

## **RESOLUTION No. 2019-31**

### **A Resolution to Adopt: (1) a Code of Conduct applicable to the Mayor, City Council Members, and Volunteer Appointees to City Boards and Commissions; and (2) Guidelines for Public Comments at New Castle City Council Meetings and Other Public Hearings**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of New Castle desires to conduct business in an open, respectful, and effective manner, and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council also desires to conduct its meetings and business affairs efficiently and within a reasonable amount of time, and

**WHEREAS**, in meeting these goals, the City Council wishes to adopt the following Code of Conduct:

#### **“Code of Conduct for the Mayor, City Council, Boards and Commissions Applicable to volunteers appointed to Boards and Commissions by the Mayor and Council**

**As representatives for the City of New Castle, we agree to these principles of conduct:**

1. We will demonstrate professionalism, respect, and civility in working for the greater good of New Castle.
2. We will strive to provide fair and equal treatment to all people in performing our respective public responsibilities.
3. We listen courteously and attentively to public comments delivered in a civil manner, respecting the different views of other people.
4. We refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks on the character or motives of the Mayor, Council members, commissioners or board members, staff, and the public.
5. We are mindful that we are perceived as public officials even when not engaged in City business and will endeavor to behave in a manner reflective of the trust placed in us by the public.
6. We will strive to hold efficient meetings designed to achieve constructive solutions for the public benefit.
7. We will strive to solve problems and render decisions based on the merits of each issue.

8. We will refrain from hindering the administrative functions and duties of City staff.

9. We will treat City staff with respect and not publicly criticize staff, but privately communicate any concerns to the City Administrator.

10. Council members will not publicly discuss personnel issues or other matters discussed in Executive Session.

11. We will not make unilateral decisions or take individual actions beyond our permitted authority.

12. When asking for information, assistance or follow-up, we will communicate directly with the City Administrator, and will provide the City Administrator with advance notice before communicating directly with staff, contractors or other governmental bodies in regards to City business;” and

**WHEREAS**, in meeting the goal of conducting its business in an efficient, respectful manner, the City Council also wishes to adopt the following Guidelines for Public Comments:

**“Guidelines for Public Comment Periods at New Castle City Council  
Meetings and Other Public Hearings**

*The presiding officer has discretion in enforcing these guidelines for the orderly, efficient, and civil conduct of city council meetings and public hearings.*

1. Public comment periods are provided at the discretion of the presiding officer.
2. In the interest of maintaining proper records, anyone wishing to speak must sign in on the sheet provided. Attendees may not sign in on behalf of others.
3. Comments should be confined to issues within the jurisdiction of the body conducting the hearing.
4. For the public comment periods and public hearings, each speaker is allowed three (3) minutes. The public comment periods may be adjusted by the presiding officer.
5. Meeting attendees may not “donate” their speaking time to another person.
6. Speakers are not permitted to comment during public comment periods on topics that are scheduled as a public hearing item.

7. All comments should be addressed to Council or other body conducting the hearing as a whole.

8. Members of the audience may not disrupt another person speaking on an issue by cheering, booing, or otherwise making it difficult for others to hear the speaker.

9. Speakers shall refrain from comment or behavior that involves:

- A. Disorderly speech or action; name-calling or personal attacks; obscene or indecent remarks; and derogatory comments on personalities;
- B. Advertising or promoting the sale of products, services, or private enterprise;
- C. Promoting any contest or lottery; and
- D. Promoting candidates for public office or any upcoming ballot measures.

10. In accordance with Delaware Code Title 29 §10004(d) any person who is willfully and seriously disruptive of the conduct of the meeting may, at the discretion of the presiding officer, be subjected to the following actions:

- A. Warning by the presiding officer.
- B. If the person persists in disruption, that person may be barred from the rest of the meeting;” and

**WHEREAS**, City Council has discussed the above described Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Public Comment Period at several City Council meetings and solicited public comments on same.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the City Council of the City of New Castle that the City hereby adopts the above stated Code of Conduct for the Mayor, City Council, Boards and Commissions Applicable to volunteers appointed to Boards and Commissions by the Mayor and Council, and the above stated Guidelines for Public Comment Periods at New Castle City Council Meetings and Other Public Hearings

**Passed this 10th day of September, 2019**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Ratchford, City Council President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Suzanne M. Souter, Councilperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Valarie W. Leary, Councilperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Russell P. Smith, Councilperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Platt, Councilperson

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Whitaker, City Clerk.