

100.3 CODE OF ETHICS.

The proper operation of democratic government requires that public officials and employees be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policy be made in proper channels of the governmental structure; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals, there is hereby established in this Chapter a Code of Ethics for all Town of Cross Plains officials and employees, whether elected or appointed, paid or unpaid, including members of boards, committees and commissions of the Town, as well as any individuals who are candidates for elective office as soon as such individuals file nomination papers with the Town.

The purpose of this Ethics Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all such officials and employees by setting forth those acts or actions that are incompatible with the best interests of the Town of Cross Plains and by directing disclosure by such officials and employees of private financial or other interests in matters affecting the Town. The Town Board believes that a Code of Ethics for the guidance of elected and appointed officials and employees will help them avoid conflicts between their personal interests and their public responsibilities, will improve standards of public service and will promote and strengthen the faith and confidence of the citizens of this Town in their elected and appointed officials and employees. The Town Board hereby reaffirms that each elected and appointed Town official and employee holds his/her or her position as a public trust, and any intentional effort to realize substantial personal gain through official conduct is a violation of that trust. The provisions and purpose of this Ethics Code and such rules and regulations as may be established are hereby declared to be in the best interests of the Town of Cross Plains.

Definitions.

(a) Public Official. Those persons serving in statutory elected or appointed offices provided for in Chapter 60 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and all members appointed to boards, committees and commissions established or appointed by the Town Chairperson and/or Town Board pursuant to this Code of Ordinances, whether paid or unpaid.

(b) Public Employee. Any person excluded from the definition of a public official who is employed by the Town.

(c) Anything of Value. Any money or property, favor, service, payment, advance, forbearance, loan, or promise of future employment, but does not include compensation or expense reimbursement paid by the Town, honorariums, fees and expenses under the standards and reporting requirements set forth in Sec. 19.56, Wis. Stats., campaign contributions as regulated by this Code or hospitality extended for a purpose unrelated to Town business by a person other than a firm, corporation, partnership, or joint venture.

(d) Business. Any corporation, partnership, proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, association, organization, self-employed individual or any other legal entity which engages in profit-making activities.

(e) Personal Interest. Any interest arising from blood or marriage relationships or from close business or political association, whether or not any financial interest is involved.

(f) Significant Interest. Owning or controlling, directly or indirectly, at least ten percent (10%) or Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) of the outstanding stock of any business.

(g) Financial Interest. Any interest which shall yield, directly or indirectly, a monetary or other material benefit to the officer or employee or to any person employing or retaining the services of the officer or employee.

Statutory Standards. There are certain provisions of the Wisconsin Statutes which should, while not set forth herein, be considered an integral part of any Code of Ethics. Accordingly, the provisions of the following sections of the Wisconsin Statutes, as from time to time amended, are made a part of this Code of Ethics and shall apply to public officials and employees whenever applicable, to wit:

(a) Sec. 946.10. Bribery of Public Officers and Employees.

(b) Sec. 946.11. Special Privileges from Public Utilities.

(c) Sec. 946.12. Misconduct in Public Office.

(d) Sec. 946.13. Private Interest in Public Contract Prohibited.

Public officials and employees are agents of public purpose and hold office for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this State and carry out impartially the laws of the nation, state and municipality, to observe in their official acts the highest standards of morality and to discharge faithfully the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest must be their prime concern.

Officials and employees should adhere to the rules of work and performance established as the standard for their positions by the appropriate authority.

Officials and employees should not exceed their authority or breach the law or ask others to do so, and they should work in full cooperation with other public officials and employees unless prohibited from so doing by law or by officially recognized confidentiality of their work.

Members of the Town staff are expected to follow their appropriate professional code of ethics. Staff members shall file a copy of such professional ethics codes with the Town Clerk-Treasurer. The Town Board shall notify the appropriate professional ethics board of any ethics violations involving Town employees covered by such professional standards.

Use of Public Property. No official or employee shall use or permit the unauthorized use of Town-owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for personal convenience or profit, except when such services are available to the public generally or are provided as Town policy for the use of such official or employee in the conduct of official business, as authorized by the Town Board or authorized board, commission or committee.

Obligations to Citizens. No official or employee shall grant any special consideration, treatment or advantage or any citizen beyond that which is available to every other citizen. No official or employee shall use or attempt to use his/her position with the Town to secure any advantage, preference or gain, over and above his/her rightful remuneration and benefits, for himself or for a member of his/her immediate family.

Political Contributions. No official shall personally solicit from any Town employee a contribution to a political campaign committee for which the person subject to this Chapter is a candidate or treasurer.

Financial and Personal Interest Prohibited.

(a) No official or employee of the Town, whether paid or unpaid, shall engage in any business or transaction or shall act in regard to financial or other personal interest, direct or indirect, which is incompatible with the proper discharge of official duties in the public interest contrary to the provisions of this Chapter or which would tend to impair independence of judgment or action in the performance of official duties.

(b) Any member of the Town Board who has a financial interest or personal interest in any proposed legislation before the Town Board shall disclose on the records of the Town Board the nature and extent of such interest; such official shall not participate in debate or vote for adoption or defeat of such legislation. If the matter before the Town Board involves a member's personal interest with

persons involved, the member may participate in debate or discussion and vote on the matter following disclosure, unless an ordinance or contract is involved; if an ordinance or contract is involved, such official shall not participate in debate or discussion and vote on the matter.

(c) Any non-elected official, other than a Town employee, who has a financial interest or personal interest in any proposed legislative action of the Town Board or any board, commission or committee upon which the official has any influence or input or of which the official is a member that is to make a recommendation or decision upon any item which is the subject of the proposed legislative action shall disclose on the records of the Town Board or the appropriate board, commission or committee the nature and extent of such interest. Such official shall not participate in debate or discussion or vote for adoption or defeat of such legislation.

(d) Any Town employee who has a financial interest or personal interest in any proposed legislative action of the Town Board or any board, commission or committee upon which the employee has any influence or input, or of which the employee is a member, that is to make a recommendation or decision upon any item which is the subject of the proposed legislative action shall disclose on the records of the Town Board or the appropriate board, commission or committee the nature and extent of such interest.

Disclosure of Confidential Information. No official or employee shall, without proper legal authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the property, government or affairs of the Town, nor shall such information be used to advance the financial or other private interests of the official or employee or others.

Incompatible Employment. No official or employee shall engage in or accept private employment or render service, for private interest, when such employment or service is incompatible with the proper discharge of his/her official duties or would tend to impair such official or employee's independence of judgment or action in the performance of his/her official duties, unless otherwise permitted by law and unless disclosure is made as hereinafter provided.

Gifts and Favors.

(a) No official or employee shall accept or offer to accept anything of value from any person who, to his/her knowledge, is interested directly or indirectly, or is seeking an interest, directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever in business dealings with the Town, or from any person who conducts activities which are regulated by the Town, or from any person who has interests which may be substantially affected by actions of the Town.

(b) No official or employee shall accept or offer to accept anything of value that may tend to influence such official or employee in the discharge of his/her duties, or grant in the discharge of his/her or her duties any improper favor, service, or thing of value.

(c) Gifts received under unusual circumstances should be referred to the Town Board within ten (10) days for recommended disposition.

(d) An official or employee is not to accept hospitality if, after consideration of the surrounding circumstances, it could reasonably be concluded that such hospitality would not be extended were it not for the fact that the guest, or a member of the guest's immediate family, was a Town official or employee. Participation in celebrations, grand openings, open houses, informational meetings and similar events are excluded from this prohibition. This paragraph further shall not be construed to prevent candidates for elective office from accepting hospitality from citizens for the purpose of supporting the candidate's campaign.

Representing Private Interests Before The Town Board or Plan Commission.

(a) Non-elected Town officials and employees shall not appear on behalf of any private person (other than him or herself, his/her or her spouse or minor children) before any Town agency, board, commission or the Town Board if the official or employee or any board, commission or committee of which the official or employee is a member has any jurisdiction, discretion or control over the matter which is the subject of such representation.

(b) Elected Town officials may appear before Town agencies on behalf of constituents in the course of their duties as representatives of the electorate or in the performance of public or civic obligations. However, the disclosure requirements of Subsection (a) above shall be applicable to such appearances.

Ad Hoc Committee Exceptions. No violation of the conflict of interest restrictions of this Section shall exist, however, where an individual serves on a special ad hoc committee charged with the narrow responsibility of addressing a specific issue or topic in which that individual, or the employee or a client of that individual, has an interest so long as the individual discloses to the Town Board that such interest exists.

Contracts with the Town. No official or employee who, in his/her capacity as such officer or employee, participates in the making of a contract in which such officer or employee has a private pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, or performs in regard to that contract some function requiring the exercise of discretion on the part of such official or employee, shall enter into any contract with the Town unless:

(a) The contract is awarded through a process of public notice and competitive bidding;

(b) The contract or activity is exempt from or otherwise deemed appropriate by Sec. 946.13, Wis. Stats.

(c) The Town Board waives this requirement after determining that it is in the best interest of the Town to do so.

Disclosure of Interest in Legislation. To the extent known, any member of the Town Board who has a financial or personal interest in any proposed legislation before the Board shall disclose on the record of the Board the nature of and extent of such interest. Any other official or employee who has a financial or personal interest in any proposed legislative action of the board and who participates in discussion with or gives official opinions or recommendations to the Board shall disclose on the record of the Board the nature of and extent of such interest.

When an official or employee has doubt as to the applicability of a provision of this Section, such official or employee may apply to the Town Attorney for an advisory opinion. The official or employee shall have the opportunity to present his/her or her interpretation of the facts at issue and of the applicability of provisions of this Section before such advisory decision is made. This Section shall be operative in all instances covered by its provisions, except when superseded by an applicable statutory provision and statutory action is mandatory, or when the application of a statutory provision is discretionary but determined to be more appropriate or desirable. If an official or employee has accurately stated the facts in their request for an advisory opinion, and acts in conformity to the advice rendered in the opinion, the official or employee shall be immune from liability under this section.

This Section governs the proposed hiring of individuals for full-time or part-time work as Town employees who are members of the immediate family of Town employees or elected officials. "Immediate family" includes those relatives by blood or marriage defined in this section as personal interest. Hiring an immediate family member of any current Town employee or elected Town official will be considered only if that individual has the knowledge and skills, experience or other job-related qualifications that warrant consideration for the position. It is required that either the current employee or the relative seeking employment will make the personal interest relationship known to the hiring authority (department head, Town Board or commission) before a hiring decision is made.

A determination that an employee's actions constitute improper conduct under the provisions of this Chapter shall constitute a cause of suspension, removal from office or employment or other disciplinary action. Sanctions, including any disciplinary action, that may affect employees covered under a labor agreement

will be consistent with the terms and conditions set forth in the applicable labor agreement.

No full-time officer or employee of the Town shall engage in other ongoing, significant remunerative employment within or without the Town which is in conflict with the responsibilities or duties the officer or employee performs for the Town. The Town Board may approve such outside employment or activity if it finds that it does not interfere or conflict with such officer's ability to perform his/her duties in an efficient and unbiased manner. Violation of this provision shall be grounds for removal from office of any such officer or employee.

EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Ordinance shall be effective one day following proper publication and posting as required by Wisconsin Statutes and after adoption of this Ordinance by the Town Board.

Dated this _____

Town Chair _____

Sup. 1 _____

Sup. 2 _____

Sup. 3 _____

Sup. 4 _____

Posted: _____

Town Clerk: _____