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**60<sup>th</sup> City Council**

**Mayor** Chuck Burtcher

**Ward I** – Trey Ayers, John Wood    **Ward II** – Mary Coffin, Patty Hazlewood

**Ward III** – Ellen Gomes, Gaylord Z. Thomas

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**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**WORKSHOP**

101 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Tuesday, July 7, 2009 6:00 p.m.

**Agenda**

1. Call to Order
2. Discussion of proposed code of ethics for city council members.
3. Discussion of possible strategic planning process and schedule.
4. Discussion of residential garage sale permits.
5. Discussion of Nuisance Ordinance.
6. Adjourn

## **UPDATED Proposed Code of Ethics for Elected and Appointed Officials**

### **POLICY PURPOSE**

The Guthrie City Council has adopted a Code of Ethics for members<sup>1</sup> of the City Council and the City's boards and commissions to assure public confidence in the integrity of local Government and its effective and fair operation.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **Preamble**

The citizens and businesses of Guthrie are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government which has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. In keeping with the City of Guthrie's commitment to treasuring our past while forging our future, the effective functioning of democratic government therefore requires that:

- Public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government;
- Public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions;
- Public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- Public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

To this end, the Guthrie City Council has adopted a Code of Ethics for members of the City Council and of the City's boards and commissions to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

- 1. Act in the Public Interest.** Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people of Guthrie and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims and transactions coming before the Guthrie City Council, boards and commissions.
- 2. Comply with the Law.** Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of Oklahoma and the City of Guthrie in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and Oklahoma constitutions; the Guthrie City Charter; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, open processes of government, and City ordinances and policies.
- 3. Conduct of Members.** The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, boards and commissions, the staff or public.
- 4. Respect for Process.** Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council and boards and commissions governing the deliberation

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of reference in the Code of Ethics, the term "member" refers to any member of the Guthrie City Council or any of the City's boards and commissions established by the City Charter, City ordinance or Council policy.

of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City staff.

- 5. Conduct of Public Meetings.** Members shall prepare themselves for public issues, listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body, and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.
- 6. Decisions Based on Merit.** Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand, rather than on unrelated considerations.
- 7. Communication.** Members shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Council or boards and commissions, which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process.
- 8. Conflict of Interest.** In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. In accordance with the law, members shall disclose investments, interests in real property, sources of income, and gifts, and they shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist, because these areas WILL exist. When these issues arise, it is simply imperative that we mitigate those issues properly.
- 9. Gifts and Favors.** Members shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office that are not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.
- 10. Confidential Information.** Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or affairs of the City. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.
- 11. Use of Public Resources.** Members shall not use public resources not available to the public in general, such as City staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.
- 12. Representation of Private Interests.** In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any board, commission or proceeding of the City, nor shall members of boards or commissions appear before their own bodies or before the Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies.
- 13. Advocacy.** Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the City Council, board or commission to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City of Guthrie, nor will they allow the inference that they do.
- 14. Policy Role of Members.** Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of Guthrie city government as outlined by the Guthrie City Charter. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards and commissions, and City staff. Except as provided by the City Charter, members therefore shall

not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

**15. Independence of Boards and Commissions.** Because of the value of the independent advice of boards and commissions to the public decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board and commission proceedings.

**16. Positive Work Place Environment.** Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with City employees to in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

**17. Implementation.** As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the City, the Guthrie Code of Ethics is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for City Council, applicants to board and commissions, and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they read and understood the City of Guthrie code of ethics. In addition, the Code of Ethics shall be annually reviewed by the City Council and boards and commissions, and the City Council shall consider recommendations from boards and commissions and update it as necessary.

**18. Compliance and Enforcement.** The Guthrie Code of Ethics expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for members of the Guthrie City Council, boards and commissions. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government.

The chairs of boards and commissions and the Mayor have the additional responsibility to intervene when actions of members that appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethics are brought to their attention. The second in line, when the Mayor's or a chair's actions come into question, would assume the duty of intervening. The City Council may impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with the City's ethical standards, such as reprimand, formal censure, loss of seniority or committee assignment. Under the City Charter, the City Council also may remove members of boards and commissions from office. A violation of this code of ethics shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Council, board or commission decision.

July 1, 2009

Dear council members,

I regret that I cannot be at the meetings on July 7. I'm traveling and exploring Ireland with my wife for our anniversary. I'll bring you back plenty of pictures though. I do want to leave with you my ideas about the possible Strategic Planning Committee.

### **Vision**

For the Citizens of Guthrie, Oklahoma to live up to our motto: A Guthrie where we "reside with pride." (Guthrie Master Plan 2002).

### **Mission**

Obtain information from residence of Guthrie to inform our strategic plan and to provide ways to achieve a Guthrie-wide pride in ourselves, our history, and our culture.

### **Strategy**

Conduct a survey question in successive water bills. Each one-question survey would elicit responses from citizens, nudging maybe even provoking participation.

Questions for consecutive water bills, 8 newsletters total so far.

1. What should Guthrie strive to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? (leave spaces after questions)
2. Based on what is your answer to Guthrie's future goals, ask yourself: How do you think we should get there? Should you be a part of it?
3. More specifically, do you want to have Guthrie grow in population in order to grow and prosper? Or, should it focus on the small touristy town? Or both? Or neither?
4. Would you be interested in participating in a neutral, professionally facilitated group discussion around Guthrie to pursue our vision as a city?
5. What makes Guthrie such a wonderful town to grow up in?
6. Would you like to learn more about working with others in your neighborhood to make Guthrie a better place for our kids?
7. How can we better inform you about how to give us your concerns?
8. Are there ways in which you could make Guthrie a better place?

There may be more questions, I'm sure if this is successful, there may be more. We could have folks send their answers to the Strategic Planning Committee at City Hall to manage. If the participation is lackluster, we can at least offer the public some much needed sense of voice. If we have any response at all, we could read the responses, synthesize them, and craft a report back into the newsletter. People would feel they have their voice and their rights are being respected. We could publish those citizen responses that possess most practical and creative ideas. Additionally, we could publish them not only in the newsletter, but maybe, the *News Leader*? Citizen participation gives the project more legitimacy. We can either make their responses anonymous, or require they be a Guthrie resident with a name? There are pros and cons to either way.

Any thoughts? I really think a strategic plan can really be helpful in clarifying who we are?  
Where are we going? And, how we are clearly moving in the right direction in terms of policy?  
This survey will help inform that Strategic Plan, make it respected and looked to not only by City Hall, but Guthrie residents, too.

I suggest we set up a committee. Participation is based on council members, who are earnestly interested in this project, and citizens who are chosen by the city council.

What do you think? Please, email me if you have questions or ideas at [woody\\_74075@yahoo.com](mailto:woody_74075@yahoo.com), or call me.

Thanks,

John