

**EXHIBIT B**  
**CITY OF HARKER HEIGHTS, TEXAS, POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR MAYOR AND COUNCIL RELATIONS, COUNCIL AND STAFF RELATIONS, AND COUNCIL AND MEDIA RELATIONS**

**I. Overview**

The City Council is the governing body for the City of Harker Heights. Therefore, it must bear the initial responsibility for the integrity of governance. The City Council is responsible for its own development (both as a body and as individuals), its responsibilities, its own discipline, and its own performance. The development of this policy is designed to ensure effective and efficient governance.

This policy provides guidelines for:

- a. Mayor and City Council relations.
- b. Council and staff relations.
- c. Council and media relations.

The Council will govern the city in a manner associated with a commitment to the preservation of the values and integrity of representative local government and democracy and a dedication to the promotion of efficient and effective governing. The following statements will serve as a guide and acknowledge the commitment being made in this service to the community.

1. The Council has, as high priorities, the continual improvement of the member's professional ability and the promotion of an atmosphere conducive to the fair exchange of ideas and policies among members.
2. In its governance role, the Council will continue to be dedicated to professional and courteous relationships with staff, other Council members and the public. Council will strive to enhance the quality and image of public service.
3. The Council will recognize its responsibility to future generations by addressing the interrelatedness of the social, cultural, and physical characteristics of the community when making policies.
4. Each Council member will make a commitment to improve the quality of life for the individual and the community and to be dedicated to the faithful stewardship of the public trust.
5. The Council will endeavor to act as one unified body, not as individuals.

**II. Mayor and City Council Relations**

To ensure proper discharge of duties for the improvement of democratic local government, Council members will display behavior that demonstrates independent, impartial review of all matters addressed by them and be duly responsible to the citizens of Harker Heights and to each other in their relationships.

### **A. Mayoral Responsibilities:**

1. The Mayor will be the presiding officer at all meetings. The Mayor Pro-Tem will preside in his/her absence.
2. The Mayor will have an opportunity to have a voice in all matters before the Council takes a vote.
3. The Mayor will preserve order and decorum and will require Council members engaged in debate to limit discussion to the item and policy under consideration. The Mayor will encourage all Council members to participate in discussions and give each member an opportunity to speak before any member can speak again on the same subject.
4. The Mayor is responsible for keeping the meetings orderly by recognizing each member for discussion, limiting speaking time, encouraging healthy debate among members and keeping discussion on the agenda item being considered.
5. If a conflict arises among Council members, the Mayor will serve as mediator.

### **B. Council Responsibilities:**

1. Each Council member is responsible for arriving at the meeting and being prepared to discuss the agenda.
2. Each Council member is encouraged to attend at least one Texas Municipal League (TML) sponsored conference each year to stay informed about the issues facing municipalities.
3. It is the responsibility of Council members to be informed about previous action taken by the Council in their absence. All agendas and meeting archives are available on the City's website. In the case of absence from a work session where information is given, the individual Council member is responsible for obtaining this information prior to the Council meeting when said item is to be voted upon.
4. When addressing an agenda item, the Council member will first be recognized by the Mayor, confine himself/herself to the question under debate and refrain from accusing the integrity or motives of any Council member or staff member in his/her argument or vote. Council members will respect other members' positions/opinions and will work together to further Council's, not individual's, goals, and objectives.
5. Council members will avoid speaking their opinion in such a manner that it may be perceived to be that of the entire Council and/or in such a manner that may appear to obligate the entire Council.
6. Council members are appointed to serve as liaison to certain boards, commissions and committees and are encouraged to attend those meetings as often as possible and report activities back to the entire Council.

### **III. Code of Conduct for Mayor and Council Members**

1. During Council meetings, Council members will preserve order and decorum, will not interrupt or delay proceedings and will not refuse to obey the orders of the Mayor or the rules of the Council. Council members will demonstrate respect and courtesy to each other, to city staff members and to members of the public appearing before the Council. Council members will refrain from rude and derogatory remarks and will not belittle other Council members, staff members, or members of the public.
2. Council members will not use their position to secure special privileges and will avoid all situations that could create a perception of bias or partiality to a question before the Council.
3. Members of the Council will not condone any unethical or illegal activity. All members of the Council agree to uphold the intent of this policy and to govern their actions accordingly.
4. Before a Council member may speak, they must first be recognized by the Mayor. Upon recognition, the Council member will hold the floor and will make their point clearly and succinctly. If a Council member fails to request to speak before speaking, the Mayor will rule them 'out of order' and remind them that they do not have the floor.
5. Once recognized, a Council member will not be interrupted when speaking unless it is to call him/her to order, or other such interruption expressed below. If a Council member, while speaking, is called to order, he or she will cease speaking until the question of order is determined and if the Council member is found to be in order, he/she will be permitted to proceed speaking.
6. A Council member prevented from voting by a conflict of interest will file a conflict of interest questionnaire with the City Secretary as soon as possible after the posting of an agenda which contains a conflict, unless an applicable conflict of interest questionnaire has already been filed. A Council member prevented from voting by a conflict of interest will step down from the dais, will not vote on the matter, will not participate in discussions regarding the matter or attempt to influence the Council's deliberation of the matter in any way, will not attend executive sessions regarding the matter and will otherwise comply with the state law and city ordinances concerning conflicts of interest including Chapter 171 of the Local Government Code.

### **IV. Code of Ethics:**

The office of an elected official is one of trust and service to the citizens of Harker Heights. This position creates a special responsibility for the Council member. In response to this unique challenge, the Council is expected to govern this city in a manner associated with a commitment to the preservation of the values and integrity of representative local government and local democracy and a dedication to the promotion of efficient and effective governing.

To further these objectives, certain ethical principles will govern the conduct of every Council member, who will adhere to the following.

1. Be dedicated to the highest of ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that any member may merit the respect and confidence of the citizens

of Harker Heights.

2. Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all the people of Harker Heights.
3. Be dedicated to public service by being cooperative and constructive and by making the best and most efficient use of available resources.
4. Refrain from any activity or action that may hinder one's ability to be objective and impartial on any matter coming before the Council.
5. Refrain from seeking and/or accepting gifts or special favors.
6. Believe that personal gain by use of confidential information or by misuse of public funds or time is dishonest.
7. Avoid the undesirable influences of family relationships or close relatives of the members of Council, the appearance of preferential treatment related to family relationships or close relatives and any interference with the proper administration of the affairs of the City of Harker Heights.
8. Recognize that public and political policy decisions, based on established values, are ultimately the responsibility of the Council.
9. Conduct business in open, well-publicized meetings to be directly accountable to the citizens of Harker Heights. It is recognized that certain exceptions are made by the State for closed sessions (executive sessions); however, any action as a result of that type of meeting will be handled later in the open session as noted on the agenda.
10. Each Council member should annually take online or attend in person ethics training as offered by staff.

## **V. Council – Staff Relations**

No single relationship is as important as that of the Council and their City Manager in effectively governing the City of Harker Heights. It is for this reason that the Council and the City Manager must understand their respective roles in that process.

The City Manager is the primary link between the Council and the professional staff. Therefore, the Council's relationship with the staff will be through the City Manager. In this manner the citizens are assured integrity is evidenced in local governance in Harker Heights.

1. In order to ensure proper presentation of agenda items by staff, questions regarding clarification will be, whenever possible, addressed with the appropriate staff prior to the Council meeting. Concerns or problems regarding an agenda item will be, whenever possible, addressed with the City Manager or his/her designee prior to the Council meeting. This allows staff time to address the Council member's concern and provide all Council members with the additional information.

2. The City Manager will designate the appropriate staff member to address each agenda item and will see to it that each presentation is prepared and presented to inform and educate the Council on the issues which require Council action. The presentation will be professional, timely and allow for discussion of options for resolving the issue. The staff member making the presentation will either make it clear that no Council action is required, present the staff recommendation or present the specific options for Council consideration.
3. The City Manager is directly responsible for providing information to all Council members concerning any inquiries by a specific Council member. If the City Manager or his/her staff's time is being dominated or misdirected by a Council member, it is the City Manager's responsibility to inform the Mayor of the concern.
4. The City Manager will be held responsible for the professional and ethical behavior of himself/herself and the discipline of his/her staff. The City Manager is also responsible for ensuring that his/her staff receives the education or information necessary to address the issues facing municipal government.
5. Any conflicts arising between the staff and Council will be addressed between the Mayor and the City Manager.
6. All staff members will show each other, each Council member, and the public respect and courtesy always. All staff members are responsible for making objective and professional presentations to ensure public confidence in the process.
7. After an election, the City Manager will ensure staff has prepared the information needed for the orientation of new Council members. The orientation will include but is not limited to Council procedures, staff/media relations, departmental overviews, city facilities, procedures, current agenda items and municipal training programs through Texas Municipal League (TML).

## **VI. Council – Media Relations**

Since the democratic form of government is only successful when the citizens are kept informed and educated about the issues facing their community, it is imperative that the media play an important role in the public relations. It is through an informed public that progress is ensured, and good government remains sensitive to its constituents.

These guidelines are designed to help ensure fair relationships with print, radio, and television reporters. The Council and the City Manager recognize that the news media provide an important link between the Council and the public. It is the Council's desire to establish a professional working relationship to help maintain a well-informed and educated citizenry.

1. During the conduct of official business, the news media will occupy the places designated for them or the public. The media are requested to refrain from conversing privately with other people in the audience and to conduct any interviews with the public outside the Council chambers while Council is in session.
2. Since each governmental body conducts business differently, it is requested that all reporters

new to Harker Heights City Council meetings meet with the City Manager, Mayor, or director of communications and marketing prior to covering their first meeting to be informed of policies and procedures to help foster a professional working relationship between the media reporter and the city.

3. On administrative matters, the City Manager, or his/her designee, is the spokesperson regarding staff information on the agenda.
4. On policy decisions or any Council information pertaining to issues on the agenda, the Mayor, or his/her designee, is the primary spokesperson. To ensure fair treatment of an issue, any clarifications requested by the media will be addressed after the meeting. When opposing positions have been debated, regardless of the outcome, the public is better informed when all sides have adequate coverage by the media. This lets the public know that the item was seriously debated and that options were discussed before a vote was taken.
5. In respect to each Council member and his/her constituents, his/her views as presented on an issue before the Council will provide equitable representation from all five elected officials. Even though Council members may express differing ideas, equitable representation in the media helps promote unity of purpose by allowing each member's position during his/her term of office and not only during the campaign.
6. When the City of Harker Heights is involved in litigation or a legal dispute, Councilmembers shall refrain from commenting on settlements or other issues related to the subject.
7. Media may contact the Mayor and Councilmembers directly.
8. Councilmembers may not speak to media or the public on behalf of the body. They may speak only as an individual member.

### **General Guidelines**

1. Be transparent – Honesty will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If your private sector work could present a conflict of interest, be the first to point it out. Be clear about why you support, or do not support, certain policies or programs.
2. Be judicious – Make sure efforts to be transparent do not violate applicable legal guidelines for external communication. Consult with legal counsel before sharing conversations that are private or internal to the city or any other public entity. What is published is widely accessible, not easily retractable, and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Also, be aware that the social media account and anything published on that social media account may be subject to the Texas Public Information Act.
3. Be knowledgeable – Write in first-person and consider including links to information sources. If you publish to a website outside of the city, consider using a clarifier such as: “These comments and opinions reflect my position as one member of Harker Heights City Council.” If you have any questions about complying with brand, trademark, copyright, fair use, confidentiality, or financial disclosure laws seek an opinion from legal counsel.
4. Be perceptive – In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and

professional are often blurred. By identifying yourself as an elected official, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and the city. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with the city's values and professional standards.

5. Be conversational – Talk to your readers like you would talk to people in professional situations. Avoid overly “composed” language. Use your own personality and say what is on your mind. Consider content that is open-ended and invites responses. Encourage comments. Broaden the conversation by citing others who are commenting about the same topic and allow your content to be shared.
6. Be excited – The city is making important contributions to the community, state, and nation on a broad range of issues. Activities are focused on providing services and innovation that benefit citizens and stakeholders. Share what Harker Heights is doing and open up social media channels to learn from others.
7. Be valuable – There is a lot of written content in the social media environment. The best way to reach an audience is to write about things they value. Social communication from city leaders should help citizens, partners, and families. It should be thought-provoking and help build a strong community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, build their businesses, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand the city better, then it adds value.
8. Be responsible – What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Do not publish something that makes you uncomfortable. If you are unsure, check with the City Manager or legal counsel. Ultimately, what you publish is yours, as well as the responsibility and potential consequence.
9. Mistakes happen – If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and quick with your correction. In some cases, you can modify an earlier post. Always be sure it is clear that you modified the original post