Act in the Public Interest

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members (Council Members, as well as Board, Commission, and Committee Members) shall work for the common good of the people of Blair and not for any private or personal interest and they shall assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the Blair City Council or a City of Blair Board, Commission, or Committee.

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, use of inappropriate language or profanity, personal charges or verbal attacks upon other members of the Council, Boards, Commissions, Committees, staff, or members of the public. Members shall exhibit respect for all people and shall be sensitive to different cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds.

Members acknowledge that they act collectively as a governing body during public meetings. Members acknowledge that they do not have authority to make decisions or take individual actions on behalf of the City, unless expressly directed to do so by the City Council, Board, Commission, or Committee.

Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the City Council governing deliberation of public policy issues. Members shall encourage meaningful involvement of the public and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council by City staff.

Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning property, City personnel, and 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.

When members or staff engage in conversation with residents, applicants, developers, and officials of other governmental agencies, they shall be cautious not to make representations or promises about future actions of the Council, Boards, Commissions, and Committees. Members acknowledge future actions of the Council, Board, Commission, or Committee cannot be promised or predicted with certainty.

Conduct of Public Meetings

Members shall prepare themselves for public issues, listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the Council, Board, Commission, or Committee 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. For the purpose of establishing the public record and informing members of the public, they shall articulate reasons for policy decisions.

Members acknowledge that within the public setting surprises are counterproductive and agree not to spring a surprise on each other or staff during a public meeting. If in doubt, members shall meet with staff beforehand and members shall not ask staff sensitive questions in a public meeting.

Members acknowledge the importance of their attendance at meetings of their respective body. Members shall make it a priority to be in attendance at all meetings, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the meeting.

Conflict of Interest
In accordance with the *Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act,* and 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.

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.

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. Members, individually, shall not direct, order, or make demands on any City employee, other than inquiries that can be answered routinely and without research.

Representation of Private Interests
In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, Council Members shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any Board, Commission, or Committee, or proceeding of the City, nor shall members of the Board, Commission, or Committee 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.

Advocacy
Members shall represent the official policies of the City Council, Board, Commission, or Committee to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for such purpose. When presenting their individual opinions or positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the City of Blair nor shall they allow the inference that they do.

Members shall leave decisions made at the public meetings at the meeting and shall refrain from disputing such decisions at a later date or later public meeting.

Policy Role Matters
Members shall respect and adhere to the Mayor-Council-Administrator form of Blair City government as outlined by the Municipal Code. In this structure, the City Council determines the policies of the City with the advice, information, and analysis provided by the public, Boards, Commissions, or Committees, and City staff.

Go through City Administration
Except as provided in the Blair Municipal Code, members shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the City or the professional duties of City staff; nor shall members impair the ability of staff to implement Council, Board, Commission, or Committee decisions.

Independence of Boards and Commissions
Because of the value of the independent advice of Boards, Commissions, and Committees to the public decision-making process, members of the Council shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations of outcomes of Board, Commission, and Committee proceedings.

Positive Workplace Environment
Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive workplace environment for City employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the City. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with City employees in order to not create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

Implementation
As an expression of the standard of conduct for members expected by the City, the Blair Code of Conduct 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, standards of conduct shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for City Council, applicants to Boards, Commissions, and Committees, and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they read and understood the City of Blair Code of Conduct.