



ETHICS ON THE BEACH: A SURVIVAL GUIDE

Jeff Johnston, Assistant City Manager, McAllen

Michelle Rivera, Deputy City Manager, McAllen

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AGENDA

TCMA and Other Ethics Codes

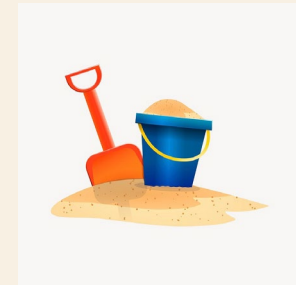
Roles and Responsibilities

Do's and Don'ts

Four Buckets

Scenarios - Ethics Game Show

Final Tips & Takeaways



WHY ETHICS?



City/County Managers

- Texas City Management Association (TCMA)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Local Codes / Ordinances
- Texas Local Govt. Code

Judges/Mayors/Council

- Local Codes / Ordinances
- Texas Local Govt. Code

Government Employees

- Building Officials (BOAT)
- Human Resource (TMHRA)
- Lawyers (Texas Bar Assn.)
- Library Directors (TMLDA)
- Municipal Clerks (TMCA)
- Planners (APA)
- Engineers (NSPE)
- Finance Officers (GFOA)
- Police Chiefs (TPCA)
- Local Codes / Ordinances
- Texas Local Govt. Code



TEXAS CITY MANAGER'S ASSOCIATION - CODE OF ETHICS

- One of the more strict professional codes
- Twelve Tenets
- Administered by a peer review board
- Penalties up to public censure and barring from membership

CORE VALUES OF THE TCMA CODE

Tenet 1 - Professional Management	Tenet 7 - Political Neutrality
Tenet 2 - Social Responsibility	Tenet 8 - Competency
Tenet 3 - Honor and Integrity	Tenet 9 - Keep Community Informed
Tenet 4 - Serve Best Interests	Tenet 10 - Be Professional
Tenet 5 - Policy's Role	Tenet 11 - Merit-Based Decisions
Tenet 6 - Respect Elected Officials	Tenet 12 - Public Trust

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL

Elected Officials are elected to:

- Set policy direction (budget is the primary tool)
- Appoint a City Manager
- Determine spending parameters
- Provide governance oversight
- Set priorities



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF CM

City Manager is selected to:

- Ensure Council is well informed
- Be sensitive to public pressure on elected officials
- Assist Council in achieving priorities
- Guide, motivate and discipline staff
- Build partnerships



KEY PRINCIPLES TO A SUCCESSFUL COUNCIL-MANAGER RELATIONSHIP

- Build and maintain trust for each other
- Respect for the “one employee” principle
- Concurrent and equal information
- No surprises – regular briefings
- Monitoring and updating the council priorities

DO'S AND DONT'S

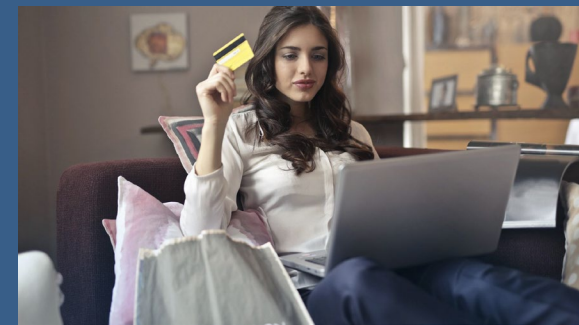
- Use e-mail and texting carefully
- Be clear and concise in communications
- Beware of "respond to all" on group texts and "forward" actions
- Friends and fans may not be forever
- Is "friending" a form of endorsement?



DO'S AND DONT'S CONTINUED



- Don't date colleagues or subordinates
- Manage your stress in healthy ways
- Don't take significant gifts/inappropriate trips
- Remember to stay in your lane
- Don't misuse public resources



FOUR BUCKETS

- * Integrity & Public Interest
- * Professional Conduct
- * Policy Leadership
- * Personal Conduct



ETHICS GAME SHOW

We need three brave volunteers to play ETHICS or NAH



SCENARIO 1



- A council member invites you to a meeting on a dolphin-watch boat
- You arrive and find two additional council members are joining you

SCENARIO 2

- A developer offers to buy you lunch at your favorite beachfront restaurant to “talk about a project”



SCENARIO 3

- A vendor send you a holiday fruit basket the size of a mid-sized car



SCENARIO 4

- A councilmember asks you to “take care of this downtown parking ticket”



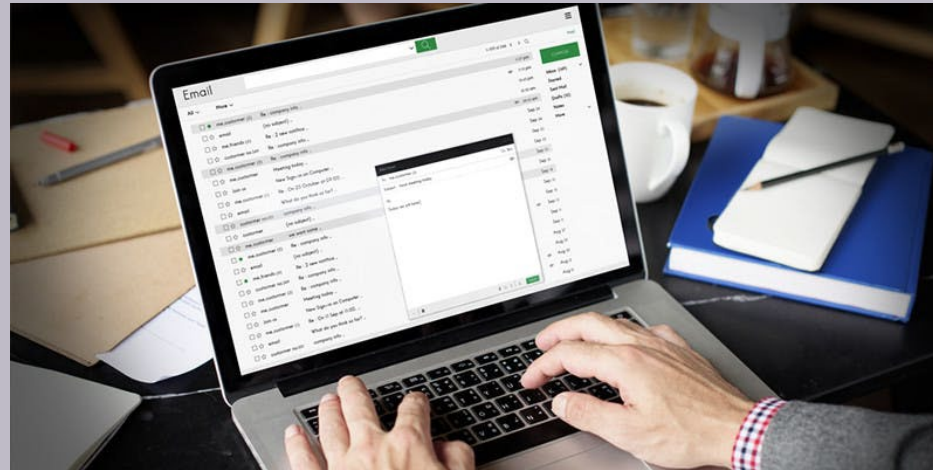
SCENARIO 5



- A citizen who always puts their trash out late calls again to complain "they missed me"
- That citizen is a relative of a councilmember

SCENARIO 6

- The mayor used the city's official email system to ask for campaign volunteers and donations.



SCENARIO 7

- A councilmember blocked critics from her official social media page



SCENARIO 8

- A city manager took consulting work with a private firm with the permission of the City Commission





THE HARD PART

- Perceived/Real Conflicts of Loyalty
- Political Pressure
- Public Perception vs. Actual Behavior

FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

- If it feels weird or wrong, it probably is
- If you wouldn't want it on the front page or on someone's vacation TikTok, don't do it
- When in doubt, ask someone



**Ethics is knowing the
difference between what
you have a right to do and
what is right to do.**

-Potter Stewart, Former Associate Supreme Court Justice



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Texas Municipal League**

www.tml.org

Texas City Management Association

www.tcma.org

- **Texas Ethics Commission**

www.ethics.state.tx.us

THANK YOU!

Jeff Johnston, Assistant City Manager, McAllen
jjohnston@mcallen.net

Michelle Rivera, Deputy City Manager, McAllen
michelle.rivera@mcallen.net

(956) 681-1001

