are entitled to have fair, ethical, and accountable local government. Such a government requires that:

- ▶ Public officials comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting operations of the government;
- ▶ Public officials be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions;
- ▶ Public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- ▶ Public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

To this end, the Paso Robles City Council has adopted this Code of Ethics to encourage public confidence in the integrity of local government and its operation.

### PUBLIC INTEREST

Advisory Body and Commission Members will work for the common good of the people of Paso Robles and not for any private or personal interest, and they will endeavor to treat all persons, claims, and transactions in a fair and equitable manner.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of California, and the City in the performance of their public duties.

### CONDUCT

Advisory Body and Commission Members are expected to exercise a duty of care in carrying out their responsibilities, which includes devoting sufficient time to carefully review and fully understand the matters that come before them.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall act with civility towards all and shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of others.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall inform themselves on public issues; listen attentively to public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration that they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST<sup>1</sup>

Advisory Body and Commission Members 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 personal relationship that would present a conflict of interest under applicable State law.

In accordance with the law, members shall timely file with the City Clerk a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700) and, if they have a conflict of interest regarding a particular decision, refrain from participating in that decision, unless otherwise permitted by law.<sup>2</sup> Advisory Body and Commission Members shall participate biennially in Ethics Training seminars as required by state law.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall not take advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office, which are not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting gifts, favors, or promises of future benefits that might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

Advisory Body and Commission Members 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 other private interests.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall not use public resources (such as City equipment, staff, and facilities) not available to the public for private gain or personal purposes.

No Advisory Body or Commission Member shall appear before the body on which that member serves to advocate on behalf of or to represent the private interests of third parties.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall represent the official policies and positions of the Advisory Body if authorized by the Advisory Body. When presenting their personal opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they are doing so in their personal capacity, and not as a representative of the Advisory Body or the City.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or decisions of City commissions, boards, or committees.

## POLICY ROLE

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall respect and adhere to the Council-Manager structure of Paso Robles City government as provided in State law and the Municipal Code.

Advisory Body and Commission Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive environment for residents, businesses, and City employees.

## COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

Advisory Body and Commission Members themselves are primarily responsible for ensuring they understand and meet the ethical standards set forth herein.

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<sup>1</sup> State laws governing conflicts of interest are written to ensure that actions are taken in the public interest. These laws are complex and fact dependent. Advisory Board Members should notify the City Manager if they have a question about the conflict-of-interest rules or should consult with the Fair Political Practices Commission for guidance in advance.