



# **Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements**

## **Complaint Form and Instructions**

Please submit the completed form to the following address:

City Clerk  
600 East Fourth Street, 7th Floor  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
Phone: 704-336-2248  
Fax: 704-336-7588  
[CityClerk@charlottenc.gov](mailto:CityClerk@charlottenc.gov)

Regular business hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

July 9, 2025

### **This document includes:**

- **General Principles**
- **Overview**
- **Instructions**
- **Complaint Form**
- **Code of Ethics for  
Mayor & Council**
- **Code of Ethics for  
Board Members**

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## GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE CODE OF ETHICS

- § The stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depend upon public confidence in the integrity of the government and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the people upon their elected officials.
- § Governmental decisions and policy must be made and implemented through proper channels and processes of the governmental structure.
- § The Mayor, Council members, and members of boards, committee and commissions must be able to act in a manner that maintains their integrity and independence, yet is responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent.
- § The Mayor and Council members must always remain aware that at various times they play different roles:
  - As advocates, who strive to advance the legitimate needs of their citizens
  - As legislators, who balance the public interest and private rights in considering and enacting ordinances, orders, and resolutions
  - As decision-makers, who arrive at fair and impartial determinations.
- § Board Members must always remain aware that they may, at various times, play different roles:
  - As advisors, who balance the public interest and private rights in considering and recommending, among other things, ordinances, policies, and decisions.
  - As decision-makers, who arrive at fair and impartial determinations.
- § The Mayor, Council members, and members of boards, commissions and committees must know how to distinguish among these roles, to determine when each role is appropriate, and to act accordingly.
- § The Mayor, Council members and members of boards, committees, and commissions must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of their constituents. Each official or board member must find within his or her own conscience the touchstone by which to determine what conduct is appropriate.
- § The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for the Mayor, Council members and members of boards, commissions and committees and to help determine what conduct is appropriate in particular cases. It should not be considered a substitute for the law or for an official's or a member's best judgment.

# OVERVIEW

- On August 7, 1978, The City Council adopted an ordinance to amend Chapter 1 of the City of Charlotte Code, adding a new Article II, entitled “Code of Ethics.” This established a Code of Ethics for City Officials, including the Mayor, City Council members, the City Manager, Assistant City Managers and Department Heads.
- On January 24, 1983, the City Council adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy for members of City Boards, Committees, and Commissions (hereinafter “Boards”)
- On May 24, 2010, the City Council adopted a Council of Code of Ethics.
- On October 28, 2013, the City Council adopted a resolution repealing the 1983 policy and established a Code of Ethics for Boards similar to the Council’s Code.
- On February 23, 2015, the City Council amended its Code of Ethics to include a gift policy, disclosure requirements, and established a process for receiving and investigating ethics complaints.
- On October 26, 2015, the Council amended the Code of Ethics for Members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions to 1) establish a process for receiving and investigating ethics complaints by the City Attorney’s Office against members of all City Boards, and 2) add a Gift Policy and Disclosure Requirements to be effective January 1, 2016 for members of the following Boards:
  - (1) Land use and other regulatory bodies
    - Historic District Commission
    - Planning Commission
    - Zoning Board of Adjustment
    - Housing Appeals Board
    - Passenger Vehicle for Hire Board
  - (2) Non-transit public enterprise advisory boards
    - Airport Advisory Committee
    - Charlotte Water Advisory Committee
    - Storm Water Advisory Committee
  - (3) Business
    - Business Advisory Committee
    - Privatization/Competition Advisory Committee
- On November 23, 2015, the Council amended the October 26, 2015 Resolution of the Charlotte City Council Amending the Code of Ethics for Members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions to add the following boards to the list of Boards subject to the new requirements:
  - (4) Other
    - Civil Service Board
    - Citizens Review Board

*The full resolutions are attached to this document.*

# INSTRUCTIONS

1. A completed complaint form must contain all of the following information:
  - a. **Who is filing the complaint.**
  - b. **Identify the person alleged to have committed an unethical act.**
  - c. **State with specificity the facts that form the bases for the alleged violation.**
  - d. **Cite the provision in the Code of Ethics that has allegedly been violated.**
2. Please type or print in ink.
3. Please review the applicable Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements for the Mayor and City Council or for Members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions of the City of Charlotte to assist you in completing this form.
4. The completed form must be signed by the person filing the complaint.
5. The form should be filed with the City Clerk on the form provided. Please submit the completed form to the following address:

City Clerk  
600 East Fourth Street, 7th Floor  
Charlotte, NC 28202  
Phone: 704-336-2248  
Fax: 704-336-7588  
CityClerk@charlottenc.gov

Regular business hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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# Complaint Form

## *Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements*

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS COMPLAINT IS PERTAINING TO (Please check one):** *A separate form must be completed for each complaint.*

\_\_\_\_\_ THE MAYOR AND/ OR A COUNCIL MEMBER **OR** \_\_\_\_\_ A MEMBER OF A BOARD, COMMITTEE OR COMMISSION

### **1. PERSON FILING THE COMPLAINT:**

FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE & ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. PERSON ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTEED AN UNETHICAL ACT:**

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### **3. ETHICS PROVISION VIOLATED:** (List the chapter names, sections and, sub-sections, if applicable)

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### **4. REASON FOR COMPLAINT:** (State with specificity the facts that form the basis of your complaint)

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[illegible]

<b>FOR OFFICIAL USE:</b>	
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	<b>DATE RECEIVED:</b>
<b>CITY CLERK</b>	_____
<b>CITY ATTORNEY</b>	_____

(Use additional sheets as necessary)

**RESOLUTION OF THE CHARLOTTE CITY COUNCIL  
REVISING THE CODE OF ETHICS, GIFT POLICY, AND DISCLOSURE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, Chapter 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes requires local governing boards to adopt a code of ethics and, pursuant it, the Charlotte City Council has previously adopted a Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements for the Mayor and City Council ("the Ethics Policy"); and

WHEREAS, on September 8, 2020, the Charlotte City Council adopted limited revisions to Part D of the Ethics Policy, wherein the term "investigator" was deleted and the term "independent outside counsel" was added and referred review of the entire Ethics Policy to the Council's Committee on Budget and Effectiveness for any further revisions or clarifications; and

WHEREAS, on January 6, 2021, the Council's Budget and Effectiveness Committee through a majority vote approved the proposed revisions and clarifications to the Ethics Policy and recommended it for consideration and approval by the full City Council; and

WHEREAS, on February 22, 2021, the Charlotte City Council was presented with proposed revisions and clarifications limited to Part A and Part D of the Ethics Policy, and more specifically to Part A, Section 3.b. and Part D, Sections 1.a. - 1.c. and 2.a. - 2.d; and

WHEREAS, these proposed revisions serve to further clarify requirements for reporting and reviewing potential ethics-related concerns and complaints; and,

WHEREAS, to the extent necessary, the City Attorney is authorized to make typographical or grammatical amendments, but not material changes, to the Ethics Policy as may be deemed necessary without the need for further Council approval; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Charlotte that the Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirement is hereby revised and adopted, effective February 22, 2021.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Stephanie Bello, Deputy City Clerk of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of a Resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, in regular session convened on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2021, the reference having been made in Minute Book 152 and recorded in full in Resolution Book 51, Page(s) 238-246.

WITNESS my hand and the corporate seal of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2021.



*Stephanie Bello*

Stephanie Bello, Deputy City Clerk

**Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements  
for the Mayor and City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina**

WHEREAS, the Constitution of North Carolina, Article I, Section 35, reminds us that a "frequent recurrence to fundamental principles is absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty," and

WHEREAS, a spirit of honesty and forthrightness is reflected in North Carolina's state motto, *Esse quam videri*, "To be rather than to seem," and

WHEREAS, Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes requires local governing boards to adopt a code of ethics, and

WHEREAS, as public officials we are charged with upholding the trust of the citizens of this City, and with obeying the law, and

NOW THEREFORE, in recognition of our blessings and obligations as citizens of the State of North Carolina and as public officials representing the citizens of the City of Charlotte, and acting pursuant to the requirements of Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes, we the City Council do hereby adopt the following General Principles and Code of Ethics to guide the Mayor and City Council in their lawful decision-making.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE CODE OF ETHICS**

- The stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depend upon public confidence in the integrity of the government and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the people upon their elected officials.
- Governmental decisions and policy must be made and implemented through proper channels and processes of the governmental structure.
- The Mayor and Council members must be able to act in a manner that maintains their integrity and independence, yet is responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent.
- The Mayor and Council members must always remain aware that at various times they play different roles:

As advocates, who strive to advance the legitimate needs of their citizens

As legislators, who balance the public interest and private rights in considering and enacting ordinances, orders, and resolutions

As decision-makers, who arrive at fair and impartial determinations.

- The Mayor and Council members must know how to distinguish among these roles, to determine when each role is appropriate, and to act accordingly.

- The Mayor and Council members must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of their constituents. Each official must find within his or her own conscience the touchstone by which to determine what conduct is appropriate.

## **A. CODE OF ETHICS**

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for the Mayor and Council members and to help determine what conduct is appropriate in particular cases. It should not be considered a substitute for the law or for an official's best judgment.

### Section 1.

The Mayor and Council members should obey all laws applicable to their official actions. The Mayor and Council members should be guided by the spirit as well as the letter of the law in whatever they do.

At the same time, the Mayor and Council members should feel free to assert policy positions and opinions without fear of reprisal from fellow board members or citizens. To declare that the Mayor or a Council member is behaving unethically because one disagrees with that official on a question of policy (and not because of the council member's behavior) is unfair, dishonest, irresponsible, and itself unethical.

### Section 2.

The Mayor and Council members should act with integrity and independence from improper influence as they exercise the duties of their offices. Characteristics and behaviors consistent with this standard include the following:

- Adhering firmly to a code of sound values
- Exhibiting trustworthiness
- Using their best independent judgment to pursue the common good as they see it, presenting their opinions to all in a reasonable, forthright, consistent manner
- Remaining incorruptible, self-governing, and unaffected by improper influence while at the same time being able to consider the opinions and ideas of others
- Treating other council members and the public with respect and honoring the opinions of others even when the board members disagree with those opinions
- Showing respect for their offices and not behaving in ways that reflect badly on those offices

- Recognizing that they are part of a larger group and acting accordingly
- Recognizing that individual Council members are not generally allowed to act on behalf of the Council but may only do so if the Council specifically authorizes it, and that the Council must take official action as a body

#### Section 3.a.

The Mayor and Council members should avoid impropriety in the exercise of their official duties. Their official actions should be above reproach and they should not use their official position for personal gain. They should also not disclose confidential information, including the premature disclosure of what transpired in a closed session. Although opinions may vary about what behavior is inappropriate, this Council will consider impropriety in terms of whether a reasonable person who is aware of all of the relevant facts and circumstances surrounding the Council member's action would conclude that the action was inappropriate.

#### Section 3.b.

If the Mayor or a Council member believes that his or her actions, while legal and ethical, may be misunderstood, the official shall seek the advice of the City Attorney and, if recommended to, in the discretion of the City Attorney, shall publicly disclose the facts of the situation and the steps taken to address the matter (such as consulting with the attorney). The Mayor or a Councilmember shall seek the advice of the City Attorney anytime a business entity or real property that has been disclosed on their individual annual Statement of Economic Interest may become a party to or the subject of a business transaction directly with the City. This requirement of the Council member to seek the advice of the City Attorney shall extend further to contractors or subcontractors of the City so long as the Council member's connection relates to the contractor or subcontractor's business with the City. Neither the City nor a contractor or subcontractor has the obligation to seek the advice of the City Attorney under this section of the Policy.

#### Section 4.

The Mayor and Council members should faithfully perform the duties of their offices. They should act as the especially responsible citizens whom others can trust and respect. They should set a good example for others in the community, keeping in mind that trust and respect must continually be earned.

The Mayor and Council members should faithfully attend and prepare for meetings. They should demand full accountability from those over whom the board has authority.

The Mayor and Council members should be willing to bear their fair share of the governing board's workload. To the extent appropriate, they should be willing to put the City's interests ahead of their own.

#### Section 5.

The Mayor and Council members should conduct the affairs of the board in an open and public manner. They should comply with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records, recognizing that doing so is an important way to be worthy of the public's trust. They should remember when they meet that they are conducting the public's business. They should also remember that local government records belong to the public and not to them or City employees.

In order to ensure strict compliance with the laws concerning openness, the Mayor and Council members should make clear that an environment of transparency and candor is to be maintained at all times in the governmental unit. They should prohibit unjustified delay in fulfilling public records requests. They should take deliberate steps to make certain that any closed sessions held by the Council are lawfully conducted and that such sessions do not stray from the purposes for which they are called.

## **B. GIFT POLICY**

### **Definitions**

"Gift" - Anything of monetary value given or received without valuable consideration. The following shall not be considered gifts:

- (1) Anything for which fair market value, or face value if shown, is paid by the official.
- (2) Commercially available loans made on terms not more favorable than generally available to the general public in the normal course of business.
- (3) Contractual arrangements or commercial relationships or arrangements made in the normal course of business.
- (4) Academic or athletic scholarships based on the same criteria as applied to the public.
- (5) Anything of value properly reported as required under Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes (North Carolina Campaign Contributions Law).
- (6) Expressions of condolence related to a death of an individual, sent within a reasonable time of the death, if the expression is one of the following:
  - a. A sympathy card, letter, or note.
  - b. Flowers.
  - c. Food or beverages for immediate consumption.
  - d. Donations to a religious organization, charity, the State or a political subdivision of the State, not to exceed a total of two hundred dollars per death per donor.

"Extended family" - Spouse, lineal descendant, lineal ascendant, sibling, spouse's lineal descendant, spouse's lineal ascendant, spouse's sibling, and the spouse of any of these individuals.

"Official" - the Mayor or a member of the City Council.

### **Gift Ban**

No official shall knowingly accept a gift unless the gift falls within one of the exceptions set

forth below.

A prohibited gift shall be promptly declined, returned, paid for at fair market value, or donated to charity or the City.

### **Exceptions**

These prohibitions shall not apply to any of the following:

- (1) Gifts from the official's extended family, or a member of the same household.
- (2) Gifts given or received as part of a business, civic, religious, fraternal, personal, or commercial relationship provided that the gift is made under circumstances that a reasonable person would conclude that the gift was not given to influence or attempt to influence official action.
- (3) Nominal gifts having a value of less than \$50.
- (4) Anything generally made available or distributed to the general public without charge.
- (5) A memento such as a commemorative shovel, plaque, figurine, trinket, or novelty item related to a civic occasion or event.
- (6) Informational materials relevant to the duties of the official.
- (7) Food and beverages for immediate consumption in connection with any of the following:
  - a. A meeting of the City Council, provided that the meeting is properly noticed under Article 33C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
  - b. Business meetings so long as the food and beverages are of incidental value.
  - c. Neighborhood or community meetings.
  - d. A gathering of ten or more individuals that is open to the general public, provided that the official pays the same amount, if any, that the general public is charged to attend.
- (8) Tickets or admittance to, and food and beverages for immediate consumption at, an event where the official is clearly representing the City and where the City has a legitimate purpose in being represented at the event. By way of illustration but not limitation, this would include events sponsored by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, the Foundation for the Carolinas, Charlotte Center City Partners, the Regional Partnership, the United Way, the Arts & Science Council, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions, and similar organizations.
- (9) Food and beverages for immediate consumption and related transportation provided all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. The food, beverage, or transportation is provided during a conference, meeting, or similar event and is available to all attendees of the same class as the recipient.
  - b. The official is a director, officer, governing board member, employee, or independent contractor of one of the following:

1. The entity giving the food, beverage, or transportation.
2. A third party that received the funds to purchase the food, beverages, or transportation.

(10) An expense appropriate for reimbursement by the City if it had been incurred by the official personally. Such a gift shall be considered a gift accepted by or donated to the City, provided that the gift and its value are reported in writing to the City Clerk within two weeks of receipt.

## **C. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS**

By February 1 of each year, the Mayor and Council members shall file with the city clerk a statement of economic interest using the form set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto. The statements required by this section are public records available for inspection and copying by any person during normal business hours.

## **D. COMPLAINTS, REVIEW AND SANCTIONS**

### **1. Complaints**

- a. Any individual may file a complaint alleging a violation. Complaints shall be filed with the City Clerk on a form provided by the City Clerk. Complaints shall: (i) identify the complainant; (ii) state with specificity the facts that form the basis for the alleged violation under this Policy; and (iii) cite the provision under this Policy that has allegedly been violated. The facts set out in the complaint, if true, must be sufficient to establish the alleged violation (hereinafter referred to as a "*prima facie* allegation").
- b. *Prima facie* allegations subject to further review may include but is not limited to complaints claiming: contractor or subcontractor connections as described in Part A, Section 3.b. of this Policy; misappropriation of City resources; criminal or fraudulent activity; or, any activity constituting harassment or sexual harassment as those terms are commonly defined under the law. To the extent applicable, the City Attorney reserves the right to refer criminal or fraudulent activity or other allegations of violations of law directly to agencies responsible for such investigations.
- c. Upon receiving a complaint, the City Clerk shall forward the complaint to the City Attorney for initial review. The City Attorney shall forward a courtesy copy of the complaint to the Councilmember who is the subject of the complaint.

### **2. Initial Review by City Attorney**

- a. The City Attorney shall review the complaint to determine whether it meets the requirements of section I.a. and 1.b. In conducting this review, the City Attorney may communicate directly with the complainant to address any questions or seek clarification regarding the substance of the complaint.

- b. If the City Attorney determines that the complaint fails to meet the requirements of section I .a. or I .b., the complainant shall be so informed in writing which may include electronic communication. Complainant shall be afforded an opportunity to provide the required information or an amended complaint to the City Attorney within seven (7) business days from the date of the writing or electronic communication. If, after this time period has elapsed, the City Attorney continues to determine that the complaint fails to meet the requirements of section I .a. or I.b., the complainant shall be notified in writing or electronic communication that no further action will be taken in the matter.
- c. If the City Attorney determines that a complaint meets the requirements of section I.a. and I.b., the complaint shall be referred to an independent outside counsel selected by the City Attorney. In such a referral under this subsection, the independent outside counsel shall investigate the allegations of the complaint and make written findings as to the truthfulness of the allegations, whether a violation of the Policy occurred and may recommend a response to those findings. Such written findings and conclusions shall be provided to the City Attorney who shall in turn provide them to the City Council for consideration and disposition. Any such disposition by the City Council shall be reduced to writing or electronic communication and provided to the complainant along with a copy of the report from the independent outside counsel.
- d. Any Councilmember who is the subject of a complaint shall be excused from participating in any Council considerations, deliberations and actions related to that complaint under sections 2.c. and 2.d. To the extent multiple Councilmembers are the subject of a single complaint and their alleged conduct cannot reasonably be separated and considered on an individual basis, Council may proceed with considerations, deliberations and action under sections 2.c. and 2.d. without a quorum if necessary.

### 3. Sanctions

Upon receipt of written findings and conclusions pursuant to Section 2.c., the City Council may sanction the official who was the subject of the investigation. Potential sanctions include the adoption of a Resolution of Censure and any other lawful sanction within the Council's power.

**CERTIFICATION**

I, Stephanie Bello, Deputy City Clerk of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the General Principles and Code of Ethics for the Mayor and City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, adopted by the City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, in regular session convened on the 22nd day of February 2021.

WITNESS my hand and the corporate seal of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, the 22nd day of February 2021.



*Stephanie Bello*

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Stephanie Bello, Deputy City Clerk

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**A RESOLUTION OF THE CHARLOTTE CITY COUNCIL AMENDING THE CODE  
OF ETHICS FOR MEMBERS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS OF  
THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE**

Section 1. The October 26, 2015 Resolution of the Charlotte City Council Amending the Code of Ethics for Members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina recorded at Resolution Book 47, Page 25 is hereby amended to read as follows:

**Code of Ethics Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements for Members of Boards,  
Committees, and Commissions of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina**

WHEREAS, the Constitution of North Carolina, Article I, Section 35, reminds us that a “frequent recurrence to fundamental principles is absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty,” and

WHEREAS, a spirit of honesty and forthrightness is reflected in North Carolina’s state motto, *Esse quam videri*, “To be rather than to seem,” and

WHEREAS, Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes requires local governing boards to adopt a code of ethics and, pursuant to Section 160A-86, the Charlotte City Council has previously adopted a Code of Ethics for the Mayor and City Council , and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that members of City boards, committees, and commissions, as well as Mayoral and City Council appointees to non-City bodies (hereinafter “Board Members”), also adhere to a Code of Ethics.

NOW THEREFORE, in recognition of our blessings and obligations as citizens of the State of North Carolina and as public officials representing the citizens of the City of Charlotte, and acting pursuant to the requirements of Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes, we the City Council do hereby adopt the following General Principles and Code of Ethics to guide Boards Members in their lawful decision-making.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE CODE OF ETHICS**

- The stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depend upon public confidence in the integrity of the government and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the people upon their elected officials.
- Governmental decisions and policy must be made and implemented through proper channels and processes of the governmental structure.
- Board Members must be able to act in a manner that maintains their integrity and independence, yet is responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent.

- Board Members must always remain aware that they may, at various times, play different roles:
  - As advisors, who balance the public interest and private rights in considering and recommending, among other things, ordinances, policies, and decisions
  - As decision-makers, who arrive at fair and impartial determinations.
- Board Members must know how to distinguish among these roles, to determine when each role is appropriate, and to act accordingly.
- Board Members must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of the Mayor and City Council and the citizens of Charlotte. Each Board Member must find within his or her own conscience the touchstone by which to determine what conduct is appropriate.

## **A. CODE OF ETHICS**

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for Board Members and to help determine what conduct is appropriate in particular cases. It should not be considered a substitute for the law or for a member's best judgment.

### Section 1.

Board Members should obey all laws applicable to their official actions. Board Members should be guided by the spirit as well as the letter of the law in whatever they do.

At the same time, Board Members should feel free to assert policy positions and opinions without fear of reprisal from fellow Board members or citizens. However in doing so, Board Members:

- (a) shall be mindful that they were appointed by the Mayor or City Council, or by another appointing authority to a City Board, Committee, or Commission and, therefore, if they are advising or advocating a position that is contrary to a Council policy, that they notify the Mayor and Council of such as soon as practicable;
- (b) who serve in an advisory capacity shall be mindful that their chief responsibility is to advise the Mayor and Council or other decision-making body rather than to advocate to the public at large, particularly when the position of advocacy is contrary to a Council policy;
- (c) shall understand that they hold a position of trust on behalf of the City and its citizens; and
- (d) shall assert policy positions and opinions on matters within or related to the jurisdiction and subject matter of the body on which they serve only through the transparency of official proceedings of the body or in a capacity and manner appropriate for a member of such body. Board Members shall not represent their individual views as being representative of the full body unless they have been formally authorized by the body to do so.

These guidelines are especially important to Chairpersons who must recognize that they are often viewed as speaking for the body.

To declare that a Board Member is behaving unethically because one disagrees with that official on a question of policy (and not because of the Board Member's behavior) is unfair, dishonest, irresponsible, and itself unethical.

## Section 2.

Board Members should act with integrity and independence from improper influence as they exercise the duties of their offices. Characteristics and behaviors consistent with this standard include the following:

- Adhering firmly to a code of sound values
- Exhibiting trustworthiness
- Using their best independent judgment to pursue the common good as they see it, presenting their opinions to all in a reasonable, forthright, consistent manner
- Remaining incorruptible, self-governing, and unaffected by improper influence while at the same time being able to consider the opinions and ideas of others
- For Board Members who act in a quasi-judicial capacity, disclosing contacts and information about issues that they receive outside of public meetings and refraining from seeking or receiving information about quasi-judicial matters outside of the quasi-judicial proceedings themselves
- Treating other Board Members and the public with respect and honoring the opinions of others even when the board members disagree with those opinions
- Showing respect for their offices and not behaving in ways that reflect badly on those offices
- Recognizing that they are part of a larger group and acting accordingly
- Recognizing that individual Board Members are not generally allowed to act on behalf of the body but may only do so if the body specifically authorizes it, and that the body must take official action as a body

### Section 3.a.

Board Members should avoid impropriety in the exercise of their official duties. Their official actions should be above reproach and they should not use their official position for personal gain. Although opinions may vary about what behavior is inappropriate, the Council will consider impropriety in terms of whether a reasonable person who is aware of all of the relevant facts and circumstances surrounding the Board Member's action would conclude that the action was inappropriate.

### Section 3.b.

If a Board Member believes that his or her actions, while legal and ethical, may be misunderstood, the official should seek the advice of the City Attorney and should consider publicly disclosing the facts of the situation and the steps taken to resolve it (such as consulting with the attorney).

### Section 4.

Board Members should faithfully perform the duties of their offices. They should act as the especially responsible citizens whom others can trust and respect. They should set a good example for others in the community, keeping in mind that trust and respect must continually be earned.

Board Members should faithfully attend and prepare for meetings.

Board Members should be willing to bear their fair share of the body's workload. To the extent appropriate, they should be willing to put the City's interests ahead of their own.

### Section 5.

Board Members should conduct the affairs of the board in an open and public manner. They should comply with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records, recognizing that doing so is an important way to be worthy of the public's trust. They should remember when they meet that they are conducting the public's business. They should also remember that local government records belong to the public and not to them or City employees.

In order to ensure strict compliance with the laws concerning openness, the Mayor and Council members have made it clear that an environment of transparency and candor is to be maintained at all times in the governmental unit. They should take deliberate steps to make certain that any closed sessions held by the body are lawfully conducted and that such sessions do not stray from the purposes for which they are called.

## **B. GIFT POLICY**

### **Definitions**

“Gift” – Anything of monetary value given or received without valuable consideration. The following shall not be considered gifts:

- (1) Anything for which fair market value, or face value if shown, is paid by the Covered Member.
- (2) Commercially available loans made on terms not more favorable than generally available to the general public in the normal course of business.
- (3) Contractual arrangements or commercial relationships or arrangements made in the normal course of business.
- (4) Academic or athletic scholarships based on the same criteria as applied to the public.
- (5) Anything of value properly reported as required under Article 22A of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes (North Carolina Campaign Contributions Law).
- (6) Expressions of condolence related to a death of an individual, sent within a reasonable time of the death, if the expression is one of the following:
  - a. A sympathy card, letter, or note.
  - b. Flowers.
  - c. Food or beverages for immediate consumption.
  - d. Donations to a religious organization, charity, the State or a political subdivision of the State, not to exceed a total of two hundred dollars per death per donor.

“Extended family” – Spouse, lineal descendant, lineal ascendant, sibling, spouse's lineal descendant, spouse's lineal ascendant, spouse's sibling, and the spouse of any of these individuals.

“Covered Member” – a member of any of the following Boards, Committees, and Commissions:

- (1) Land use and other regulatory bodies
  - Historic District Commission
  - Planning Commission
  - Zoning Board of Adjustment
  - Housing Appeals Board
  - Passenger Vehicle for Hire Board
- (2) Non-transit public enterprise advisory boards
  - Airport Advisory Committee
  - Charlotte Water Advisory Committee
  - Storm Water Advisory Committee
- (3) Business
  - Business Advisory Committee
  - Privatization/Competition Advisory Committee

- (4) Other
  - Civil Service Board
  - Citizens Review Board

### **Gift Ban**

No Covered Member shall knowingly accept a gift unless the gift falls within one of the exceptions set forth below.

A prohibited gift shall be promptly declined, returned, paid for at fair market value, or donated to charity or the City.

### **Exceptions**

These prohibitions shall not apply to any of the following:

- (1) Gifts from the Covered Member's extended family, or a member of the same household.
- (2) Gifts given or received as part of a business, civic, religious, fraternal, personal, or commercial relationship provided that the gift is made under circumstances that a reasonable person would conclude that the gift was not given to influence or attempt to influence official action.
- (3) Nominal gifts having a value of less than \$50.
- (4) Anything generally made available or distributed to the general public without charge.
- (5) A memento such as a commemorative shovel, plaque, figurine, trinket, or novelty item related to a civic occasion or event.
- (6) Informational materials relevant to the duties of the Covered Member.
- (7) Food and beverages for immediate consumption in connection with any of the following:
  - a. A meeting of the Covered Body, provided that the meeting is properly noticed under Article 33C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
  - b. Business meetings so long as the food and beverages are of incidental value.
  - c. Neighborhood or community meetings.
  - d. A gathering of ten or more individuals that is open to the general public, provided that the Covered Member pays the same amount, if any, that the general public is charged to attend.
- (8) Tickets or admittance to, and food and beverages for immediate consumption at, an event where the Covered Member is clearly representing the City and where the City has a legitimate purpose in being represented at the event. By way of illustration but not limitation, this would include events sponsored by the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, the Foundation for the Carolinas, Charlotte Center City Partners, the Regional Partnership, the United Way, the Arts &

Science Council, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions, and similar organizations.

- (9) Food and beverages for immediate consumption and related transportation provided all of the following conditions are met:
- a. The food, beverage, or transportation is provided during a conference, meeting, or similar event and is available to all attendees of the same class as the recipient.
  - b. The Covered Member is a director, officer, governing board member, employee, or independent contractor of one of the following:
    1. The entity giving the food, beverage, or transportation.
    2. A third party that received the funds to purchase the food, beverages, or transportation.
- (10) An expense appropriate for reimbursement by the City if it had been incurred by the Covered Member personally. Such a gift shall be considered a gift accepted by or donated to the City, provided that the gift and its value are reported in writing to the City Clerk within two weeks of receipt.

### **C. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS**

By February 1 of each year, Covered Members shall file with the city clerk a statement of economic interest using the form set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto. The statements required by this section are public records available for inspection and copying by any person during normal business hours.

### **D. COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS, AND SANCTIONS**

#### **1. Complaints**

- a. Any individual may file a complaint alleging a violation of this policy. Complaints shall be filed with the City Clerk on a form provided by the City Clerk. Complaints shall: (i) identify the complainant; (ii) state with specificity the facts that form the basis for the alleged violation; and (iii) cite the provision that has allegedly been violated.
- b. Upon receiving a complaint, the City Clerk shall forward the complaint to the City Attorney.
- c. The City Attorney shall review the complaint to determine whether it provides the information required in subsection a. If the City Attorney determines that the complaint fails to provide the information required by subsection (a), the complainant shall be so informed and afforded an opportunity to provide the required information. If the City Attorney determines that a complaint does provide the required information, the complaint shall be investigated.

## 2. Investigations

- a. Investigations will be conducted by the City Attorney's Office unless there is a conflict or significant political concerns that warrant investigation by an independent third party.
- b. In the event that the complaint is determined to be either: (i) frivolous; or (ii) does not state a claim of a violation even if the facts alleged are true, that conclusions shall be communicated to the complainant, the subject of the complaint, and the Mayor.
- c. In the event that the complaint is determined to not be frivolous and does state a claim of a violation if the facts alleged are true, the complaint shall be investigated and written findings as to the truthfulness of the factual allegations and conclusions as to whether a violation has occurred shall be prepared. The written findings and conclusions shall be provided to the complainant, the subject of the complaint, the Mayor, and the City Council.

## 3. Sanctions

Upon receipt of written findings and conclusions pursuant to Section 2.c., the Covered Member who was the subject of the investigation may be sanctioned. Potential sanctions include the adoption of a Resolution of Censure and any other lawful sanction within the Council or Mayor's power.

Section 2. This Resolution shall be effective January 1, 2016.

### **CERTIFICATION**

I, Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of a Resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, in regular session convened on the 23rd day of November, 2015 the reference having been made in Minute Book 139, and recorded in full in Resolution Book 47, Page(s) 94-107.

WITNESS my hand and the corporate seal of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, the 23rd day of November, 2015.



Stephanie C. Kelly, MMC, NCCMC, City Clerk



**City of Charlotte**  
**Statement of Economic Interest**

FILER'S NAME (FIRST, MIDDLE, LAST)			
First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix
MAILING ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP			
Address	City	State	Zip
HOME ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP			
<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Mailing Address			
Address	City	State	Zip
CURRENT EMPLOYER	JOB TITLE		
NATURE OR TYPE OF BUSINESS			
DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER	ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER		
E-MAIL ADDRESS			



## City of Charlotte

### Statement of Economic Interest

#### I. \$10,000 PLUS DISCLOSURES

If you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family<sup>1</sup> have assets or liabilities with a market value of at least \$10,000 in the following categories, please provide the requested information as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year unless another time period is specified in the question.

- ▶ Do not list the actual value of those assets or liabilities.
- ▶ Do not list assets or liabilities held in a blind trust<sup>2</sup> established by or for the benefit of you or an immediate family member.

1. Do you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family have an ownership interest in any real estate located in the City of Charlotte or the City's extraterritorial planning jurisdiction with a market value of \$10,000 or more?

▶ **This may include your home/residence. Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Owner of Real Estate	% Ownership Interest	Location by City

2. Do you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family lease or rent to or from the City real estate with a market value of \$10,000 or more? **Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of Lessor	Name of Lessee (Renter)	Location by City

3. Within the preceding two years, have you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family sold to or bought from the City personal property with a market value of \$10,000 or more? **Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of Purchaser	Name of Seller	Type of Property

<sup>1</sup>**Immediate family** includes your spouse (unless legally separated), minor children, and members of your extended family (your and your spouse's adult children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, and siblings, and the spouses of each of those person) that reside in your household.

<sup>2</sup>**Blind trust** is a trust that meets all of the following criteria: (a) the owner of the trust's assets has no knowledge of the trust's holdings and sources of income, (b) the individual or entity managing the trust's assets ("the trustee") is not a member of the official's extended family and is not associated with or employed by the official or his or her immediate family, and (c) the trustee has sole discretion to manage the trust's assets.



**City of Charlotte**  
**Statement of Economic Interest**

4. Do you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family currently lease or rent to or from the City personal property with a market value of \$10,000 or more? **Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of Lessor	Name of Lessee (Renter)	Type of Property

5(a). Do you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family own interests (generally stock) valued at \$10,000 or more in a publicly owned company that you know or have reason to know: (1) is doing or is seeking to do business of any kind with the City; or (2) has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of your official duties? **Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

► Do not list ownership interests in a widely held investment fund (including mutual funds, regulated investment companies, or pension or deferred compensation plans) if (i) the fund is publicly traded or its assets are widely diversified and (ii) neither you nor an immediate family member are able to control the assets held in the mutual fund, investment company, or pension or deferred compensation plan.

Owner of Interest	Full Name of Company (Do not use a ticker symbol)

5(b). Do you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family hold stock options valued at \$10,000 or more in a company or business that you know or have reason to know: (1) is doing or is seeking to do business of any kind with the City; or (2) has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of your official duties? **Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Owner of Stock Option	Full Name of Company (Do not use a ticker symbol)



**City of Charlotte**  
**Statement of Economic Interest**

6(a). Do you, your spouse, or members of your immediate family have financial interests valued at \$10,000 or more in a non-publicly owned company or business entity (including interests in sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships, joint ventures, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, and closely held corporations) that you know or have reason to know: (1) is doing or is seeking to do business of any kind with the City; or (2) has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of your official duties? **Do not list actual value.**

☐ Yes    ☐ No - If "No", proceed to question 7.

**Owner of Interest**

**Name of Business Entity**

6(b). For each of those non-publicly owned companies or business entities identified in question 6(a) (the "primary company"), please list the names of *any other companies* in which the primary company owns securities or equity interests valued at over \$10,000, *if known*. **Do not list actual value.**

**Non-Publicly Owned Company  
(the Primary Company)**

**Other Companies in which the Primary Company  
Owns Security or Equity Interests**

☐ None or Not Known

6(c). If you know that any company or business entity listed in 6(a) or (b) above has any material business dealings or business contracts *with the City*, or is *regulated by the City*, provide a brief description of that business activity.

**Name of Company or Business Entity**

**Description of Business Activity with the City**

☐ None or Not Known

## II. OTHER DISCLOSURES

7(a). During the preceding calendar year, were you, your spouse or members of your immediate family a director, officer, governing board member, employee, or independent contractor of a nonprofit corporation or organization operating in the City primarily for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, public health and safety, or educational purposes that you know or have reason to know: (1) is doing or is seeking to do business of any kind with the City; or (2) has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of your official duties?

☐ Yes    ☐ No - If "No", proceed to question 8.

► Do not list organizations of which you are a mere member or subscriber.

**Name of Person**

**His/Her Position**

**Name of Nonprofit  
Corporation or Organization**

**Nature of Business or  
Purpose of Organization**



**City of Charlotte**  
**Statement of Economic Interest**

7(b). If the listed nonprofit corporations or organizations do business with the City or receive City funds, please provide a brief description of the nature of that business, if known, or with which due diligence could reasonably be known.

Name of Nonprofit Corporation or Organization	Describe City Business or City Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> None or Not Known	

8. Have you ever been convicted of a felony for which you have not received either (i) a pardon of innocence or (ii) an order of expungement regarding that conviction?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Offense	Date of Conviction	County of Conviction	State of Conviction

9(a). List the name of each business with which you are associated where you or a member of your immediate family is an employee, director, officer, partner, proprietor, or member or manager and that you know or have reason to know: (1) is doing or is seeking to do business of any kind with the City; or (2) has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner distinguishable from the public generally, by the performance or nonperformance of your official duties.

Name of Person	Relationship to Filer	Name of Company	Role of Person
<input type="checkbox"/> No Business Associations			

9(b). If you know that any company or business entity listed in 9(a) above has any material business dealings or business contracts with the City, or is regulated by the City, provide a brief description of that business activity.

Name of Company or Business Entity	Description of Business Activity with the State
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable (No entities listed on #9a) <input type="checkbox"/> No relationship / Not known	



**City of Charlotte**  
**Statement of Economic Interest**

**AFFIRMATION**

I affirm that the information provided in this Statement of Economic Interest and any attachments hereto are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I also certify that I have not transferred, and will not transfer, any asset, interest, or property for the purpose of concealing it from disclosure while retaining an equitable interest.

I understand that my Statement of Economic Interest and any attachments or supplements thereto are public record.

☐ **I Agree**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Submit SIGNED, ORIGINAL documents only.**

**Do not fax or email this form.**

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