

CODE OF CONDUCT



Board of Directors of the City of Texarkana, Arkansas

CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CITY OF TEXRAKANA, ARKANSAS

I. General Policy

It is essential to the proper working of city government that:

There is a spirit of working together among members of the Board of Directors of the City of Texarkana, Arkansas, that reflects caring and concern for all those who depend upon the Board to act and advocate for the best interest of the City, its citizens and our community; and

Members of the Board of Directors are expected to be dedicated to the highest ideals of honesty and integrity.

II. Purpose of Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code is to provide a Code of Conduct for the Directors of the City of Texarkana, Arkansas, and set forth ideals to which members of the Board of Directors are expected to aspire. Public service is a very special vocation. It involves a special kind of public trust. Those who are elected to public office are expected by the public not only to follow the law but to go above that and set the standard for integrity, honesty, courtesy, and good stewardship.

If each Director will follow the suggestions in this Code of Conduct contained herein, he/she will have done his/her part to ensure objectivity and promote public confidence in city government. This Code may be more stringent than what is required by law but it does not go beyond what is expected by the citizens of the City of Texarkana. The only enforcement to anything mentioned in the Code which does not have force of law must rely on what is in the heart of each individual director and ultimately with the voters at election time.

III. Mayor

- The Mayor is expected to promote high standards of democratic governance and chairs meetings with efficiency and fairness, never discriminating against any speaker, whether board member or member of the public, based on the speaker's point of view.
- The Mayor will not use his or her authority to thwart the democratic process.
- The Mayor demonstrates honesty and integrity in every action and statement.

IV. Board of Directors

- The Board of Directors demonstrates respect, kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others during meetings.
- The Board of Directors serves as a model of leadership and civility to the municipality.
- The Board of Directors inspires public confidence in Texarkana, Arkansas city government.
- All members of the Board of Directors have equal votes. Board members are expected to treat one another with equal respect.
- Board members will endeavor to inform the City Manager and the City Clerk of plans to be absent from a Board meeting or plans to leave a Board meeting before it is adjourned.
- A Board member recognizes that all electronic transmittals sent or received in performance of their duties as a Board member are subject to the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

V. Principles and Guidelines

The Board of Directors are expected to hold themselves accountable to the following principles and guidelines:

Board Members Conduct with One Another

This Board is composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Despite this diversity, each Board member has chosen to serve in public office in order to preserve and protect the present and the future of the City of Texarkana. This common goal should be acknowledged even as Board members may “agree to disagree” on contentious issues.

1. Practice Civility and Decorum in Discussions and Debate.

Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. This does not allow, however, Board members to make belligerent personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments. No shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening will be tolerated. Therefore:

- Avoid personal comments that could offend other Board members.
- Honor the role of the Mayor in maintaining order.
- Be respectful of other members of the Board of Directors, other boards, commissions, committees, city staff, and the public by refraining from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks.

- Fully participate in Board meetings and other public meetings while demonstrating respect, consideration, and courtesy to others.
- Always treat a fellow Board member with the respect he or she would expect to receive in return.
- Always address citizens, employees, committee members, and fellow Board members with respect.
- Request the opportunity to speak and address the Board through the Mayor, Assistant Mayor, or other member conducting the meeting.
- Recognize fellow Board members and guest speakers by their formal names and appropriate titles; after initial acknowledgement, the terms “Mr.” or “Ms.” may be used.
- Be respectful of others’ time and be brief and prepared in making remarks.
- Be prompt in attending public meetings so that they may begin at the publicly posted time.

2. Board Member Conduct with The Public

Be Polite and Professional to Speakers and Treat Them with Care and Gentleness.

Because personal concerns are often the reason citizens come before the Board to speak, Board members should remember that their behavior will either relax the speaker or push their emotions to a higher level of intensity.

- Limit comments to issues and avoid personal attacks.
- Remain seated when someone is speaking at the podium.
- Give the appearance of active listening.
- Ask for clarification but avoid debate and argument with the public.
- Do not engage in personal attacks of any kind, under any circumstances.
- Make no promises on behalf of the Board or staff.
- Make no personal comments about other Board members.

VI. Principles of Proper Conduct

Proper conduct IS...

- Keeping promises
- Being dependable
- Building a solid reputation
- Participating and being available
- Demonstrating patience
- Showing empathy
- Holding onto ethical principles under stress
- Listening attentively
- Studying thoroughly
- Keeping integrity intact
- Overcoming discouragement
- Going above and beyond, time and time again
- Modeling a professional manner

Proper conduct IS NOT...

- Showing antagonism
- Deliberately lying or misleading
- Speaking recklessly
- Spreading rumors
- Stirring up bad feelings or divisiveness
- Acting in a self-righteous manner

