

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-13

A RESOLUTION of the City Council of Bainbridge Island, Washington, amending the ethics program for the City of Bainbridge Island in accordance with Chapter 2.07 BIMC.

WHEREAS, Chapter 2.07 BIMC provides that the City Council shall establish, by resolution or ordinance, an ethics program for the City of Bainbridge Island; and

WHEREAS, on May 10, 2006, the City Council passed Resolution No. 2006-25, adopting an ethics program for the City of Bainbridge Island; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has previously amended the ethics program through the passage of Resolution Nos. 2011-07, 2011-13, 2012-11, 2018-10, and 2019-26; and

WHEREAS, the City Council now desires to further update the City's ethics program.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Repeal and Replacement of Ethics Program. The Code of Conduct and Ethics Program adopted by Resolution No. 2019-26 is hereby repealed in its entirety and replaced as shown on **Exhibit A**, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference as if set forth in full.

Section 2. Corrections. The City Clerk, following review by the City Attorney's Office, is authorized to make corrections to **Exhibit A** that are necessary to correct errors in cross references, the numbering of sections or subsections, and other scrivener or clerical errors.

Section 3. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

PASSED by the City Council this 11th day of August, 2020.

APPROVED by the Mayor this this 11th day of August, 2020.



Leslie Schneider, Mayor

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATE:



Christine Brown, CMC, City Clerk

FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK:
PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL:
RESOLUTION NO.

July 24, 2020
August 11, 2020
2020-13

Exhibit A: Code of Conduct and Ethics Program

EXHIBIT A

**CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS PROGRAM**

Resolution No. 2020-13

Effective Date: July 28, 2020

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
ARTICLE I - CODE OF CONDUCT	8
A. Preamble.....	8
B. Core Values	8
1. Service, Helpfulness, Innovation.....	8
2. Integrity	8
3. Equality, Fairness, Mutual Respect	8
4. Responsibility, Stewardship, Recognition.....	8
C. Ethical Principles.....	8
1. Obligations to the Public	8
2. Obligations to Others.....	9
3. Obligations Regarding the Use of Public Resources.....	9
ARTICLE II - CODE OF ETHICS	10
A. Gifts and Compensation	10
1. Limitations on City-Related Gifts and Outside Compensation	10
2. Exceptions to Gift Limitations	10
3. Immediate Family Gift Exception	11
B. Use of City Property by Councilmembers.....	11
C. Confidentiality.....	11
D. Conflict of Interest – General.....	11
1. Applications of Conflict of Interest	11
2. Conflict of Interest Exceptions for Councilmembers	12
3. Conflict of Interest Exceptions for Members of City Committees and Commissions	12
4. Disclosure for Councilmembers	13
E. Conflict of Interest – After Leaving Elected City Office	13
F. Conflict of Interest – Members of City Committees or Commissions and Employment.....	13
G. Conflict of Interest – Family Members of Councilmembers.....	13
1. Appointment of Family Members	13
2. Supervision of Family Members	14
3. Waivers.....	14
H. Conflict of Interest – Contractors	14
I. Conflict of Interest - Individuals Serving on City Committees and Commissions	14
J. Conduct of Public Meetings	14
K. Conflict of Interest – Individuals Serving on the Ethics Board.....	14

ARTICLE III - SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS, CODE OF ETHICS COMPLAINTS, REQUESTS FOR WAIVERS, AND REQUESTS FOR ADVISORY OPINIONS	15
A. Submission and Review of Code of Conduct Complaints	15
B. Submission and Review of Ethics Complaints.....	18
C. Review of Complaints Concerning City Employees.....	21
D. Requests for Advisory Opinions by City Councilmembers or Members of City Committees or Commissions	22
E. Waivers.....	23
F. Effect of Advisory Opinion or Waiver.....	23
ARTICLE IV - HEARING EXAMINER REVIEW AND POSSIBLE SANCTIONS	24
A. Hearing Examiner Review of Article II Complaints	24
B. Action by City Council upon Hearing Examiner’s Findings and Conclusion	25
ARTICLE V - ETHICS BOARD	26
A. Creation, Terms, and Appointments.....	26
1. Membership of Ethics Board.....	26
2. Qualifications of Board Members	26
3. Method of Appointment	26
4. Terms of Appointment.....	26
5. Removal of Board Members.....	27
6. Compensation	27
7. Rules	27
8. Consultation with City Attorney.....	27
9. Liaison to the Ethics Board.	27
B. Training Provided by the Ethics Board	27
C. Training Provided to the Ethics Board	28
D. Annual Report	28
ARTICLE VI - DEFINITIONS	29
“City Committees and Commissions” and “City Committee or Commission”	29
“Confidential Information”	29
“Direct official action”	29
“Direct line of supervision”.....	29
“Fact-finding”	30
“Gift”	30
“Immediate family”	30
“Legislation of General Application”	30
“Major Contractor”.....	30
“Political Action Committee”.....	30
“Question of Fact”.....	30

“Reconciliation”30
“Rule of Necessity”30
ARTICLE VII - CITY COUNCIL REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS
PROGRAM31

CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS PROGRAM

Introduction

All those associated with City government, including Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions, seek to earn and maintain the public's confidence in the City's services and the public's trust in its government. To this end, the decisions and work of those associated with City government must meet the highest ethical standards. It is therefore the purpose of this program to:

1. Articulate the Code of Conduct that will guide the conduct of Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions;
2. Establish a Code of Ethics for Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions;
3. Provide training for Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions on the Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics;
4. Establish a system that enables individuals, Councilmembers, and members of City Committees and Commissions to seek guidance and assistance regarding possible violations of the Code of Conduct or of the Code of Ethics;
5. Provide processes to review possible violations of the Code of Conduct and of the Code of Ethics by Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions; and
6. Maintain an Ethics Board to assist with the administration of the program.

This Code of Conduct and Ethics Program is intended to supplement state and federal law. As such, Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions shall comply with all state and federal laws in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to, the following: the United States and Washington Constitutions; Chapter 42.23 RCW; and Chapter 42.17A RCW.

**ARTICLE I -
CODE OF CONDUCT**

A. Preamble

The City of Bainbridge Island has adopted this Code of Conduct, which consists of the Core Values and Ethical Principles detailed below, to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct among City Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions. The optimal operation of democratic government requires that the City's government be fair and accountable to the people it serves. This Code of Conduct articulated in Article I applies to Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions.

B. Core Values

1. Service, Helpfulness, Innovation

We are committed to providing service to the people of Bainbridge Island and to each other that is courteous, cost effective, and continuously improving.

2. Integrity

We treat one another with honesty and integrity, recognizing that trust is hard won and easily lost. We pledge to promote balanced, consistent, and lawful policies and directives, in keeping with that integrity and the highest standards of this community.

3. Equality, Fairness, Mutual Respect

We pledge to act with the standard of fairness and impartiality in the application of policies and directives and that of equality and mutual respect with regard to interpersonal conduct.

4. Responsibility, Stewardship, Recognition

We accept our responsibility for the stewardship of public resources, and our accountability for the results of our efforts, and we pledge to give recognition for exemplary work.

C. Ethical Principles

1. Obligations to the Public

Following the highest standards of public service, Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions act to promote the public good and preserve the public's trust. In practice, this principle looks like transparency and honesty in all public statements and written communications.

2. Obligations to Others

In order to sustain a culture of ethical integrity, Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions treat each other and the public with respect and are guided by applicable codes of ethics. In practice, this principle looks like:

- a. Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions shall familiarize themselves with the ethical rules governing them (including Chapter 42.23 RCW and this Ethics Program) and obtain periodic education regarding such rules.
- b. Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions shall, in all their interactions, conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates civility and respect for others.

3. Obligations Regarding the Use of Public Resources

In recognition of the importance of stewardship, Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions use and allocate public monies, property, and other resources in a responsible manner that takes into consideration both present and future needs of the community. In practice, this principle looks like:

- a. Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions shall, to the extent possible, seek guidance regarding the use of public resources from staff and other experts, including legal advice from the City Attorney as appropriate, in order to ensure that public resources are used and conserved for the public good.
- b. Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions shall ensure that paid experts and consultants who provide guidance regarding the use of public resources shall be impartial and free of conflicts of interest.

**ARTICLE II -
CODE OF ETHICS**

Except where specifically stated, the rules articulated in Article II apply to Councilmembers and individuals serving on City Committees and Commissions.

A. Gifts and Compensation

1. Limitations on City-Related Gifts and Outside Compensation

Except as permitted under Subsections A.2 and A.3 below, no Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission, or any member of their immediate families, shall, directly or indirectly, accept any gift (as defined below) for a matter connected with or related to their services or duties with the City of Bainbridge Island or accept any non-City compensation for the performance or non-performance of those services or duties.

2. Exceptions to Gift Limitations

The following are exceptions to the limitation on gifts that may be accepted by those individuals subject to Subsection A.1 above:

- a. Unsolicited items of trivial value. "Items of trivial value" means items or services with a value of fifty dollars (\$50.00) or less, such as promotional t-shirts, pens, calendars, books, or other similar items.
- b. Gifts from other City officers, officials, or employees, or their family members on appropriate occasions.
- c. Gifts appropriate to the occasion and reasonable and customary in light of a familial, social, or official relationship of the giver and recipient, such as weddings, funerals, illnesses, holidays, and ground-breaking ceremonies.
- d. Campaign contributions as permitted and reported in accordance with law.
- e. Awards that are publicly presented by a nonprofit organization in recognition for public service if the award is not extraordinary when viewed in light of the position held by the recipient.
- f. Gifts offered while visiting other cities, counties, states, or countries or hosting visitors from other cities, counties, states, or countries, when it would be a breach of protocol to refuse the gift, provided that any such gifts received shall become property of the City.

g. Reasonable and necessary costs to attend a conference or meeting that is directly related to the official or ceremonial duties of the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission, provided that any payment of substantial travel or lodging expenses by any person or entity regulated by the City or doing or seeking to do business with the City must be approved in advance by the Mayor or, if the Mayor is the recipient, by the Deputy Mayor or the Mayor Pro Tem.

3. Immediate Family Gift Exception

It shall not be a violation of Subsection A.1 above for a member of a Councilmember's or a member of a City Committee or Commission's immediate family to accept a gift which arises from an independent relationship, if the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission does not significantly benefit from the gift, and it cannot reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission in the performance of their duties.

B. Use of City Property by Councilmembers

1. Except for limited incidental personal use or emergency circumstances, no Councilmember shall request, permit, or use City vehicles, equipment, materials, or property for personal use, personal convenience, or profit.

2. From the time that a Councilmember declares or publicly states that they intend to run for reelection until the conclusion of the respective general election, that Councilmember shall not request or direct that City funds be used to purchase any media (including newspaper, radio, television, social media, or bulk mailing) that contains the name or image of that Councilmember unless the names or images of all City Councilmembers appear in the media being purchased.

C. Confidentiality

Except as required by law, a Councilmember, former Councilmember, or current or former member of a City Committee or Commission shall not disclose or use privileged, confidential, or proprietary information obtained in executive session or otherwise in the course of their duties as a result of their position.

D. Conflict of Interest – General

1. Applications of Conflict of Interest

Except as permitted in Subsections D.2 or D.3 below, a Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission shall not take any direct official action on a matter if they, or a member of their immediate family:

a. Have any substantial direct or indirect contractual employment related to the matter;

- b. Have other significant financial or private interest in that matter (which includes serving on a Board of Directors for any organization but does not, for Councilmembers, include appointing members to the Salary Commission); or
- c. Are a party to a contract or the owner of an interest in real or personal property that would be significantly affected by that matter. Taking direct official action on, or regarding, legislation of general application does not “significantly affect” real or personal property within the meaning of this Subsection.

2. Conflict of Interest Exceptions for Councilmembers

Subsection D.1 above shall not apply when a Councilmember:

- a. Is required to take or participate in an action based upon the rule of necessity;
- b. Acts as their own representative before the City Council, Hearing Examiner, or any other City board, commission, or agency, provided that the individual does not also participate in any way in the deliberations or decision of the City Council, Hearing Examiner, or that board, commission, or agency related to that matter;
- c. Acquires an interest in bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued by the City if acquired and held on the same terms available to the general public;
- d. Officially participates in the development and adoption of the City's budget; or establishes the pay or benefit plan of City officers, officials, or employees;
- e. Makes decisions on any legislation of general application unless these actions directly affect, or appear to affect, the official's or immediate family member's employment; or
- f. Serves on the governing body of an organization or entity as part of their official duties as a Councilmember of the City.

3. Conflict of Interest Exceptions for Members of City Committees and Commissions

Subsection D.1 above shall not apply to a member of a City Committee or Commission:

- a. Who takes direct official action, as a member of a City Committee or Commission to which that member was appointed based on that member's ownership or lease of certain real property or of that member's ownership of a business located in a certain area of the City, that results in a conflict of interest under Subsection D.1 above due solely to the fact of that member's ownership or lease of the certain real property or of that member's ownership of the business located in a certain area of the City providing the basis for that member's appointment to the City Committee or Commission; provided that the member fully discloses the basis for the conflict of interest under Subsection D.1 during each meeting of the City Committee or Commission in which the conflict of interest under Subsection D.1 occurs or may occur;

- b. Who fully disclose the basis for the conflict of interest under Subsection D.1 above on the public record of the City Committee or Commission and the Committee or Commission votes to allow the member to participate in the discussion or the vote; or
- c. Is required to take action or participate in an action based upon the rule of necessity.

4. Disclosure for Councilmembers

All Councilmembers are required to comply with the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission requirements for financial disclosure. In addition, all Councilmembers shall publicly disclose their financial interest in any matter that comes before them. All Councilmembers shall annually complete a conflict of interest statement to be submitted to the City Clerk by April 15th.

E. Conflict of Interest – After Leaving Elected City Office

- 1. For two (2) years after leaving elected City office, no former Councilmember shall obtain employment in which they will take direct or indirect advantage of matters on which they took direct official action during their service with the City. This includes contractual negotiations or solicitation of business unavailable to others.
- 2. For two (2) years after leaving elected City office, no former Councilmember shall engage in any action or litigation in which the City is involved, on behalf of any other person or entity, when the action or litigation involves an issue on which the person took direct official action while in elected City office.

F. Conflict of Interest – Members of City Committees or Commissions and Employment

While serving on a City Committee or Commission, and for two (2) years after leaving such position, no member of a City Committee or Commission shall obtain employment in which they will take direct or indirect advantage of matters which they, as a member of a City Committee or Commission, recommended to the City Council. This includes applying for positions or contracts with the City when the City Committee or Commission on which the member served recommended funding such position or contract.

G. Conflict of Interest – Family Members of Councilmembers

1. Appointment of Family Members

Unless they obtain a waiver from the Ethics Board, no Councilmember shall appoint or hire a member of their immediate family for any type of employment with the City. This includes, but is not limited to, full time employment, part time employment, permanent employment, temporary employment, and contract employment.

2. Supervision of Family Members

No Councilmember shall supervise or be in a direct line of supervision over a member of their immediate family. If a Councilmember is placed in a direct line of supervision of a member of their immediate family, they shall have three (3) months to come into compliance or to obtain a waiver pursuant to Subsection G.3 below.

3. Waivers

Waivers from the requirements of Subsections G.1 and G.2 above may be sought from the Ethics Board to allow a member of the immediate family to be hired or to be in the direct line of supervision of a member of the immediate family. Procedures to consider such a waiver are set forth in Article III.

H. Conflict of Interest – Contractors

Every major contractor submitting bids to the City shall affirm that neither the contractor nor any agent of the contractor has made any prohibited gift to a Councilmember who is involved in direct official action on the bid or has a relationship to such Councilmember that would create a conflict of interest for that Councilmember under this Code of Conduct and Ethics Program.

I. Conflict of Interest - Individuals Serving on City Committees and Commissions

Individuals serving on City Committees and Commissions shall sign a conflict of interest statement upon appointment and reappointment.

J. Conduct of Public Meetings

1. Meetings involving Councilmembers or City Committees and Commissions should be conducted in a manner that maximizes transparency of relationships among individuals or groups that could affect decision-making.
2. Meetings of the City Council and City Committees and Commissions shall have a standing agenda item for disclosure of possible conflicts of interest. Members are encouraged to disclose relationships with persons and issues on the agenda, including potential conflicts of interests. If necessary, discussion among the members may be undertaken to judge the significance of these relationships and whether a possible conflict of interest exists.

K. Conflict of Interest – Individuals Serving on the Ethics Board

No member of the Ethics Board shall participate in the review of complaints or requests for advisory opinions relating to the conduct of a Councilmember where that member of the Ethics Board is or was a member of a political action committee that supports, supported, opposes, or opposed the election or reelection of the Councilmember in question.

**ARTICLE III -
SUBMISSION AND REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS, CODE OF ETHICS
COMPLAINTS, REQUESTS FOR WAIVERS, AND REQUESTS FOR ADVISORY
OPINIONS**

A. Submission and Review of Code of Conduct Complaints

1. Any individual may submit to the City Clerk a complaint alleging violations of the Code of Conduct (Article I) by a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission.
2. Each complaint must include the name and address of the complainant, along with a detailed statement of facts, supported by a declaration in compliance with RCW 9A.72.085, on a form supplied by the City Clerk.
3. The City Clerk shall refer complaints alleging one or more violations of the Code of Conduct (Article I) by a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission, except for complaints concerning members of the Ethics Board, to the Ethics Board for review in accordance with Subsection A.4 below. The City Clerk shall refer complaints alleging one or more violations of the Code of Conduct (Article I) by a member of the Ethics Board to the Hearing Examiner, who shall review the complaint in accordance with Subsection A.4 below in place of the Ethics Board.
4. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Ethics Board shall make a threshold determination as to whether or not the complaint is reasonably credible and whether or not the facts asserted in the complaint, even if true, would constitute a violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I).
 - a. If the Ethics Board determines that the complaint lacks reasonable credibility, the Ethics Board shall dismiss the complaint, take no further action on it, and provide, following legal review, a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall forward the notice of dismissal to the complainant and respondent
 - b. If the Ethics Board determines that the facts stated in the complaint, even if true, would not constitute a violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I), then the Ethics Board shall dismiss the complaint, take no further action on it, and provide, following legal review, a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the complainant and respondent-

- c. If the Ethics Board determines that the complaint is reasonably credible and that the facts asserted in the complaint, if true, would constitute a violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I), then the Ethics Board shall provide, following legal review, a written threshold determination to the City Clerk, along with a recommendation as to the appropriateness of mediation for reconciliation or, alternatively, the issuance of an advisory opinion based on the facts and circumstances stated in the complaint. Complaints alleging conduct directed at the complainant individually shall be presumptively referred to mediation. (As an illustrative example, this could include a complaint brought by a resident alleging that a Councilmember violated the Code of Conduct by not treating that resident with civility and respect related to a particular interpersonal transaction). Complaints alleging conduct not directed at the complainant shall be presumptively referred to the process set forth in A.6 below. (As an illustrative example, this could include a complaint brought by a resident alleging that a Councilmember violated the Code of Conduct by using public resources in a manner that fails to meet the standard of accepting responsibility for the stewardship of public resources). The City Clerk shall forward the threshold determination and recommendation to the complainant and respondent and refer the complaint to the mediation process as described in Subsection A.5 below, back to the Ethics Board for an advisory opinion as described in Subsection A.6 below, or, for complaints concerning members of the Ethics Board, to the Hearing Examiner, who shall prepare an advisory opinion as described in Subsection A.6 below in place of the Ethics Board.
5. As soon as practicable following receipt of a threshold determination under Article III, Subsection A.4.c, that includes a recommendation for mediation, the City Clerk, or designee, shall schedule the time and place for reconciliation of the complaint.
- a. To facilitate timely reconciliation, the City Manager is authorized to, as needed, negotiate, execute, or amend a contract with the Dispute Resolution Center of Kitsap County, or other similar firm or organization, for the provision of trained mediators suitable for facilitating reconciliation to resolve complaints.
- b. Reconciliation shall occur at the time and place scheduled. However, if the complainant refuses to participate in reconciliation, then no reconciliation shall be scheduled, and no further action shall be taken on the complaint. If the respondent refuses to participate in reconciliation, then no reconciliation shall be scheduled. In circumstances where the respondent refuses to participate in reconciliation, the City Clerk shall, except for complaints concerning members of the Ethics Board, instead refer the complaint to the Ethics Board for review and issuance of an advisory opinion in accordance with Subsection A.6 below. For complaints concerning members of the Ethics Board, the City Clerk shall instead refer such complaints to the Hearing Examiner, who shall review the complaint and issue an advisory opinion in accordance with Subsection A.6 below in place of the Ethics Board. If the parties engage in mediation, no further action shall occur under the ethics program.

6. Upon referral back to the Ethics Board of a complaint pursuant to Subsection A.4.c or A.5.b above, the Chair of the Ethics Board shall provide the respondent with a reasonable period of time to submit a written response to the complaint supported by a declaration in compliance with RCW 9A.72.085.

a. The Ethics Board shall then review the complaint and response, if submitted. The Ethics Board's review shall be limited to the complaint and the response, if submitted. In the course of reviewing a complaint, the Ethics Board may request clarification of the complaint by the complainant or of the response by the respondent; provided that if the Ethics Board obtains clarification of the complaint, the Ethics Board shall give the respondent the opportunity to review the clarification and to provide an additional written response. However, the Ethics Board shall not engage in other fact-finding.

b. If, in reviewing the complaint and response, a question of fact exists, the Ethics Board shall identify the existence of the question of fact in its advisory opinion.

c. After reviewing the matter, the Ethics Board shall, following legal review, forward to the City Clerk an advisory opinion, with identifying information as to the complainant and individual(s) names in the complaint deleted, for publication. The City Clerk shall provide notice to both the complainant and respondent of the publication of the advisory opinion. Upon publication of the advisory opinion, the City Clerk shall provide to the complainant a copy of any response submitted by the respondent.

d. If, during the process of reviewing a complaint alleging a violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I), the Ethics Board determines that an additional violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I) may have occurred or a violation of the Code of Ethics (Article II) may have occurred, then the Ethics Board may choose to note that possibility in its advisory opinion. However, the Ethics Board shall not on its own initiative pursue an investigation of an additional violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I) or a violation of the Code of Ethics (Article II). Nothing in this Subsection, however, shall preclude the complainant from subsequently filing other Code of Conduct (Article I) or Code of Ethics (Article II) complaints.

e. The Ethics Board shall strive to complete its review and issue an advisory opinion within 45 business days from the date that the City Clerk forwarded the request to the Ethics Board. If review takes longer than 45 business days, the Ethics Board in its advisory opinion shall specify the reasons for why additional time was needed.

f. Advisory opinions shall be viewed as educational only. The purpose of such an opinion is to provide an educational opinion to Councilmembers, members of City Committees and Commissions, and the public on what type of conduct is generally expected from Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions.

B. Submission and Review of Ethics Complaints

1. Any individual may submit to the City Clerk an ethics complaint alleging violations of one of the following:
 - a. The Code of Ethics (Article II) by a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission; or
 - b. The ethics standards contained in the City of Bainbridge Island Employee Manual by a City employee other than the City Manager.
2. Each complaint must include the name and address of the complainant, along with a detailed statement of facts, supported by a declaration in compliance with RCW 9A.72.085, on a form supplied by the City Clerk.
3. To facilitate timely review, each complaint may only allege violations of one of the two standards described in Subsection B.1 above. To the extent that an individual believes both standards were violated, the individual may submit multiple complaints (i.e., a complaint related to Subsection B.1.a and a separate complaint related to Subsection B.1.b).
4. The City Clerk shall refer complaints alleging one or more violations of the Code of Ethics (Article II) by a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission, except for complaints concerning members of the Ethics Board, to the Ethics Board for review in accordance with Subsections B.5–.9 below. The City Clerk shall refer complaints alleging one or more violations of the Code of Ethics (Article II) by a member of the Ethics Board to the Hearing Examiner for review in accordance with Subsections B.10-.14 below.
5. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Chair of the Ethics Board shall provide the respondent with a reasonable period of time to submit a written response to the complaint supported by a declaration in compliance with RCW 9A.72.085.
6. The Ethics Board shall review any complaint forwarded to it by the City Clerk and any response submitted by the respondent. The Ethics Board shall not engage in other fact-finding. However, in the course of reviewing a complaint, the Ethics Board may request clarification of the complaint by the complainant or of the response by the respondent.
7. After reviewing the complaint and the response, if one was submitted, the Ethics Board shall, following legal review, take one or more of the following actions and inform the complainant, the respondent, and the City Clerk accordingly:

- a. If the Ethics Board, after review of the complaint and any response, determines that the complaint alleges violations of the Code of Conduct (Article I) rather than alleged violations of the Code of Ethics (Article II), then the Ethics Board shall dismiss the complaint and, after legal review, provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the complainant and respondent. Nothing in this Subsection shall preclude the complainant from subsequently filing a Code of Conduct complaint based upon the same facts.
- b. If the Ethics Board, after review of the complaint and any response, determines that the complaint lacks reasonable credibility, then the Ethics Board shall dismiss the complaint and, after legal review, provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the complainant and respondent.
- c. If the Ethics Board, after review of the complaint and any response, determines that the facts stated in the complaint, even if true, would not constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics (Article II), then the Ethics Board shall dismiss the complaint and, after legal review, provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the complainant and respondent.
- d. If the Ethics Board, after review of the complaint and any response, determines that that the facts stated in the complaint, even if true, would not constitute a material violation of the Code of Ethics because any possible violation was inadvertent or minor or has been adequately cured, such that further proceedings on the complaint would not serve the purposes of the Code of Ethics (Article II), then the Ethics Board shall dismiss the complaint and, after legal review, provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the complainant and respondent.
- e. If the Ethics Board learns at any time during its review of the complaint that the matter is the subject of litigation it shall hold the complaint for action at a future time.
- f. If the Ethics Board, after review of the complaint and any response, determines that the facts asserted in the complaint appear credible and appear to constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics (Article II), then the Ethics Board shall, following legal review, issue such a determination, and forward its determination, along with the complaint and response, to the complainant, respondent, and the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall then forward the Board's determination and associated materials to the Hearing Examiner for review and possible further proceedings in accordance with Article IV.

8. The Ethics Board shall strive to complete its review within 45 business days from the date that the City Clerk forwarded the complaint to the Ethics Board. If review takes longer than 45 business days, the Ethics Board in its determination shall specify the reasons why additional time was needed.
9. The Ethics Board shall report apparent violations of law to the City Attorney.
10. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Hearing Examiner shall provide the respondent with a reasonable period of time to submit a written response to the complaint supported by a declaration in compliance with RCW 9A.72.085.
11. The Hearing Examiner shall conduct a threshold review of any complaint forwarded to them by the City Clerk and any response submitted by the respondent. The Hearing Examiner shall not engage in other fact-finding during this preliminary review. However, in the course of reviewing a complaint, the Hearing Examiner may request clarification of the complaint by the complainant or of the response by the respondent.
12. After reviewing the complaint and the response, if one was submitted, the Hearing Examiner shall take one or more of the following actions and inform the complainant, the respondent, and the City Clerk accordingly:
 - a. Determine that the complaint alleges violations of the Code of Conduct (Article I) rather than alleged violations of the Code of Ethics (Article II), dismiss the complaint, and provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the Ethics Board, complainant, and respondent. Nothing in this Subsection shall preclude the complainant from subsequently filing a Code of Conduct complaint based upon the same facts.
 - b. Determine that the complaint lacks reasonable credibility, dismiss the complaint, and provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the Ethics Board, complainant, and respondent.
 - c. Determine that the facts stated in the complaint, even if true, would not constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics (Article II), dismiss the complaint, and provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the Ethics Board, complainant, and respondent.

d. Determine that the facts stated in the complaint, even if true, would not constitute a material violation of the Code of Ethics because any possible violation was inadvertent or minor or has been adequately cured, such that further proceedings on the complaint would not serve the purposes of the Code of Ethics (Article II), dismiss the complaint and provide a notice of dismissal, to include a brief statement regarding the basis for the dismissal, to the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide the notice of dismissal to the Ethics Board, complainant and respondent.

e. Hold the complaint for action at a future time if the matter is the subject of litigation; or

f. Determine that, based on the submissions of the complainant and the respondent, further proceedings under Article IV are warranted.

13. The Hearing Examiner shall strive to complete their review within 45 business days from the date that the City Clerk forwarded the complaint to the Hearing Examiner. If review takes longer than 45 business days, the Hearing Examiner in their determination shall specify the reasons why additional time was needed.

14. If the Hearing Examiner determines that, based on the submissions of the complainant and the respondent, further proceedings under Article IV are warranted, the Hearing Examiner shall forward their determination, along with the complaint and response, to the complainant, respondent, and the City Clerk. The City Clerk will then schedule further proceedings in accordance with Article IV.

C. Review of Complaints Concerning City Employees

1. The City Clerk shall refer complaints concerning City employees to the City Manager.

2. The City Manager shall review any ethics complaint forwarded by the City Clerk and determine the appropriate course of action to address the complaint including, as applicable, authorizing such investigations as may be necessary to determine whether a violation has occurred, consistent with state law as well as relevant policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements.

3. Upon making a determination that no violation of ethics rules has occurred, the City Manager shall provide a written response regarding the determination to the complainant.

4. Upon making a determination that a violation of ethics rules has occurred, the City Manager or other appropriate City officer shall take action as guided by state law and relevant policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements.

5. In the event of a violation, the City Manager shall provide a response to the complainant outlining the substance of the violation and the action taken, subject to governing rules regarding confidentiality articulated in state law, City policy, and collective bargaining agreements.

6. Apparent violations of law shall be reported to the appropriate authorities, as applicable.

D. Requests for Advisory Opinions by City Councilmembers or Members of City Committees or Commissions

1. To the extent described below, the following individuals or bodies may submit to the City Clerk a request for an advisory opinion from the Ethics Board:

a. A Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Board as to whether their own behavior has violated or might in the future violate the Code of Conduct (Article I) or the Code of Ethics (Article II).

b. The City Council may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Board regarding City policies or practices in relation to the Code of Conduct (Article I) or the Code of Ethics (Article II).

c. City Committees and Commissions may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Board regarding operating rules or practices in relation to the Code of Conduct (Article I) or the Code of Ethics (Article II).

d. A Councilmember may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Board concerning the applicability of the Code of Ethics (Article II) to hypothetical circumstances and/or situations related to the actions, or potential actions, of a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission.

2. Requests for advisory opinions must be submitted to the City Clerk on a form supplied by the Ethics Board. The Ethics Board shall, following legal review, submit finalized advisory opinions to the City Clerk for publication.

3. Advisory opinions issued in response to requests made under Subsection 1.a or 1.d above shall not include identifying information as to the requestor or the individual(s) whose conduct is the subject of the opinion unless otherwise agreed in writing by both the requestor and subject individual(s).

4. The grant of authority in this Section D is supplemental to, and does not change, the authority granted to the Ethics Board in Section A above.

E. Waivers

Councilmembers may request a waiver from the Ethics Board of the conflict of interest restrictions related to the hiring of and supervision over family members, as provided by Article II, Section G. Such requests shall be submitted in writing to the City Clerk, who shall refer them to the Ethics Board. Once finalized, the Board shall, following legal review, provide its response to the City Clerk, who shall publish both the request and the Board's response.

F. Effect of Advisory Opinion or Waiver

An individual who receives a waiver, or who acts in reliance on an advisory opinion, shall not later be found to have violated the Code of Conduct (Article I) or the Code of Ethics (Article II) if the individual acts in a manner consistent with that advisory opinion or waiver.

**ARTICLE IV -
HEARING EXAMINER REVIEW
AND POSSIBLE SANCTIONS**

A. Hearing Examiner Review of Article II Complaints

1. The City Clerk shall provide written notification to the complainant and the respondent of the time, date, and place of the hearing before the Hearing Examiner at which the complaint concerning alleged violations of the Code of Ethics (Article II) will be reviewed.

2. Hearings conducted by the Hearing Examiner shall be informal and held in accordance with rules of procedure adopted by the Hearing Examiner, except to the extent that such rules conflict with the terms of this Ethics Program. The respondent may be represented by legal counsel. The City Attorney shall designate special counsel to present the Code of Ethics violations charges and case. The respondent and special counsel may present and cross examine witnesses and give evidence before the Hearing Examiner. The Hearing Examiner may also call witnesses and compel the production of books, records, papers, or other evidence needed. To that end, the Hearing Examiner may issue subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum at the request of the respondent, special counsel, or their own initiative. All testimony shall be under oath administered by the Hearing Examiner. The Hearing Examiner may adjourn the hearing from time to time in order to allow for the orderly presentation of evidence.

3. The Hearing Examiner or designee shall prepare an official record of the hearing, including all testimony, which shall be recorded by electronic device, and exhibits; provided that the Hearing Examiner or designee shall not be required to transcribe such records unless presented with a request accompanied by payment of the cost of transcription.

4. Within 20 business days after the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Examiner shall, based upon a standard of proof of clear and convincing evidence, make findings of fact and conclusions of law. If the Hearing Examiner determines that the alleged Code of Ethics violation(s) have not been proven, the Hearing Examiner shall dismiss the complaint. If the Hearing Examiner determines that one or more Code of Ethics violation(s) are proven, the Hearing Examiner shall forward the matter to the City Council for a determination regarding the appropriate level of sanctions to be imposed for the Code of Ethics (Article II) violations. In either event, a copy of the findings and conclusions shall be forwarded to the City Clerk, for distribution to the City Council, and, by registered mail, to the person who made the complaint and to the respondent at addresses as given by such persons to the Hearing Examiner.

B. Action by City Council upon Hearing Examiner's Findings and Conclusion

1. Within 45 business days of receipt of the Hearing Examiner's findings and conclusions that sustain a Code of Ethics violation, the City Council shall schedule an executive session to consider the findings and conclusions, hear from the respondent, and deliberate upon the appropriate level of civil sanction(s) to be imposed, if any, except to the extent that the respondent requests that they be heard in open public session.
2. The Council may take no formal action or, by majority vote of the Council (not including the respondent, if a Councilmember, who shall not participate in said vote) at an open public meeting, may impose any of the following sanctions in response to a sustained violation of the Code of Ethics:
 - a. **Admonition:** An admonition shall be a verbal non-public statement made by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Mayor Pro Tem to the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission who has violated the Code.
 - b. **Reprimand:** A reprimand shall be a letter prepared by the City Council, signed by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Mayor Pro Tem, and directed to the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission who has violated the Code.
 - c. **Censure:** A censure shall be a written statement administered personally by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Mayor Pro Tem to the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission who has violated the Code violation. The Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission shall appear at a time and place directed by the City Council to receive the censure. The censure shall be given publicly and the official who has violated the Code shall not make any statement in support or opposition thereto or in mitigation. A censure shall be deemed administered at the time it is scheduled whether or not the Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission appears as required.
 - d. **Other sanctions:** Any sanction imposed under this Ethics Program is in addition to and not in lieu of any other penalty, sanction, or remedy which may be imposed or sought according to law or equity.
3. The City Clerk shall forward, by registered mail, a copy of the findings, conclusions, and sanctions, if imposed, to the complainant and to the respondent at addresses as given by both persons to the City Clerk. Following approval by the Council, the City Clerk shall publish the written findings, conclusions, and sanctions, if imposed.

**ARTICLE V -
ETHICS BOARD**

A. Creation, Terms, and Appointments

1. Membership of Ethics Board

The Ethics Board consists of seven members appointed in accordance with this Section A.

2. Qualifications of Board Members

- a. Members of the Board shall represent a diverse set of backgrounds and interests.
- b. At least one member of the Ethics Board shall be a former judicial officer or have expertise in ethics acquired through education or experience.
- c. Members appointed or reappointed after the effective date of Resolution No. 2019-26, updating the Ethics Program, shall not, while serving on the Ethics Board, also simultaneously be employees or officers of the city or individuals appointed to another city committee or commission.

3. Method of Appointment

- a. Members of the Ethics Board shall be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council by a supermajority vote of at least five Councilmembers.
- b. The Mayor and City Council shall work cooperatively to ensure that any person who is nominated has the required support of the City Council. Nominations shall be presented at meetings of the City Council in which all seven Councilmembers are present, unless exceptional circumstances exist (e.g., a Council vacancy exists and has not yet been filled, or other good cause).

4. Terms of Appointment

- a. Board members shall be appointed to terms of three years; however, the first two members nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council shall initially serve one-year terms to achieve staggered ending dates.
- b. If a member is appointed to fill an unexpired term, that member's term shall end at the same time as the term of the person being replaced.
- c. Each member shall continue to serve until a successor has been appointed, unless the member is removed or resigns.

5. Removal of Board Members

- a. The absence of any member of the Board from three (3) consecutive meetings, unless the Board has excused the absence for good and sufficient reasons as determined by the Board, shall constitute a resignation from the Board.
- b. The City Council may remove a member for inappropriate conduct before the expiration of the member's term. Before removing a member, the City Council shall specify the cause for removal and shall give the member the opportunity to make a personal explanation.

6. Compensation

Members of the Ethics Board shall serve without compensation. Members may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses pursuant to the rules of the City and as approved by the City Manager or their designee.

7. Rules

The Ethics Board may, by majority vote, adopt reasonable operating rules consistent with this Ethics Program. The City Council reserves the right to modify such operating rules at its discretion.

8. Consultation with City Attorney

The Ethics Board shall consult with the City Attorney's Office or special counsel appointed by the City Attorney's Office regarding legal issues which may arise in connection with the Board's duties and functions under this Ethics Program.

9. Liaison to the Ethics Board.

A representative of the City Attorney's Office shall attend Ethics Board meetings and serve as the liaison to the Ethics Board. No Councilmember shall serve as a liaison to the Ethics Board.

B. Training Provided by the Ethics Board

The Ethics Board shall perform the following training related duties:

- 1. At least every two years, the Ethics Board shall prepare and distribute a pamphlet describing the Code of Conduct (Article I) and Code of Ethics (Article II) to all Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions, after review of the pamphlet by the City Attorney's Office. The Ethics Board shall ensure that all new Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions receive a pamphlet on this Code of Ethics.

2. The Ethics Board shall develop and present a training course on the Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics to be presented annually to all Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions.

C. Training Provided to the Ethics Board

The Ethics Board shall include all requests for training for the coming year in the Board's annual report to the City Council, and the Council will determine what training to approve, if any.

D. Annual Report

By February 15 of each year, the Ethics Board shall submit an annual report to the City Council summarizing its activities during the previous calendar year and work plan for the following year. The report shall include any recommendations for modifying the Code of Conduct and Ethics Program as well as all training requested by the Ethics Board.

ARTICLE VI - DEFINITIONS

For purposes of the Ethics Program, the following definitions shall apply.

“City Committees and Commissions” and “City Committee or Commission” mean all advisory boards, commissions, committees, and task forces created or appointed by the City Council.

“Confidential Information” means (a) specific information, rather than generalized knowledge, that is not available to the general public on request; or (b) information made confidential by law.

“Direct official action” means any of the following:

1. For Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions, taking action, as defined by RCW 42.30.020, in an open public meeting.
2. For Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions, directly, or indirectly through a proxy, doing the following: negotiating or recommending for or against a contract, purchase order, lease, concession, franchise, grant, or other similar instrument in which the City is a party.
3. For Councilmembers and members of City Committees and Commissions, directly, or indirectly through a proxy, doing the following: recommending for or against the approval of a permit, or other similar City approval or authorization, issued by the City. However, direct official action does not include the submittal, to the City, of a permit application by a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission or the appeal of a denial of such a permit application by the City. Direct official action includes actions taken by a Councilmember or a member of a City Committee or Commission to use or attempt to use their position to obtain special privileges or exemptions in the processing, or review on appeal, of their permit application.
4. For Councilmembers, appointing or terminating employees (i.e., the City Manager) or appointing or removing members of City Committees and Commissions.

Direct official action does not include acts that do not affect the disposition or decision with respect to the matter. Additionally, a Councilmember or member of a City Committee or Commission who recuses herself or himself in lieu of taking action, as defined by RCW 42.30.020, in an open public meeting is not exercising direct official action.

“Direct line of supervision” means the supervisor of an employee and the supervisor of an employee's supervisor.

“Fact-finding” means any action to gather facts or other evidence not submitted by a complainant in a complaint or a clarification to a complaint or by a respondent in a response or a clarification to a response. However, “fact-finding” does not include review by the Ethics Board of official video or audio recordings of meetings of the City Council or of City Committees and Commissions as well as review by the Ethics Board of the official minutes of such meetings.

“Gift” means any favor, reward, or gratuity and any money, good, service, travel, event ticket, lodging, dispensation, or other thing of value that is given, sold, rented, or loaned to a person without reasonable compensation and that is not available to the general public on the same terms and conditions. Any honoraria or payment for participation in an event will be considered a gift.

“Immediate family” means husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, grandchildren, brother, sister, domestic partner, or spouse of the above. The term includes any minor children for whom the person, or their domestic partner, provides day-to-day care and financial support. A "domestic partner" is an unmarried adult, unrelated by blood, with whom an unmarried officer, official, or employee has an exclusive committed relationship, maintains a mutual residence, and shares basic living expenses.

“Legislation of General Application” means any legislative act, including regulations, policies, ordinances, resolutions, and motions, of general application, as opposed to legislative acts that affect only a particular person or individual or a small group of similarly situated persons or individuals.

“Major Contractor” means any person, corporation, company, firm, business, or other entity doing business over \$5,000 with the City under one contract or annually.

“Political Action Committee” means a legal entity, other than a natural person, that raises, spends, receives, or contributes money to support or oppose the election of one or more candidates for elected office at the local, state, or federal levels.

“Question of Fact” means a factual dispute between the complainant and the respondent concerning an issue that is material to a determination as to whether a violation of the Code of Conduct (Article I) exists.

“Reconciliation” means mediation between a complainant and a respondent facilitated by a trained mediator.

“Rule of Necessity” shall be interpreted and defined in accordance with RCW 42.36.090, which provides: In the event of a challenge to a member or members of a decision-making body which would cause a lack of a quorum or would result in a failure to obtain a majority vote as required by law, any such challenged member(s) shall be permitted to fully participate in the proceeding and vote as though the challenge had not occurred, if the member or members publicly disclose the basis for disqualification prior to rendering a decision. Such participation shall not subject the decision to a challenge by reason of violation of the appearance of fairness doctrine.

**ARTICLE VII -
CITY COUNCIL REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS PROGRAM**

The City Council shall, at a minimum, review this Code of Conduct and Ethics Program annually following receipt of the annual report of the Ethics Board.