

LOCAL POLICY FOR BOARD MEETINGS AND TOWN OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS

Town of Columbus, Columbia County, WI

Adopted 8/11/2025, Amended 5/11/2026

Section 1 Standing Rules

All meetings associated with the Town of Columbus Board shall be conducted under Robert's Rules of Order, the Newest Revised Edition, except specifically stated in this document. Meetings are open to the public, allowing residents to observe and, when permitted, participate. (WI Stat. §19.84)

BOARD MEETING RULES OF PROCEDURES

In the event the Chair is unavailable to preside, a supervisor will call a meeting to order, then the Board votes for a supervisor to preside. Must have a quorum of Board members to conduct a meeting.

An agenda item may be added by ~~a majority request of Board members~~ any voting board member, provided the addition complies with Wisconsin Open Meetings Law and public notice requirements.

(1) ANNUAL MEETING. The Board shall hold an annual meeting on the default date set by statute, the second Tuesday in April. The Board may vote at the annual meeting to change the following year's date, but the date must fall within 10 days following the second Tuesday in April. The annual meeting cannot be held prior to the second Tuesday in April. Reference to WI Statute 60. 10.

(2) REGULAR MEETING. The Board shall hold its regular meeting on the second Monday of each month at 7: 00pm. The date and time of the meeting may be changed by a majority vote of the Board. The Board shall meet monthly. The town clerk is then responsible for providing proper public notice.

(3) SPECIAL AND EMERGENCY MEETINGS. A special meeting of the Board can be called by the town chair, a specific number of electors, or by a vote of the town Board itself. The purpose, time and date of the meeting shall be clearly defined in the call or request. Upon receipt the town clerk is responsible for providing proper public notice, including meeting agenda.

(a) A special meeting of the town Board may be called by the town chair by filing in writing with the time and purpose 24 hours prior to the proposed meeting to the town clerk. Upon receipt the clerk shall give timely notice, including the meeting agenda.

(b) A member of the town Board, other than the town chair, may request a special meeting of the town Board by filing in writing with the town clerk. The request must designate the agenda item(s) for the special meeting. Upon receipt the clerk shall give timely notice,

including the meeting agenda, to all Board members no later than 24 hours after receiving a request. The town clerk shall then set a time for the special meeting not more than 2 days thereafter.

(c) A written request, signed by electors equal to, but not less than 10 percent of the votes cast in the last governor's election, is filed with the clerk. The request must designate the purpose along with the time and date of the meeting. Public notice requirements of one public place and on Townships website. Notice shall be posted for a minimum of 15 days, but not more than 20 days of said meeting.

(d) The town chair or presiding officer is responsible for maintaining order and decorum during the meeting.

(4) ORDER OF BUSINESS.

(a) Call meeting to order.

(b) Roll call of members, to ensure quorum.

(c) Pledge of Allegiance.

(d) Verification & approval of minutes.

(e) Approval of Treasurers report.

(f) Standing committee reports, including Chairman and all other committees.

(g) Old Business.

(h) New Business.

(i) Requests for future agenda items.

(j) Public comments.

(k) Adjourn meeting.

Section 2 Town Officials Code of Ethics

2(A) Title/Purpose

The title of this Section is Town Officials Code of Ethics. The purpose of this Section is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all such officials and employees by setting forth those acts or actions that are incompatible with the best interests of the Town of Columbus and by directing disclosure by such officials and employees of private financial or other interests in matters affecting the Town. The Town Board believes that a Code of Ethics for the guidance of elected and appointed officials and employees will help them

avoid conflicts between their personal interests and their public responsibilities, will improve standards of public service and will promote and strengthen the faith and confidence of the citizens of this Town in their elected and appointed officials and employees. The Town Board hereby reaffirms that each elected appointed Town official and employee holds his or her position as a public trust, and any intention effort to realize substantial gain through official conduct is a violation of that trust.

2(B) Authority

This Section is adopted pursuant to the authority provided in Wis. Stat. §§ 19. 41 and 19. 59.

2(C) Policy and Principles

The proper operation of democratic government requires that public officials and employees be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policy be made in proper channels of the governmental structure; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals, this Section is hereby established for Town of Columbus officials and employees, whether elected or appointed or appointed, paid or unpaid, including members of boards, committees and commissions of the Town, as well as any individuals who are candidates for elective office as soon as such individuals file nomination papers with the Town.

2(D) Definitions

The following definitions shall be applicable in this Section.

(1) Anything of value means any gift, money or property, favor, service, payment, advance, forbearance, loan, hospitality, or promise of future employment for any public official or the public official's immediate family if it could reasonably be expected to influence the local public official's vote, official action or judgment, or could be reasonably be considered to be a reward for any official action or inaction as provided in Wis. Stat. § 19. 59(1)(b). Excluded from this definition are compensation and fees paid the State, fees and expenses permitted under Wis. Stat. § 19. 56, seasonal, anniversary, or customary gifts among immediate family members or friends, hospitality unrelated to Town business, and all political contributions that are reported under Ch. 11, Wisconsin Statutes.

(2) Associated, when used with reference to an organization, means any organization in which an individual or a member of his or her immediate family is a director, officer or trustee, or owns or controls, directly or indirectly, and severally or in the aggregate, at least 10 percent of the outstanding equity.

(3) Business means any corporation, partnership, proprietorship, firm, enterprise, franchise, or association, organization, self-employed individual or any other legal entity that engages in profit making activities.

(4) Elective office means an office regularly filled by vote of the people.

(5) Financial interest means any interest which shall yield, directly or indirectly, a monetary or other material benefit to a public official.

(6) Gift means payment or receipt of anything of value without valuable consideration.

(7) Immediate family means:

(a) An individual's spouse; and

(b) An individual's relative by marriage, lineal descent or adoption who receives, directly or indirectly, more than one-half of his or her support from the individual or from whom the individual receives, directly or indirectly, more than one-half of his or her support.

(8) Ministerial action means an action that an individual performs in a given state of facts in a prescribed manner in obedience to the mandate of legal authority, without regard to the exercise of the individual's own judgment as to the propriety of the action being taken.

(9) Organization means a political organization under whose name individuals who seek elective office appear on the ballot at any election or any national, state, or local unit or affiliate of that organization.

(10) Political party means a political organization under whose name individuals who seek elective office appear on the ballot at any election or any national, state, or local unit or affiliate of that organization.

(11) Public employee means any person excluded from the definition of a public official who is employed by the Town.

(12) Public official means the following persons:

(a) An elective office under WI Statute 60.

(b) An appointive office or position of the Town in which an individual serves for a specified term, except a position limited to the exercise of ministerial action or a position filled by an independent contractor.

(c) An appointive office or position of the Town which is filled by the Town Board or the executive or administrative head of the local government and in which the incumbent serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority, except a clerical position, a position limited to the exercise of ministerial action or a position filled by an independent contractor.

(13) Town means the Town of Columbus.

2 (E) Responsibility of Public Officials

(1) No public official may use his or her public position or office to obtain financial gain or anything of substantial value for the private benefit of himself or herself or his or her immediate family, or for an organization with which he or she is associated. This paragraph does not prohibit a local public official from using the title or prestige of his or her office to obtain campaign contributions that are permitted and reported as required by Wis. Stat. Ch. 11.

(2) No person may offer or give to a public official, directly or indirectly, and no public official may solicit or accept from any person, directly or indirectly, anything of value if it could reasonably be expected to influence the public official's vote, official actions or judgment or could reasonably be considered as a reward for any official action or inaction on the part of the public official. This paragraph does not prohibit a public official from engaging in outside employment.

(3) No public official or candidate for public office may, directly or by means of an agent, give, or offer or promise to give, or withhold, or offer or promise to withhold, his or her vote or influence, or promise to take or refrain from taking official action with respect to any proposed or pending matter in consideration, or, upon condition that, any other persons make or refrain from making a political contribution, or provide or refrain from providing any service or other thing of value, to or for the benefit of a candidate, a political party, any person who is subject to a registration requirement under sec. Wis. Stat. § 11.05, or any person making a communication that contains a reference to a clearly identified public official holding an elective office or to a candidate for public office.

(4) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (E), no public official may:

(a) Take any official action substantially affecting a matter in which the official, a member of his or her immediate family, or an organization with which the official is associated, has a substantial financial interest.

(b) Use his or her office or position in a way that produces or assists in the production of a substantial benefit, direct or indirect, for the official, one or more members of the official's immediate family either separately or together, or an organization with which the official is associated.

(5) Paragraph (4) does not prohibit a public official from taking any action concerning the lawful payment of salaries or employee benefits or reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses or prohibit a local public official from taking official action with respect to any proposal to modify this Code.

2(F) Statutory Standards of Conduct

There are certain provisions of the Wisconsin Statutes which should, while not set forth herein, be considered an integral part of any Code of Ethics. Accordingly, the provisions of the following sections of the Wisconsin Statutes, as from time-to-time amended, are made a

part of this Code of Ethics and shall apply to public officials and employees whenever applicable, to-wit:

- (1) Wis. Stat. § 946. 10 Bribery of Public Officers and Employees.
- (2) Wis. Stat. § 946. 11 Special Privileges from Public Utilities.
- (3) Wis. Stat. § 946. 12 Misconduct in Public Office.
- (4) Wis. Stat. § 946. 13 Private Interest in Public Contract Prohibited.

2(G) Use of Town Property

No official or employee shall use or permit the unauthorized use of Town-owned vehicles, equipment, materials or property for personal convenience or profit, except when such services are available to the public generally or are provided as Town policy for the use of such official or employee in the conduct of official business, as authorized by the Town Board or authorized Board, commission or committee.

2(H) Advisory Opinions

Any questions as to the interpretation of any provisions of this Code of Ethics Chapter shall be referred to the Town Attorney. Such requests shall be as detailed as possible and shall be made in writing. Advisor requests and opinions shall be kept confidential, except when disclosure is authorized by the requestor, in which case the request and opinion may be made public.

2(I) Sanctions

A determination that an official's or employee's actions constitute improper conduct under the provisions of this Section may, in the case of an employee, constitute a cause of suspension, removal from office or employment or other disciplinary action. In the case of an elected or appointed Town official, the Town Board, upon a review of the facts with the individual, may officially reprimand the official or remove such official from certain committee assignments or responsibilities.

Adopted by the Town of Columbus Board this 11th of August, 2025.

Name & Title	Signature	Date
[Darren Schroeder, Chairman]		
[Ed Wolf, Supervisor 1]	<u>Edward H. Wolf</u>	<u>8/11/2025</u>
[Harold Schwoerer, Supervisor 2]	<u>Harold Schwoerer</u>	<u>8/11/2025</u>
Gabrielle Loeffler, Attest-Town Clerk	<u>Gabrielle Loeffler</u>	<u>8-11-2025</u>