

# EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS WITH COUNCIL

POLICY NUMBER: CEMS-016

## PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to promote transparency, integrity, and professionalism in all interactions between City employees and City Council members, ensuring that such interactions align with the City's Code of Ethics and standards of professional conduct.

In accordance with the City Charter, this policy is intended to ensure that communication between City employees and the City Council involving day-to-day operations are conducted not only in a fair, transparent, and ethical manner, but also consistent with the management and organizational structure of city government. Employees are expected to prioritize the City's best interests and comply with all guidelines outlined in this policy.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the timely sharing of accurate, factual, and relevant information necessary for City Council to carry out its policy-making responsibilities.

## POLICY:

All City employees are prohibited from lobbying City Council or any individual member of City Council during their work hours, in their official capacity, or in any manner not permitted for the public on any issue under consideration. This includes using their position or any influence gained through their role for personal gain.

**Personal Gain:** Employees must not use their City position or any influence derived from that position for personal benefit. Employees are prohibited from seeking access to City Council members, or others outside their direct chain of command, for purposes of lobbying on matters of personal interest or for personal advantage.

**Adherence to the Code of Ethics:** All employees must comply with the City's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct when engaging with City Council members, regardless of the topic or context.

**Council-Initiated Communication:** This policy does not restrict communication initiated by City Council members. Employees should respond to factual, informational, and technical inquiries that do not advocate for policy positions if they have the information requested and should copy their Department Head and the City Manager. If an employee does not have the answer or the request requires policy interpretation, analysis, or information outside their knowledge or authority, they should refer the Council member to their Department Head and/or the City Manager.

**Meetings and Phone Calls:** Employees may conduct meetings or phone calls with City Council members in accordance with the purpose of this policy with the knowledge of their Department Head, and the City Manager or Deputy City Manager.

**Written Communication:** Except for the Deputy Clerk of Council and the Communications Director (for official press releases), unless otherwise authorized, employees should coordinate written communication to City Council through or with the knowledge of their Department Head and the City Manager or Deputy City Manager.

**Department Heads:** Department Heads needing to provide important information to the City Council should route that information through the City Manager or Deputy City Manager, who will handle it appropriately.

**Whistleblower Protection:** Employees may report suspected illegal activity, fraud, wrongdoing, waste, abuse, or violations of policy or ethical standards involving the City Manager or senior leadership through appropriate reporting channels, consistent with applicable laws and City policies.