

CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

ORDINANCE NO. 6913

AN ORDINANCE amending the ethics code in chapters 3.90 and 3.92 of the Bellevue City Code to improve clarity, consistency and implementation; providing for severability; and setting an effective date.

WHEREAS, Bellevue's ethics code in chapters 3.90 and 3.92 of the Bellevue City Code (BCC) establishes ethical standards for city employees in the performance of their city work and for members of the city council and council-appointed boards, commissions and committees to achieve the highest ethical standards and best practices; and

WHEREAS, chapters 3.90 and 3.92 BCC have not been substantively updated since their original adoption in 1977 and 2013, respectively, and contain inconsistent and outdated provisions; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to amend chapters 3.90 and 3.92 BCC to correct inconsistent and outdated provisions and to improve clarity, consistency and implementation of these chapters; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Section 3.90.010 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

**3.90.010 Declaration of policy.**

This chapter is enacted to establish ethical standards which shall govern the conduct of city employees in the performance of their city work and other city business, and to prevent potential conflicts of interest.

Section 2. Section 3.90.040.B of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

B. Solicits, accepts or seeks anything of economic value as a gift, gratuity, or favor, other than officially on behalf of the city, from any person, firm or corporation involved in a contract or transaction which is or may be the subject of official action of the city; provided, that the prohibition against gifts or favors shall not apply to:

1. Attendance of an employee at a hosted meal or event when it is provided in conjunction with a meeting or event directly related to the conduct of city business or where official attendance by the employee as a staff representative is appropriate;

2. Unsolicited tokens or awards of appreciation in the form of a plaque, trophy, desk item, wall memento, or similar item;
3. Unsolicited flowers, plants, floral arrangements, or food items that are shared with other employees;
4. An award publicly presented in recognition of public service;
5. Any gift which would have been offered or given to the employee if they were not a city employee;
6. Discounts available to an individual as a member of an employee group, occupation, or similar broad-based group;
7. Payments by a governmental or nongovernmental entity of reasonable expenses incurred in connection with a speech, presentation, appearance, or trade mission made in an official capacity. As used in this subsection, "reasonable expenses" are limited to travel, lodging, and subsistence expenses incurred the day before through the day after the event; or
8. Gifts of fifty dollars or less for bona fide, nonrecurring, ceremonial occasions

No city employee may accept gifts, other than those specified in this subsection, with an aggregate value in excess of \$100.00 from a single source in a calendar year or a single gift from multiple sources with a value in excess of \$100.00 consistent with RCW 42.52.150, as now or hereafter amended. For purposes of this section, "single source" means any person, corporation, or entity, whether acting directly or through any agent or other intermediary, and "single gift" includes any event, item, or group of items used in conjunction with each other or any trip including transportation, lodging, and attendant costs. The value of gifts given to a city employee's family member or guest shall be attributed to the official for the purpose of determining whether the limit has been exceeded, unless an independent business, family, or social relationship exists between the donor and the employee, family member or guest.

Section 3. Section 3.90.050 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

**3.90.050 Political activities.**

A. No city employee shall use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election for a position on the Bellevue city council.

B. Nothing in this chapter shall prevent an employee from fully exercising their constitutional and lawful rights to participate in political activities.

Section 4. Section 3.90.060 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to remove subsection A and renumber the remaining subsections, to read as follows:

**3.90.060 Penalties.**

A. The city, through the authorized agents, may initiate appropriate civil action against any person who violates or fails to comply with any provision of this chapter.

B. Any employee whose conduct is determined by the city manager to be in violation of this chapter may be terminated from employment and/or temporarily suspended with loss of pay up to and including 30 days by the city manager.

C. Any contract or transaction which is the subject of an official act or action of the city in which there is an interest prohibited by this chapter or which involves the violation of a provision of this chapter, shall be voidable at the option of the city.

Section 5. Section 3.92.010.B of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

B. Intent. The people and businesses of Bellevue are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government that has earned the public's full confidence. It is further the intent that city officials be permitted to fulfill their duties to represent the public to the greatest extent possible unless circumstances exist where such engagement is impermissible. Nothing in this chapter is intended to reduce, limit, or restrict the pool of available candidates for service on the council or service on council-appointed public bodies, all of which are either part-time or volunteer positions. It is in the public interest to ensure that barriers to resident public service are not created by the provisions of this chapter. In keeping with the city of Bellevue's commitment to excellence, the effective functioning of democratic government therefore requires that:

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

Section 6. Section 3.92.030.E.1 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

1. No official may accept gifts, other than those specified in subsection (E)(2) of this section, with an aggregate value in excess of \$100.00 from a single source in a calendar year or a single gift from multiple sources with a value in excess of \$100.00 consistent with RCW 42.52.150, as now or hereafter amended. For purposes of this section, “single source” means any person, corporation, or entity, whether acting directly or through any agent or other intermediary, and “single gift” includes any event, item, or group of items used in conjunction with each other or any trip including transportation, lodging, and attendant costs. The value of gifts given to an official’s family member or guest shall be attributed to the official for the purpose of determining whether the limit has been exceeded, unless an independent business, family, or social relationship exists between the donor and the official, family member or guest.

Section 7. Section 3.92.030.F.1 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

1. Specific information, rather than generalized knowledge, that is not available to a person who files a public records request; or

Section 8. Section 3.92.040.A of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

A. In addition to BCC 3.92.030, which shall be administered by the ethics officer, officials shall comply with the following standards:

1. Compliance with Other Laws. Officials shall comply with federal, state and city laws in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and Washington Constitutions; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures and open processes of government; and city ordinances and policies. See Appendix A of this section. Officials shall comply with the requirements of RCW 42.17A.005 through 42.17A.220 regarding contract interests. As required by RCW 42.17A.565, no official shall knowingly solicit or encourage, directly or indirectly, any political contribution from any city employee. Except under limited circumstances described in RCW 42.17A.555, no official may use or authorize the use of the facilities of the city for the purpose of assisting a campaign for the election of any person to office, or form the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition in a manner not available to the general public on the same terms.

Section 9. Section 3.92.040.B of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

B. Officials shall also comply with the following standards:

...

Section 10. Section 3.92.040 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to remove Appendix A in its entirety.

Section 11. Section 3.92.060 of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

3.92.060 Ethics officer.

A. The city council creates the position of ethics officer. The ethics officer shall be admitted to the practice of law and shall have sufficient experience and training. The ethics officer shall at all times maintain the impartiality of the office by revealing information provided to the officer only in the context of rendering opinions to the city and its officials and staff, as necessary or in response to legal process.

B. As needed, the ethics officer will provide for review of this code of ethics and review of training materials for education regarding the code of ethics. The ethics officer is also responsible for advisory opinions concerning the code of ethics as provided in BCC 3.92.070 and for the prompt and fair enforcement of its provisions as provided in BCC 3.92.080. In issuing opinions or orders under BCC 3.92.070 and BCC 3.92.080, the ethics officer shall consider the purpose and intent described in BCC 3.92.010 and RCW 42.23.010.B.

Section 12. Section 3.92.080.A of the Bellevue City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

A. Complaint Procedures.

1. Any -person who believes an official has committed a violation of this code of ethics may file a complaint with the city clerk. Complaints shall be subject to the following requirements:

...

- d. The complaint must be accompanied by all available documentation or other evidence known to the complainant to support the allegations of the complaint; and

...

Section 13. Severability. If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining parts of this Ordinance.

Section 14. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force five (5) days after its passage and legal publication.

Passed by the City Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026 and signed in authentication of its passage this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

(SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mo Malakoutian, Mayor

Approved as to form:  
Trisna Tanus, City Attorney

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Trisna Tanus, City Attorney

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charmaine Arredondo, City Clerk  
Published \_\_\_\_\_