



**REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF TAFT CITY COUNCIL
TAFT CITY HALL, 230 GREEN AVE., TAFT, TEXAS
MARCH 4, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL AND CERTIFY A QUORUM

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND TEXAS PLEDGE

4. INVOCATION

5. PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND COUNCIL AND STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

This item will also include any announcements of community interest and/or upcoming events.

- a. REAL Transportation assistance during recent winter storm
 - i. Proclamation
 - ii. Presentation (Pam Hernandez, REAL Transportation)

6. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

The public is invited to address the City Council on any matter of City business. Please note that all comments should be made at this time. Unless an agenda item is listed as a "public hearing," comments will not be taken elsewhere. Also, Council members cannot respond to comments if the topic is not on this agenda. Each speaker will be allowed three minutes. If you wish to speak, please sign up with the City Secretary before the meeting begins. Citizens are to refrain from any personal attacks on the council or any member of the staff. Failure to abide by these policies could result in a charge of disorderly conduct.

7. STAFF REPORTS AND OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

Items in this section are not expected to require action by City council and are generally for information only. However, all items in this section may become action items on request of any Council Member, and City Council may take action on any item listed in this section without further notice.

- a. City Attorney Contract- The Gwosdz Law Firm (Mayor Pro Tem Castillo)
- b. City of Taft Budget (Mayor Pro Tem Castillo)
 - i. Attorney's Fees
 - ii. Public Works Personnel
- c. Water Conservation Efforts and update Drought Contingency Plan (Mayor Pro Tem Castillo)
- d. Lamas Cemetery (Mayor Pro Tem Castillo)

8. ACTION ITEMS

City council will discuss, consider, and take any action deemed necessary on items listed in this section, including the adoption of a minute order, a resolution or an ordinance.

- a. Approve the appointment of Rolando Rodriguez to the Taft Quality Improvement Corporation
- b. Approve to name Filaberto Rivera as President of the Planning & Zoning Commission
- c. Approve to tear down fence along Highway 181
- d. Authorize the City Manager to enter a finance agreement with Government Capital on the purchase of water meters
- e. Authorize the City Manager to renew a one year agreement with Infiniti Communications Technologies, Inc for computer network maintenance and support.
- f. Approve Ordinance 2025-1305 adopting the City of Taft Personnel Policy
- g. Approve Ordinance 2025-1306 creating the Building & Standards Commission
- h. Approve the use of the Alvarado Senior Center for private events

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

All items listed in this section will be deliberated in a closed session. Members of the public are not generally permitted to attend a closed session. Executive session items may be considered as an action item at the discretion of the Mayor; however, City Council will not take any action in closed session

- a. Section 551.074, Personnel Matters involving the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a Public Officer or employee or to hear a complaint against an officer or employee, including but not limited to:
 - i. Evaluation of City Manager, Ryan Smith
- b. Section 551.071, Consultation with attorney on matter involving pending or contemplated litigation or other matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- c. Tex. Gov't Code Section 551.087: To discuss or deliberate regarding commercial or financial information that the City has received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the territory of the City and with which the City is conducting economic development negotiations. (Mayor Pro Tem Castillo)

10. ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

Council will reconvene in open session and may take action on any item listed in the Executive Session action of this agenda.

- a. Section 551.074, Personnel Matters involving the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a Public Officer or employee or to hear a complaint against an officer or employee, including but not limited to:
 - i. Evaluation of City Manager, Ryan Smith
- b. Section 551.071, Consultation with attorney on matter involving pending or contemplated litigation or other matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- c. Tex. Gov't Code Section 551.087: To discuss or deliberate regarding commercial or financial information that the City has received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the territory of the City and with which the City is conducting economic development negotiations. (Mayor Pro Tem Castillo)

11. ADJOURNMENT

Certification

I, Jessica Gonzalez, certify that the above notice of this Regular Meeting of the City Council was posted on the City Hall bulletin board, a place convenient and readily accessible to the general public at all times, and to the City's website, www.tafttx.gov, in compliance with Chapter 551, Texas Government.

Posted on:

Date: Feb-28, 2025

Time: 4:30pm


Jessica Gonzalez, City Secretary

The City Council of the City of Taft reserves the right to convene in Executive Session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code: Section 551.071 (Consultations with Attorney), Section 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters), Section 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices), or Section 551.087 (Deliberations Regarding Economic Development Negotiations) on any of the above items.

Special Accommodations

This facility is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking spaces are available. Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact the City Secretary's office at (361) 528-3512 or FAX (361) 528-3515 or email jgonzalez@tafttx.gov for further information. Braille is not available.



City of Taft

Application for City of Taft Boards/Commissions/ Committees

Return completed application to City Secretary's office, 230 Green Ave., Taft, TX 78390 or
email to jgonzalez@tafttx.gov

Please type or print clearly:

Date: Feb. 14, 2025

Name: Rolando Rodriguez

Phone: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Alt. Phone: _____

City, State, Zip: TAFT, TX 78390

Email: _____

Resident of Taft Yes No How long? 53 yrs Registered Voter Yes No

Current Employer: Retired

Please list any experience that qualifies you to serve in the areas you have indicated.

EDC Member, PRIOR TQIC MEMBER

List civic or community involvement with which you have been involved.

TAFT L.L. President, Cub Scouts, High School ANNOUNCER

Educational Background

Bach. Degree - TEXAS A&M@ COLLEGE STATION, TX

Board or Commission- List 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice

_____ Taft Economic Development Corporation

1st Taft Quality Improvement Corporation

_____ Planning & Zoning Commission

_____ Other _____

I hereby affirm that all statements herein are true and correct.

Rolando Rodriguez
Applicant Signature

Feb. 14, 2025
Date



Financing Proposal

Prepared For



City of Taft

February 28, 2025

Submitted By

Government Capital Corporation

345 Miron Drive
Southlake, Texas 76092

Stephanie Cates

SVP Client Services
(817) 722-0214



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Corporate Overview

Government Capital Corporation (GCC) was founded in 1992 with the primary purpose of providing tax-exempt financing solutions for state and local government entities including cities, schools, counties, and special districts. Since our inception, GCC and its affiliates have provided financing solutions exceeding \$6 billion for many different types of projects. These financings have provided funding for a wide variety of municipal needs including vehicles, technology, facilities, and heavy-duty equipment. Although we serve clients in all 50 states, one of our primary areas of focus is assisting Texas cities with acquiring essential personal property and equipment. Our team possesses extensive experience assisting local Texas governments in creating, evaluating and implementing financing structures of every type authorized by state borrowing authorities. Since our inception, we've been honored to provide financing solutions for over 560 Texas cities, representing over 45 percent of the cities in the state. In many cases, we have helped our clients adapt to and comply with regulatory changes as well as enable them to execute financings more rapidly, efficiently, and economically.

Representative Experience

City of Mathis - Government Capital's longest client relationship is with the City of Mathis, Texas. From the firm's very first funding in January of 1993 to the present day, GCC has provided the City of Mathis with millions of dollars in financing. Projects have included public works, public safety, capital equipment, energy efficiency, and technology improvements as well as various economic development projects.

City of San Saba - For over 20 years, Government Capital has assisted the City of San Saba with providing tailored financing solutions for more than 55 projects. With GCC's support, the city has financed a wide variety of vehicles, equipment, infrastructure improvements, and real estate acquisitions. The city's Economic Development Corporation has also partnered with Government Capital to fund playground and water park projects.

City of Van Horn - Since 2002, GCC has partnered with the City of Van Horn to create various financing solutions that fit the needs of the city. Projects have included numerous vehicle and equipment acquisitions as well as utility improvement projects.

City of Corrigan - Government Capital's relationship with the City of Corrigan began in 2006 and has included funding a variety of acquisitions for police vehicles, technology, and public safety equipment. Most recently, the city financed a water meter replacement project to install radio-read meters to recapture water loss.

City of Hillsboro - Since 2010, the City of Hillsboro and Government Capital have completed numerous projects and acquisitions together. These projects have included public safety vehicle acquisitions, HVAC upgrades, capital equipment procurement, and utility meter updates. Most recently, the city financed hardware and software technology upgrades for the police department.

City of Post - Government Capital has partnered with the City of Post since 2020 to fund projects from heavy equipment acquisitions to water meter replacements. Additionally, GCC has provided multiple refinancings designed to reduce interest costs, allowing the city to reallocate critical funds.

City of La Feria - Since 2005, Government Capital has provided financing solutions to the City of La Feria. Funded projects have included acquiring public safety vehicles and public works equipment. Most recently, GCC funded a city-wide utility meter replacement project.



GOVERNMENT CAPITAL
CORPORATION

Partial Listing of Texas City Clients



City of Brady



City of Stephenville



City of Troup



City of Anson



City of Dilley



City of Early



City of Eastland



City of Katy



City of Ralls



City of Poteet



City of Dublin



City of Whitney



Town of Anthony



City of Panhandle



City of Roma



City of Liberty Hill



City of East Tawakoni



Town of Pecos City



City of Dalhart



City of Hidalgo



City of Mineral Wells



City of Chandler



City of Lamesa



City of Canyon



February 28, 2025

Mr. Ryan Smith
City Manager
City of Taft
361-528-3512
rsmith@tafttx.gov

Thank you for the opportunity to present proposed financing for City of Taft. I am submitting for your review the following proposed structure:

ISSUER:	City of Taft, TX	
FINANCING STRUCTURE:	Public Property Finance Contract issued under Local Government Code Section 271.005	
EQUIPMENT COST:	\$ 581,730.00	
TERM:	7 Payments	10 Payments
INTEREST RATE:	5.725%	5.799%
PAYMENT AMOUNT:	\$ 103,191.91	\$ 78,287.52
PAYMENTS BEGINNING:	One year from signing and annually thereafter	

Financing for these projects would be simple, fast and easy due to the fact that:

- ✓ We have an existing relationship with you and have your financial statements on file, expediting the process. Please keep in mind we may also need current year statements.
- ✓ We can provide familiar documentation for your legal counsel.

The above proposal is subject to audit analysis, assumes bank qualification and mutually acceptable documentation. The terms outlined herein are based on current markets. Upon credit approval, rates may be locked for up to thirty (30) days. If funding does not occur within this time period, rates will be indexed to markets at such time.

Our finance programs are flexible and as always, my job is to make sure you have the best possible experience every time you interact with our brand. We're always open to feedback on how to make your experience better. If you have any questions regarding other payment terms, frequencies or conditions, please do not hesitate to call.

With Best Regards,

Stephanie Cates

Stephanie Cates
SVP Client Services
Main: 817-421-5400

RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION REGARDING A CONTRACT FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING A **"METER UPGRADE"**.

WHEREAS, City of Taft (the "Issuer") desires to enter into that certain Finance Contract by and between the Issuer and Government Capital Corporation ("GCC") for the purpose of financing a "Meter Upgrade". The Issuer desires to designate this Finance Contract as a "qualified tax-exempt obligation" of the Issuer for the purposes of Section 265 (b) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY CITY OF TAFT:

Section 1. That the Issuer will enter into a Finance Contract with GCC for the purpose of financing a "Meter Upgrade".

Section 2. That the Finance Contract by and between the City of Taft and GCC is designated by the Issuer as a "qualified tax-exempt obligation" for the purposes of Section 265 (b) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

Section 3. That the Issuer appoints the _____ (Title) or designee, as the authorized signer of the Finance Contract by and between the City of Taft and GCC as well as any other ancillary exhibit, certificate, or documentation needed for the Contract.

Section 4. The Issuer will use loan proceeds for reimbursement of expenditures related to the Property, within the meaning of Treasury Regulation § 1.150-2, as promulgated under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended.

This Resolution has been PASSED upon Motion made by Board Member _____, seconded by Board Member _____ by a vote of _____ Ayes to _____ Nays and is effective this _____, 2024.

Issuer: City of Taft

Witness Signature

Leonard Vasquez, Mayor

Jessica Gonzalez, City Secretary



January 30th, 2025

- 302 Kerh Blvd. • Victoria • Texas • 77904 • (361)576-1153 • Office • (361)572-0787 • Fax

ANNUAL COMPUTER NETWORK MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT AGREEMENT (2025-2026)

For the

City of Taft

Infiniti Communications Technologies, Inc. (ICT) agrees to provide **CITY OF TAFT, Taft, Texas**, a one (1) year renewable computer network maintenance & support agreement based on the following provisions:

STANDARD RESPONSE

- ❖ ICT offices will be open 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday for the customer to report any ‘non-emergency’ or ‘non-essential’ computer network problem(s) or to schedule and/or address any new system support and/or maintenance.
- ❖ ICT will guarantee a two (2) hour telephone or email response to any ‘non-emergency’ or ‘non-essential’ system support request by *authorized* customer personnel during ‘normal’ business hours.
- ❖ ICT contact information (telephone numbers, emails, and fax numbers) will be provided to *authorized* customer personnel in order to have the wherewithal to notify ICT of any required system support and/or maintenance discovered *after* ‘normal’ business hours, weekends, or holidays.

EMERGENCY RESPONSES – SYSTEM OUTAGE

- ❖ ICT guarantees an ‘immediate’ response via telephone, fax, or email to any system outage reported by *authorized* **CITY OF TAFT** personnel
- ❖ ICT guarantees remote diagnosis to any system outage reported by *authorized* **CITY OF TAFT** personnel within a minimum of 4 hrs.
- ❖ ICT guarantees on-site response to any system outage reported by *authorized* **CITY OF TAFT** personnel within a minimum of NBD (next business day) *
- * *In all cases of reported ‘system critical’ outages, maximum effort will always be employed by ICT for same-day on-site response, if possible.*

SCOPE OF SUPPORT:

- 1.) The proposed agreement is based on supporting the following equipment:

Three (3) Server(s)
One (1) Peplink router(s)
Two (2) Aruba switch(es)
Three (3) Printer(s)
Seven (7) Workstation(s)
Three (3) WAPs (Ubiquiti)

Please note: Customer will be responsible for providing serial #'s for all current and/or future equipment to be covered by the proposed agreement.

- 2.) ‘Support’ includes, but is not limited to:
 - Scheduled evaluation of computer equipment, printers and networking equipment.
 - Advisement on scheduled replacement of said equipment.
 - Maintaining updates on OS, firewall, antivirus, antispysware.

Business Telephone Systems • Computer Network Technologies • Fiber Optic Specialists • Videoconferencing Systems • Wireless Networks • Voice/Data Cabling Infrastructures • Underground Excavation

- Back-up log monitoring
- Microsoft patch management
- Printer maintenance (settings, network connectivity)
- Remote management Servers and Workstations
- Antivirus protection
- Offsite Backup

- 3.) The proposed agreement is based on ‘blocks’ of hourly support. One (1) day, excluding Mondays or Fridays, of every other week of each month will be selected by the customer for support (three (3) days per month of on-site support). **Eighteen (18) hours per month will be allocated annually, for a total of 216 man-hours of support per year.** For simplicity and a consistent structured scheduling process, ICT strongly recommends the same weekday be selected for each month (i.e. each Tuesday of every other week).
- 4.) The duration of the agreement is for one calendar year.

TERMS:

Annual Fee: **\$22,680.00**

This fee includes all labor, travel, and expenses up to a sixty (60) mile radius.

Please Note: Submitted pricing is based on the following considerations, clarifications, and exclusions:

- 1.) ICT personnel will have access to work areas, during normal business hours (Mon–Fri; 8am – 5pm)
- 2.) Travel (outside Victoria, TX. 60-mile radius) will be billed at existing hourly rate (\$105/hr.), portal to portal
- 3.) Additional associated travel expense (lodging, meals) will be billed, when applicable* (\$200/day min.)
- 4.) Applicable taxes are not included in submitted pricing
- 5.) Lost time** recorded by ICT personnel but, out of the control of ICT personnel, (i.e. no access to work site, customer POC (Point-of-Contact) scheduled but unavailable, customer cancellation without notification, etc.)

*Overnight stay **In excess of 2 hours

Materials, installation hardware, software, or equipment required will be billed in addition to and separately from this agreement.

Pre-Paid: If the total annual fee is paid upon signing, a discount of 5% will be applied **(\$22,680.00 – 5% = \$21,546.00; a savings of \$1134.00)**

Monthly Payments: Upon receipt of the signed agreement, a deposit of the first and last month’s fee **(\$1,890 x 2 - \$3,780.00)** is due and payable immediately to ICT. The remaining monthly payments are due and payable at **\$1,890.00** by the 10th of each month thereafter, until the annual balance is paid in full.

Renewal of this agreement must be completed and signed by a duly authorized representative of each party Thirty (30) days before the last payment is due for this agreement year (2025-2026).

Prepared by: _____
(Authorized ICT Representative)

Accepted by: _____
(Authorized Customer Signature)

Date: _____

Date: _____

We appreciate this opportunity to serve your managed services needs!

Respectfully submitted,

Rocco Windover
Infiniti Communications Technologies, Inc. (ICT)



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY FORM

MEETING DATE: 28 FEB 2025

PREPARED BY: Ryan Smith, BSBA, City Manager

AGENDA CONTENT: Discussion and possible action to approve Ordinance Number 2025-1305 adopting the City of Taft Employee Manual, Repealing Conflicting Personnel Policies, Manuals, or Ordinances not specifically retained in the Attached Employee Manual; and Requiring department specific manuals to be updated and submitted for approval within 90 days.

AGENDA SECTION: Regular Agenda

BUDGETED AMOUNT: N/A

FUNDS REQUESTED: N/A

FUND: N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed ordinance seeks to adopt the City of Taft Employee Manual as the official personnel policy and manual of the City. It repeals any previously adopted personnel policies, manuals, or ordinances in conflict with the new manual, except where specifically cited and retained. Additionally, the ordinance mandates that all department-specific manuals be updated to align with the Employee Manual and submitted for approval within ninety (90) days of its adoption.

The City of Taft recognizes the need for an updated and comprehensive Employee Manual to ensure consistency, compliance, and clarity in employment policies across all departments. The adoption of this ordinance ensures that all city employees adhere to a standardized set of policies and procedures. Department-specific manuals must also conform to these policies and will require Council approval through a resolution process within the specified timeframe.

There is no anticipated direct financial impact resulting from the adoption of this ordinance. However, potential administrative efforts may be required to review and update department-specific manuals to ensure compliance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the ordinance adopting the City of Taft Employee Manual, repealing conflicting policies, and requiring department-specific manuals to be updated and submitted for approval within ninety (90) days.

Supporting Documents:

- Ordinance Adopting the City of Taft Employee Manual (Exhibit A)

Recommended Motion:

"I move to approve Ordinance Number 2025-1305 adopting the City of Taft Employee Manual, repealing any conflicting personnel policies, manuals, or ordinances, and requiring all department-specific manuals to be updated and submitted for approval within ninety (90) days."

ORDINANCE NO. 2025- 1305

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CITY OF TAFT EMPLOYEE MANUAL; REPEALING CONFLICTING PERSONNEL POLICIES, MANUALS, OR ORDINANCES NOT SPECIFICALLY RETAINED IN THE ATTACHED EMPLOYEE MANUAL; REQUIRING DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC MANUALS TO BE UPDATED AND SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL WITHIN NINETY (90) DAYS; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, REPEALER, CODIFICATION, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Taft recognizes the necessity of a comprehensive and updated Employee Manual to provide clear policies, procedures, and guidelines for city employees; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Taft desires to ensure consistency in employment policies across all departments and ensure that all department-specific manuals conform to the adopted Employee Manual; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds it in the best interest of the City of Taft to formally adopt the Employee Manual, attached hereto as Exhibit A, and to require all department-specific manuals to be updated accordingly and submitted for formal adoption via resolution within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS:

SECTION 1. ADOPTION OF EMPLOYEE MANUAL The City of Taft Employee Manual, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted as the official personnel policy and manual of the City of Taft. All employees of the City shall adhere to the policies, procedures, and provisions contained therein.

SECTION 2. REPEAL OF PRIOR POLICIES AND ORDINANCES Any previously adopted personnel policies, manuals, or ordinances other than the Employee Manual attached as Exhibit A are hereby repealed in their entirety, except where specifically cited and retained in Exhibit A.

SECTION 3. UPDATE AND ADOPTION OF DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC MANUALS All department heads shall review and update their respective department-specific manuals to ensure compliance with the City of Taft Employee Manual. The updated department-specific manuals shall be submitted to the City Manager for formal written approval no later than ninety (90) days from the effective date of this Ordinance and shall become effective upon such written approval. Any department-specific manual not approved by the City Manager within ninety (90) days after the effective date of this Ordinance is hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court

of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision, and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

SECTION 5. REPEALER All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the City Council of the City of Taft and shall be enforced as of such date.

Passed and adopted this _____ day of _____ 2025.

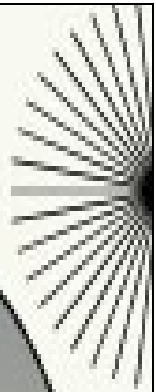
Leonard Vasquez, Mayor

Attest:

Jessica Gonzalez, City Secretary

Approved as to form:

Thomas A. Gwosdz, City Attorney



Personnel Policy Manual

Guidelines for a successful workforce!

Draft Version 1.0

_____ By City Council

Ordinance No. _____

Adopted: _____

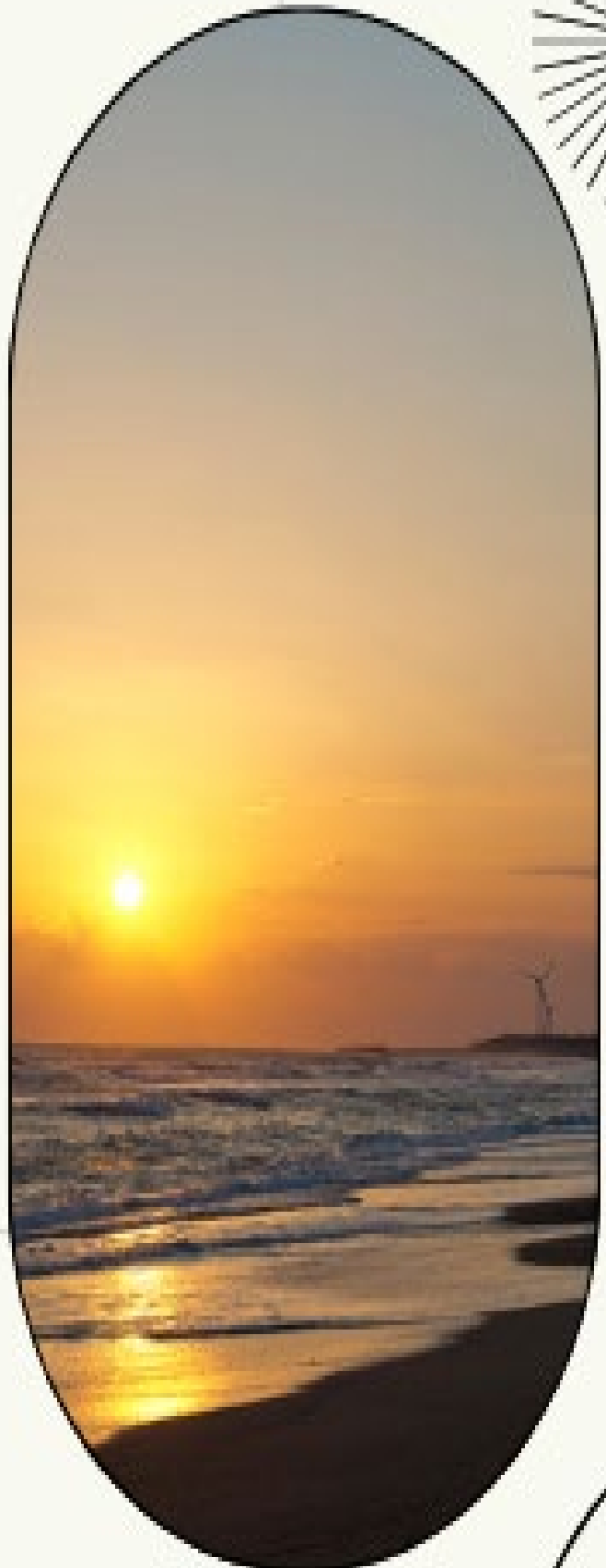


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Chapter 1: Purpose and Authority for This Manual

A. Purpose of the Manual:

The purpose of this Manual is to establish a uniform set of policies governing the employees of the City of Taft with respect to performance expectations, pay and benefits, disciplinary policies, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. This Manual serves as a guide for City employees and management to ensure a consistent approach to personnel management.

B. Application and Responsibility:

This Manual applies to all employees of the City of Taft. It shall be the duty and responsibility of the City Manager to oversee the implementation of these policies, ensure compliance across all departments, and maintain operational consistency throughout the workforce.

C. No Contract Created or Intended:

This Policy Manual does not constitute, nor is it intended to constitute, a contract or promise of continued or future employment with the City of Taft. Employment with the City is "at-will," meaning that either the City or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or notice, unless otherwise governed by contract or law. This Manual is intended as a guide for management and employees and sets forth expectations and objectives in connection with City operations and personnel management.

D. Retention of Authority to Modify Policy:

The City of Taft City Council has the authority to adopt this Manual and retains the right to amend, modify, or suspend the policies herein as necessary. Policies will be updated as needed to reflect changes in City operations, legal requirements, or organizational priorities.

E. Expectation of Compliance:

The City of Taft expects its employees to comply with all applicable rules of behavior and conduct in the performance of their duties. This includes adherence to City regulations and policies regarding safety, ethics, and professionalism. Employees are required to maintain high standards in their work performance and interactions with colleagues and the public.

F. Customer Service Orientation:

Every City employee is expected to understand that they serve the citizens of Taft and that exemplary customer service is a fundamental job requirement for every position. Employees act as representatives of the City and are expected to conduct themselves professionally, with respect and responsiveness in all interactions with the public, to maintain and promote public trust.

Chapter 2: City Organizational Structure

A. General Law Municipality:

The City of Taft is a General Law, Type A municipality governed by an elected five-member City Council. The City Council is responsible for establishing policies, passing ordinances, approving the budget, and providing oversight for the administration of City operations.

B. City Manager Administration:

The City Manager, appointed by the City Council, serves as the Chief Administrative Officer. The City Manager is accountable to the City Council for the overall administration and management of City departments and staff. The City Manager has the final authority over the day-to-day operations and personnel management, except where otherwise specified in this Manual or required by law. The City Manager ensures that the directives and policies set forth by the City Council are executed effectively and efficiently.

C. Organizational Structure:

The City of Taft follows a top-down pyramid structure, with operational departments organized under the leadership of the City Manager. This structure is reviewed and updated annually as part of the budget process to ensure it aligns with the operational needs of the City.

1. **City Council:**
 - The City Council sits at the top of the organizational structure, providing overall policy direction and appointing the City Manager.
2. **City Manager:**
 - The City Manager oversees all City departments and staff, ensuring that policies and procedures are followed and that City services are delivered effectively.
3. **Key Departments:**
 - **Police Department:** Led by the Chief of Police, this department is responsible for law enforcement, public safety, and emergency response services.
 - **Public Works Department:** Overseen by the Public Works Director, this department manages the City's infrastructure, including streets, water and wastewater systems, parks, and public facilities.
 - **Finance Department:** Managed by the Finance Director, this department handles the City's finances, including budget preparation, financial reporting, utility billing, and accounts payable.
 - **City Secretary's Office:** Responsible for maintaining City records, supporting the City Council, and managing official communications.
 - **Community Enrichment:** Manages community programs, including the Library, Senior Center, and recreational services.

D. Staffing:

The City Manager and the City Council collaborate during the annual budget process to assess and determine staffing needs across departments. Staffing levels are based on the City's

operational requirements and financial constraints. Department heads are responsible for managing their respective departments' staffing needs within the authorized budget and headcount.

E. Administration and Accountability:

The City Manager holds ultimate authority for administering and enforcing the policies outlined in this manual. Department heads are responsible for assisting the City Manager by setting and enforcing employee conduct standards, ensuring employee welfare, and promoting morale within their departments. Regular reviews of department performance and adherence to City policies are essential to maintaining high operational standards.

F. Department Heads:

Department heads are responsible for the effective administration of their departments, including the enforcement of City rules and regulations. Department heads are empowered to delegate routine tasks to supervisory personnel but remain accountable for the overall performance and management of their departments. They are also responsible for ensuring their departments function efficiently and meet City goals.

Chapter 3: Goals of This Manual

Promote Fair and Consistent Personnel Management

To ensure that all personnel policies are applied consistently across all departments by clearly defining employee responsibilities, rights, and expectations.

Provide Equal Employment Opportunity

To guarantee fair and equal employment opportunities for all employees and applicants, fostering an inclusive and non-discriminatory work environment that complies with all relevant laws and regulations.

Support Efficient City Operations

To enhance the efficiency of City operations by providing employees with clear policies and procedures that promote accountability, high performance, and responsiveness to the needs of the public.

Foster Positive Work Relationships and High Morale

To promote high morale and positive working relationships among employees by recognizing contributions, encouraging teamwork, and maintaining open communication.

Ensure Transparency and Consistency in Personnel Actions

To ensure transparency and fairness in personnel decisions, including hiring, promotions, discipline, and terminations, by adhering to clear guidelines and procedures.

Comply with Employment Laws

To comply with all applicable local, state, and federal employment laws, ensuring that the City's personnel policies and practices reflect best practices in human resources management.

Chapter 4: Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Equal Employment Opportunity:

The City of Taft is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all individuals, without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws. This commitment extends to all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment, including recruitment, hiring, promotions, compensation, benefits, and terminations.

Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment:

Harassment, retaliation, coercion, interference, or intimidation of any employee based on a protected characteristic is strictly prohibited. Harassment includes unwelcome conduct based on protected characteristics that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Racial Harassment:** Offensive comments or actions based on race or ethnicity.
- **Harassment Based on Other Protected Classes:** Any behavior targeting an individual's gender identity, age, religion, disability, or other protected characteristic.

Prohibition of Retaliation:

The City strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against employees who file complaints, participate in investigations, or exercise their rights under equal employment opportunity laws. Employees who believe they have been subjected to retaliation may file a complaint through the procedures outlined below.

Complaint Procedure:

Employees who believe they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should report the matter to their supervisor, the Human Resources Department, or the City Manager. Complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially, and

corrective action will be taken if warranted. Employees who report incidents in good faith will not face retaliation. For more information on the procedure for filing complaints and for further guidance, employees should refer to **Chapter 14: Complaint Resolution Procedures** of this manual.

Reasonable Accommodations:

The City will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws. Employees who require accommodations should submit a request to their supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

Periodic Review of Policies:

The City's equal employment opportunity policies will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, and to reflect best practices in workplace equity and inclusion.

Chapter 5: Disability Policy

Compliance with ADA and ADAAA:

The City of Taft is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities in compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and the **ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA)**. The City will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals, ensuring they have an equal opportunity to perform the essential functions of their positions.

Requesting Accommodations:

Employees seeking accommodations must submit a written request to their supervisor or the Human Resources Department. Supporting medical documentation may be required to determine the appropriate accommodations. The City will respond to accommodation requests within **10 business days** and engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify a reasonable accommodation that meets the needs of both the employee and the City.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Modifying work schedules.
- Adjusting job duties or providing assistive technology.
- Making physical changes to the workplace (e.g., ramps, accessible restrooms).
- Allowing for modified work equipment or processes.

Interactive Process:

The City will engage in an interactive process with employees to determine the most appropriate accommodation. This process involves discussing possible options with the employee to find a solution that allows the employee to perform their essential job functions without imposing an undue hardship on the City.

Undue Hardship:

While the City is committed to providing reasonable accommodations, requests may be denied if the accommodation imposes an undue hardship on the City's operations or finances. An undue hardship is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors such as the cost of the accommodation and the impact on the City's operations.

Confidentiality:

All medical information related to an employee's disability and accommodation request will be treated as confidential and stored separately from other personnel files, in compliance with the ADA and applicable privacy laws.

Reassignment as a Last Resort:

If no reasonable accommodations can be made for an employee in their current role, the City may explore reassignment to a vacant position for which the employee is qualified, as a form of accommodation.

Chapter 6: Recruitment and Selection

Methods of Recruitment:

The City of Taft utilizes three methods to fill vacancies:

1. **Promotions from within:** Qualified employees of the City will be considered first for promotions when vacancies arise. If two or more applicants have substantially equal qualifications and one is a current City employee, the current City employee will be given preference over external applicants. Internal job openings will be posted for a minimum of **5 business days**, giving current employees an opportunity to apply. Internal candidates must have a satisfactory performance record and have completed their probationary period before being eligible for transfer or promotion.
2. **Lateral transfers from within:** Employees may transfer from one position to another within the City at their current pay level, provided they meet the qualifications of the new position. Transfers are subject to the approval of the Department Head and City Manager. The City will ensure that transfers are handled fairly and consistently across departments.
3. **Public announcement and competitive consideration:** Job openings are publicly announced, and external applicants are invited to compete for employment. Announcements are made through appropriate methods such as local media, Texas

Municipal League (TML) postings, and the City's website. Recruitment efforts will actively encourage a diverse pool of applicants.

Recruitment for Police Department Positions:

For positions within the Police Department, applicants must undergo a more rigorous recruitment process, including but not limited to:

- Written and oral testing to assess job knowledge and communication skills.
- Psychological evaluations to determine fitness for duty.
- Background investigations to ensure candidates meet safety and ethical standards.
- Physical agility assessments, where applicable, to confirm candidates can meet the physical demands of the position.

Commitment to Diversity and Equal Opportunity:

The City of Taft is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all applicants regardless of race, gender, religion, age, disability, or other protected characteristics. Efforts will be made to promote diversity within the City's workforce, and the City encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply for available positions.

Public Announcements and Application Process:

Public announcements of vacancies will be coordinated by the Human Resources Department in collaboration with Department Heads and the City Manager. Positions will be advertised through appropriate channels based on the nature of the position, including:

- Local newspaper postings.
- Texas Municipal League (TML) postings.
- The City's website and other relevant online platforms.

Applications will be reviewed by Human Resources, and qualified candidates will be referred to the Department Head for further consideration. The City Manager will have final approval on all hiring decisions, including compensation levels and position assignments.

Job Descriptions and Qualifications:

The City of Taft maintains job descriptions for all positions. These descriptions outline the knowledge, skills, abilities, and minimum acceptable levels of experience required for each role. Job descriptions will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure alignment with current operational needs.

Selection Based on Merit:

All selections for employment will be based on merit, demonstrated through a candidate's education, experience, and performance during interviews. Political affiliation or personal

relationships will not influence the selection process. The City will ensure that each applicant for a position is asked the same core questions, based on job-related qualifications, to ensure that all candidates are evaluated fairly and consistently..

References and Background Checks:

All finalists for employment with the City are required to undergo reference checks and, where appropriate, background investigations. This includes criminal history checks, verification of education or professional licenses, and confirmation of previous employment. Applicants for positions that require driving will be required to submit a driving record before an offer of employment is extended.

Role of Human Resources Department:

The Human Resources Department will be responsible for coordinating all job postings, initial application screenings, and ensuring compliance with employment regulations throughout the hiring process. Human Resources will work closely with Department Heads to facilitate interviews and ensure that hiring decisions align with City policies and standards.

Feedback to Candidates:

The City will provide constructive feedback to internal candidates who reach the interview stage upon request. This feedback will help candidates understand areas for improvement and provide guidance for future opportunities.

Selection and Appointment:

Department Heads hold the responsibility for hiring and firing their subordinates, provided they remain within the approved budget and authorized headcount. Department Heads may conduct interviews and select candidates for positions under their authority. However, all hiring decisions, including compensation, are subject to final approval by the City Manager.

Employment Restrictions:

The City does not employ individuals under the age of **16** for full-time regular positions, nor does it hire individuals under **18** for hazardous occupations. Employees under the age of **18** must provide a signed Minor's Release Form, completed by a lawful parent or guardian, prior to starting work. Applicants must complete the City's official application form and submit accurate information regarding training, experience, and certifications.

Drug Testing and Pre-Employment Screening:

All new employees are required to submit to a pre-employment drug screening as part of the hiring process. Additionally, background checks will include verification of criminal history,

driving records (if applicable), and other relevant information to determine the applicant's suitability for the position.

Chapter 7: Categories of Employees

Regular Full-Time Employees:

Regular full-time employees are those who are scheduled to work a minimum of **40 hours per week**. With the approval of the City Manager, full-time employees who are enrolled in an institution of higher education may be scheduled to work a minimum of **32 hours per week**. These employees are eligible for full employee benefits, subject to the completion of a probationary period as specified in this Manual. Full-time employees are expected to adhere to the City's operational requirements and policies as outlined throughout this manual.

Temporary Exceptions: Temporary exceptions to the 40-hour workweek may be granted for reasons such as medical accommodations, phased retirements, or project-specific requirements, with the City Manager's approval.

Regular Part-Time Employees:

Part-time employees are those who are scheduled to work less than **32 hours per week** on a regular basis. Part-time employees are not eligible for full benefits, except as required by law or as otherwise provided in this manual. The allocation of duties to part-time employees will be based on departmental needs and operational demands.

Part-Time Benefits: Part-time employees who work **30 or more hours per week** may be eligible for specific benefits, such as health insurance, as required by federal law (Affordable Care Act).

Temporary or Seasonal Employees:

Temporary or seasonal employees are employed for a specific and limited duration, such as to complete a specific project or to address seasonal increases in workload. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits, unless required by applicable law.

Seasonal Benefits: In cases where temporary or seasonal employees are employed for more than **6 months** or meet specific eligibility criteria, they may be eligible for benefits as required by law.

Volunteers:

Volunteers engaged by the City of Taft, outside of the Taft Volunteer Fire Department, who perform services in furtherance of City interests are subject to the provisions of this Manual. Volunteers are not eligible for employment benefits but are expected to comply with City policies and safety programs when operating within City facilities or on City business.

Taft Volunteer Fire Department (TVFD): The Taft Volunteer Fire Department operates as an independent 501(c)(3) organization and maintains its own policies and procedures. However, the City reserves oversight on the allocation and use of funds provided through the City budget, including reporting and compliance with financial guidelines established by the City.

Contract Personnel:

Contract personnel, including consultants, who render services to the City under a contract or retainer agreement are not considered employees. The provisions of this manual generally do not apply to contract personnel unless specifically stated in their contracts.

Chapter 8: Probationary Period

Purpose:

The probationary period is a mutual evaluation period, allowing both the City of Taft and the employee to assess the suitability of the role. It provides the City with the opportunity to evaluate the employee's qualifications, performance, and fit for the position while giving the employee the opportunity to determine if the role and work environment meet their expectations.

Length of Probationary Period:

The probationary period for new hires, employees who are promoted, or those transferred to a different position is **90 days** from the date of hire, promotion, or transfer.

For certain positions requiring specialized skills or extended training, the City may extend the probationary period up to an additional **90 days**, with the approval of the City Manager.

Use of Leave During the Probationary Period:

New employees will accrue leave from the date of hire, but accrued leave cannot be utilized until **90 days** of continuous employment have been completed. Employees promoted or transferred to a new position may utilize accrued leave during their probationary period, in accordance with City policies.

Performance Evaluation and Feedback:

Each department head is responsible for developing a **30, 60, and 90-day probationary qualifications program** outlining expectations, key learning objectives, and performance benchmarks at each interval. This program will track employee progress and identify any deficiencies, which must be addressed promptly.

Supervisors must provide **regular feedback** throughout the probationary period, including **three formal check-in meetings** at or near the **30-day, 60-day, and 90-day marks** to review performance, expectations, and areas for improvement.

At the end of the **90-day probationary period**, a **formal performance evaluation** will determine whether the employee will be granted regular employment status.

Performance Improvement and Reassignment:

Employees who are struggling to meet performance expectations at the end of their probationary period may be placed on a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** in conjunction with a 30 day extension of the probationary period. Supervisors will work closely with these employees to help them meet the job requirements. In cases where the employee may be better suited for another position within the City, reassignment may be considered, if such a position is available.

Termination During the Probationary Period:

The City of Taft reserves the right to terminate any probationary employee at any time during the probationary period without notice or cause, provided the termination is not based on illegal discrimination or retaliation.

Before termination, the supervisor will consult with the Department Head and the City Manager to ensure the decision is justified and properly documented.

Successful Completion of Probation:

Upon successful completion of the probationary period, employees will be granted regular employment status. A final performance evaluation will confirm that the employee has met the required standards. If performance concerns persist, the probationary period may be extended for up to an additional **30 days** with the approval of the Department Head and the City Manager.

Chapter 9: Residency Requirements

Residency Policy:

Except as otherwise required by City Ordinances, City employees are not required to reside within the City of Taft city limits. The City recognizes that employees may live in surrounding areas and commute to work.

Emergency Personnel:

Employees in public safety or public maintenance job functions who may be needed at work on an emergency basis, such as police officers, firefighters, and public works staff, are required to reside within a **30-minute drive** of their assigned work location. This ensures the employee can report to duty promptly during emergencies.

Temporary Exceptions: New hires for these roles may be given up to **6 months** to meet the residency requirement, provided they have a plan to relocate within the required commuting distance.

Commuting Costs:

The City is not responsible for any travel costs incurred by employees for commuting to and from work or duty stations. The City’s obligation to pay employees begins when they arrive at their assigned work or duty station and ends when they leave the work station at the conclusion of their work shift.

Emergency Recall:

Employees subject to emergency recall, such as public safety and public works personnel, must be reachable and able to return to their work site within a reasonable timeframe, typically within **30 minutes** of receiving an emergency call.

Non-Emergency Personnel:

Non-emergency personnel are not subject to the same commuting restrictions and may reside farther away from the city, provided they can reliably report to work during regular hours.

Chapter 10: Hiring Restrictions; Nepotism Prohibitions under State Law

Baseline Policy: State Law

The City’s nepotism policy complies with all requirements imposed by state law and incorporates **Chapter 573 of the Texas Government Code** by reference. This policy applies to all regular full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees directly compensated by the City.

Definitions:

- **Consanguinity (Blood):** Includes relationships such as parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.
- **Affinity (Marriage):** Includes spouses, in-laws, step-relatives, and any other family relationships created by marriage.

Nepotism Chart:

You	First Degree	Second Degree	Third Degree
Consanguinity (Blood)	Father	Brother	Aunt
	Mother	Sister	Uncle
	Son	Grandmother	Niece
	Daughter	Grandfather	Nephew
Affinity (Marriage)	Spouse	Granddaughter	Great Granddaughter

You	First Degree	Second Degree	Third Degree
	Daughter-in-law	Grandson	Great Grandson
	Son-in-law	Brother-in-law	Great Grandmother
	Mother-in-law	Sister-in-law	Great Grandfather
	Father-in-law	Spouse's Grandmother	
	Spouse's Grandfather		

Prohibition Applicable to Public Officials:

A public official may not appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the appointment or confirmation of an individual to a compensated position if:

- The individual is related to the public official by blood or marriage within the degrees outlined by state law.
- The public official holds the authority to appoint or confirm as a member of a board, and the individual is related to another board member within the prohibited degrees.

City Council as Public Officials:

For City Council members, this nepotism prohibition applies specifically to the appointment of key municipal officers such as the **City Manager** and **City Attorney**. It also applies to appointments to any boards or committees recognized under the City Ordinances that involve compensation.

Appointed Officers as Public Officials:

Appointed officers who meet the definition of public officials are subject to the same nepotism prohibitions as outlined by state law.

Disclosure Requirement:

All employees and public officials must disclose any family relationships covered by this policy at the time of hiring or when such relationships develop after employment.

Conflicts Beyond Hiring:

Employees and officials are also prohibited from supervising, evaluating, or making procurement decisions that directly affect a family member as defined by this policy.

Penalties for Violations:

Violations of this nepotism policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, for both the employee and the public official involved in the violation.

Chapter 11: Performance Expectations and Discipline

Performance:

It is the policy of the City of Taft that all employees are expected to be qualified, ready, willing, and able to perform the job duties for the position that the employee holds. The City Manager reserves the right to define the needs of the job positions, and employees are hired with an expectation that they can meet those needs.

When the needs of a position change, the employee will be provided with a reasonable amount of training and orientation to meet those needs. If an employee is unable or unwilling to satisfy the needs of a job position, that employee may transfer to a different duty position or may be involuntarily separated from employment for non-disciplinary reasons.

Discipline:

It is the policy of the City of Taft that all employees are expected to comply with the City's standards of behavior and performance as set forth in this policy manual or as otherwise required by supervisory personnel. Non-compliance with these standards may result in an adverse personnel decision, including termination of employment.

Chapter 12: Performance Evaluation

Purpose:

The City Manager and Department Heads will provide a performance evaluation on a regular basis or as-needed to give employees an opportunity to better understand the duties of their positions and to meet the minimum standards of performance expected for the position.

Formal Performance Evaluations:

- Formal performance evaluations shall be conducted **annually**. However, more frequent evaluations may be conducted as determined necessary by department heads or the City Manager.
- Each formal performance evaluation shall be reduced to writing, and a copy will be provided to the employee for review and acknowledgment.
- Verbal evaluations may be given throughout the year, as needed, to address immediate performance concerns or provide feedback.
- An employee may request a written performance evaluation form at any time.

Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs):

- Employees who receive unsatisfactory evaluations may be placed on a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**. The PIP will outline specific areas of needed improvement, with clear objectives and timelines for meeting those objectives.
- Supervisors will monitor progress regularly and provide support to help employees meet the expectations of their roles.
- Failure to meet the terms of the PIP may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Recognition of Good Performance:

- Employees who consistently exceed expectations may be recognized through merit-based raises, awards, or other incentives. The City encourages supervisors to acknowledge and reward exceptional performance as a means of promoting a positive work environment and high standards.

Consequences of Poor Performance:

- Employees who consistently demonstrate an inability or unwillingness to perform assigned duties, and who, in the opinion of the supervisor, department head, or City Manager, remain unable to meet job standards, are subject to removal from the position held or other disciplinary actions.

Chapter 13: Personnel Records

Personnel File Maintenance

The City maintains a personnel file for each employee. These records are the property of the City of Taft and not the employee. Personnel files may be maintained in paper or electronic format, depending on City practices.

Employee Access to Personnel Files

An employee may inspect their official personnel file upon written request made to the department head or the Human Resource Officer. Employees may also request copies of specific documents from their personnel file. The City will respond to such requests within 10 business days. Review and inspection of an employee's personnel file will be conducted under the supervision of authorized personnel.

Personnel Manual Acknowledgment Form

Each employee must have on file a signed and executed Personnel Manual Acknowledgment Form, which may be obtained from the Personnel Officer or designee. Also see **Exhibit A** to this Manual.

Public Access Option Form

Each employee must have on file a signed and executed Public Access Option Form, a copy of which is attached as **Exhibit B** to this Manual. A copy may also be obtained from the Human Resource Officer.

Wage Deduction Form

Each employee must have on file a signed and executed Wage Deduction Form, a copy of which is attached as **Exhibit C** to this Manual. A copy may also be obtained from the Personnel Officer. Wage deductions for employee-incurred obligations to the City may be made only after providing the employee with notice of the specific amounts owed and after resolving any disputes over the amounts owed.

If an employee disputes a proposed wage deduction, they may submit a written appeal to the City Manager within five business days of receiving notice. The City Manager will review the matter and issue a final decision within 10 business days.

Retention and Disposal of Personnel Records

Personnel records will be retained for the duration of employment and for a minimum of seven years after termination, in compliance with applicable laws. After the retention period, personnel records will be securely disposed of to protect employee privacy.

Data Privacy and Security

The City is committed to safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of employee records. Access to personnel files is limited to authorized personnel only. Electronic records will be protected by appropriate security measures in compliance with applicable data privacy laws.

Compliance with Legal Requirements

All personnel records will be maintained and handled in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, including but not limited to the Texas Public Information Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Exhibits for Chapter 13:

- **Exhibit A:** Personnel Manual Acknowledgment Form
- **Exhibit B:** Public Access Option Form
- **Exhibit C:** Wage Deduction Form

Chapter 14: Outside Employment

Approval of Outside Employment

Employees must submit a written request to their Department Head at least 10 business days before commencing any outside employment, including self-employment or freelance work. Department Heads will review the request and provide a written response within 5 business days. Outside employment is not permitted without written approval. Outside employment with a law enforcement agency or regulatory agency cannot be approved by a Department Head and must be approved by the City Manager or City Council according Chapter 38 of this Policy.

Conditions for Approval

Outside employment will not be approved if it conflicts with the employee's job duties, compromises the employee's ability to perform their City responsibilities, or violates any City ethics or conflict-of-interest policies (Reference Chapter 38 for Conflicts of Interest).

Injury and Workers' Compensation

The City will not provide workers' compensation for any injury incurred during outside employment, even if such employment was approved.

Reporting Compensation and Compliance

Employees engaging in outside employment must disclose any compensation received and ensure that the employment complies with all applicable labor and safety laws. The City may revoke approval if an employee's outside employment violates these laws.

Appeals Process

If outside employment is denied, the employee may submit a written appeal to the City Manager within 5 business days of the decision. The City Manager will issue a final decision within 10 business days.

Public Safety Personnel

Public safety personnel must ensure that outside employment does not interfere with their call-out duties or operational readiness.

CHAPTER 15: PAY AND COMPENSATION

Purpose

To provide clear guidelines on the compensation structure, pay practices, and on-call procedures for City of Taft employees, ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations while promoting fairness and operational efficiency.

Pay Periods

- The City of Taft's pay periods are **bi-weekly**, with employees receiving paychecks every other **Friday**.
- All employees are required to submit accurate records of hours worked during each pay period using the City's electronic timekeeping system.

Overtime

- Overtime will be paid in accordance with the **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)** for hours worked beyond **40 hours per week**, except for employees subject to a public safety schedule under federal law.
- All overtime must be **pre-approved** by the employee's supervisor.

Assignment of Hours Worked

- Hours worked will be assigned to the date on which the employee **clocked in**, even if the shift crosses into the next calendar day.

Holiday Pay and Work

- Employees who are required to **work on City-recognized holidays** will be compensated at their **overtime rate** for all hours actually worked during the holiday.
- If an employee is scheduled to work but does not perform any work on the holiday, they will not receive additional holiday pay beyond their regular compensation.

Discrepancies in Pay

- Employees must report any pay discrepancies to the **Personnel Officer** within **five (5) business days** of receiving their paycheck.
- The **Personnel Officer** will investigate and resolve the issue within **ten (10) business days**.

Electronic Timekeeping

- The City utilizes an **electronic timekeeping system** to record employee hours.
- Employees are required to **clock in and out** using this system, and all records will be securely stored in accordance with City policy.

Public Works On-Call Policy

Purpose

To provide clear guidelines for managing and compensating Public Works Department personnel assigned to on-call duties, ensuring that critical services are maintained efficiently during emergencies and after-hours situations.

On-Call Scheduling

- On-call shifts will rotate according to a schedule established by the **Public Works Director**.
- The rotation will ensure fair and equitable distribution of on-call duties among qualified staff.
- Changes to the on-call schedule must be approved in advance by the **Public Works Director**.
- On-call personnel must remain reachable and be prepared to respond to calls within **30 minutes**.
- On-call employees must refrain from engaging in activities that could impair their ability to respond (e.g., consuming alcohol or leaving the area).

On-Call Compensation

- **Weekend Pay:** On-call personnel will receive **\$50 per weekend day (Saturday and Sunday)** for being available and carrying the on-call phone.
- **Holiday Pay:** On-call personnel will receive **\$100 per designated City holiday**.
- **Weekday Pay:** On-call duties during weekdays will be compensated based on actual hours worked, paid at the employee's **regular hourly rate** or **overtime rate**, if applicable.
- **Response Pay:** Time spent responding to calls, including travel time, will be compensated in accordance with the City's overtime policy.

Responsibilities of On-Call Personnel

- **Response:** Employees must promptly answer calls and respond to emergencies as directed.
- **Documentation:** On-call personnel must maintain accurate records of all calls and responses, submitting documentation to the **Public Works Director** by the next business day.
- **Resource Management:** On-call employees must ensure they have access to necessary tools, equipment, and resources to address emergencies.

Accountability

- **Failure to Respond:** Failure to respond to calls or perform assigned on-call duties may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- **Compliance:** On-call employees must comply with all safety procedures and operational guidelines.
- **Review:** The **Public Works Director** will regularly review the effectiveness of the on-call schedule and procedures to ensure operational efficiency.

Policy Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect operational needs and compliance with City policies.

CHAPTER 16: TIMEKEEPING & PAYROLL RECORDS

Purpose

To establish accurate and consistent procedures for recording employee work hours and managing payroll records while ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Timekeeping Requirements

- All **non-exempt employees** are required to accurately and timely record their hours of work for payroll purposes, including any hours qualifying for authorized overtime pay.
- Employees must **clock in and out** using the City's approved **electronic timekeeping system**, which utilizes **biometric fingerprint technology** to ensure accurate and secure time tracking.

Biometric Data Consent

- The City of Taft's timekeeping system uses **biometric fingerprint scanning** for employee identification during clock-in and clock-out procedures.
- Employees are required to sign the **Biometric Consent Form** acknowledging their understanding and consent to the collection, use, and storage of their biometric data.
- Biometric data is securely stored and protected in compliance with all applicable privacy laws and is not shared with third parties unless required by law.
- The timekeeping system does not store actual images of fingerprints. Instead, it converts fingerprints into a **randomized, de-identified code**. This code may be securely shared with the City's timekeeping vendor, **SwipeClock**, solely for system management and verification purposes.
- Biometric data will not be retained longer than **three (3) years** after the employee's last use of the timekeeping system.

*Reference: **Biometric Consent Form (Exhibit I)***

Accuracy of Time Records

- Time records are **official government documents** related to the expenditure of public funds.
- Any **falsification** or **improper alteration** of time records may result in **disciplinary action**, up to and including termination of employment.
- Employees are responsible for reporting any timekeeping discrepancies to their supervisor or the **Human Resource Officer** immediately.

Voluntary Deductions

- Employees may authorize voluntary payroll deductions for approved items such as:
 - Health insurance premiums
 - Credit union payments
 - Other approved payroll deductions
- All voluntary deductions must be formally requested through the **Human Resource Officer**.

Standard Deductions

- Standard payroll deductions will be made as required by law, including but not limited to:
 - **Federal and state taxes**
 - **Social Security and Medicare contributions**
 - **Court-ordered garnishments** or other mandatory deductions

Direct Deposit

- All employees are required to enroll in **direct deposit** for payroll processing.
- A **Direct Deposit Authorization Form** must be completed and kept on file with the payroll department to ensure timely and secure payment.
- Changes to direct deposit information must be reported promptly to the payroll department.

Chapter 17: Salary, Wages, and Benefits

Authority of City Council

The final determination of salary, wages, and benefits is made by the City Council as part of the annual budget process. The City Council retains the authority to amend compensation packages each year to reflect operational needs and fiscal responsibility.

Staffing Levels & Authorized Positions

The City Council determines staffing levels and the number of authorized positions as part of its fiscal budget authority. Department heads are responsible for submitting staffing requests during the annual budget review process, which will be considered based on operational demands and financial constraints.

Compensation Package

The City Council determines the compensation package for each authorized position. This may include:

- **Base Salary or Wages:** Determined by job classification.
- **Seniority Pay:** Additional pay based on the employee's length of service.
- **Education Pay:** Compensation for employees who achieve relevant higher education degrees that contribute to their job roles.
- **Certification Pay:** Pay provided to employees who maintain professional certifications required for their roles.

Longevity Pay

Employees who have been employed by the City for a minimum of one (1) year will receive **longevity pay** annually:

- **Full-time employees** will receive \$500.
- **Part-time employees** will receive \$250.

This payment is made in the first pay period of December.

Benefits Package

The City Council establishes the benefits package for City employees, which may include:

- **Health Insurance:** Coverage for eligible employees as determined by the City.
- **Workers' Compensation:** Insurance provided in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- **Paid Time Off (PTO):** Includes vacation, holidays, sick leave, and other forms of leave.
- **Retirement Benefits:** Participation in the City's retirement plan, including pension options and deferred compensation programs.
- **Other Benefits:** Additional benefits such as life insurance, disability coverage, or other approved benefits.

Eligibility for Benefits

Benefits are provided based on employment classification. Full-time employees are eligible for the full benefits package, while part-time employees may be eligible for prorated benefits depending on their working hours and City policy.

Review and Adjustment

The City Council will review the compensation and benefits package each year during the budget process and may adjust benefits to reflect financial conditions, operational needs, or legislative changes.

Chapter 18: Overtime and FLSA Compliance

Overtime Eligibility

Overtime is paid to non-exempt employees for any hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). All non-exempt employees are required to accurately track and record their time worked using the City's timekeeping system. Overtime work must be approved in advance by the employee's Department Head or supervisor.

Overtime for Law Enforcement Personnel

In accordance with FLSA regulations, law enforcement personnel working a 14-day pay period will be eligible for overtime pay for any hours worked in excess of **86 hours per pay period**. This provision is specific to law enforcement employees and does not apply to other City staff.

Approval of Overtime

All overtime must be pre-approved by the employee's Department Head or supervisor before it is worked. Employees who work unauthorized overtime may face disciplinary action for failing to follow City policy. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring and managing overtime requests to ensure operational efficiency.

Compensation for Overtime

Employees who work authorized overtime will be compensated at a rate of one-and-a-half times their regular hourly rate for each hour worked beyond the established thresholds (either 40 hours per week for general employees or 86 hours per 14-day period for law enforcement personnel). Overtime compensation is included in the next regularly scheduled paycheck.

Tracking Overtime

Employees are responsible for accurately tracking their overtime hours using the City's electronic timekeeping system. Any discrepancies in recorded time must be reported to the Personnel Officer immediately for correction.

FLSA Compliance

The City of Taft follows all applicable guidelines under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding overtime, wage deductions, and employee classification. The City ensures that all non-exempt employees are compensated fairly and in accordance with federal and state labor laws.

Chapter 19: Paid Time Off: General Rules

Paid Time Off (PTO) Policy

Paid time off (PTO) is defined as accrued leave time, such as sick leave or annual leave (PTO), during which an employee is paid their regular salary but is not required to be present at work. PTO is available to eligible employees in compliance with City policy and state or federal regulations.

Eligibility for Paid Time Off

Eligibility for PTO begins after an employee has completed their probationary period of 90 days, as outlined in City policies. Once eligible, employees accrue PTO according to the rates specified in the personnel policy book under Chapter 21.

Accrual of PTO

Employees accrue PTO starting from the date of hire. Accrual rates are based on the employee's classification (full-time or part-time), position, and length of service. These accrual rates are detailed in **Chapter 21** of the personnel policy book.

Using Paid Time Off

- **Request Process:** Employees must submit a request to use accrued PTO in advance. Department heads will review requests based on operational needs and approve or deny them accordingly.
- **Scheduling:** While the City strives to accommodate employees' scheduling preferences for PTO, business needs may require the denial of certain requests.

- **Mandatory Use:** The City may designate certain periods when employees are required to use accrued PTO, such as during City-wide closures or operational slowdowns.

Unused PTO

At the end of the fiscal year, any unused PTO may either be carried over to the next year (up to a maximum limit) or paid out, depending on the policy set by the City Council. Employees will be informed annually of their accrued PTO balance and any applicable limits.

Cash-Out of PTO

Employees may be permitted to cash out unused PTO under certain circumstances, as specified in the personnel policy. The specific conditions and limits for PTO cash-out are outlined in **Chapter 21**.

Tracking PTO

All PTO must be tracked accurately using the City's electronic timekeeping system. Any discrepancies in PTO records must be reported immediately to the Personnel Officer for resolution.

Chapter 20: Paid Time Off: Holidays

Holiday Policy

The City Council establishes and authorizes a set number of recognized holidays each fiscal year as part of its budget adoption process. It is the responsibility of the City Manager to propose a set of holidays for each fiscal year during the budget process.

Holiday Pay

- **Standard Holiday Pay:** Qualifying employees are paid for one eight (8) hour shift per holiday, regardless of whether they work on the holiday. Pay will be at the employee's regular rate and included in the payroll period following the holiday. Police department shifts may differ based on scheduling needs.
- **Non-Work Days:** If a holiday falls on an employee's scheduled day off, an alternate day off will be arranged, subject to the Department Head's approval.

Premium Holiday Pay for Working on Holidays

Employees required to work on a recognized holiday will receive premium holiday pay, which is one-and-a-half (1.5) times their regular hourly rate for hours worked on the holiday. The holiday period is defined as **midnight to midnight** on the actual or recognized holiday.

Holiday Schedule Adjustments

- If a holiday falls on a **Saturday**, the previous **Friday** will be observed as the holiday.
- If a holiday falls on a **Sunday**, the following **Monday** will be observed as the holiday.

Sick Leave and Holidays

An employee who uses sick leave on the working day before or after a recognized holiday must provide a healthcare provider's note to receive holiday pay. Without such documentation, holiday pay will be forfeited. Appeals regarding forfeited holiday pay can be directed to the City Manager, whose decision is final.

Additional Considerations

Holiday pay does not count toward the calculation of overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) unless otherwise required by law. Overtime is calculated based on hours worked, excluding holiday pay unless an employee actually works during the holiday period.

CHAPTER 21: PAID TIME OFF (PTO) POLICY

Purpose

The City of Taft provides Paid Time Off (PTO) to eligible employees as a benefit to promote work-life balance and ensure time for rest, personal matters, and well-being. PTO is accrued based on length of service and can be used for vacation, personal matters, illness, or other approved absences.

Eligibility for PTO

- **Full-time employees** are eligible to accrue PTO based on their years of service.
- **Part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees** are not eligible for PTO.
- **Newly hired or rehired employees** begin accruing PTO from their date of hire but may not use it until they have completed **their probationary period**.

PTO Accrual Rates

PTO is accrued on a **bi-weekly** basis according to the following schedule:

Years of Service	Bi-Weekly Accrual Rate	Annual Accrual	Maximum Accrual (Annual Accrual + 30 Hours)
0 - 1 year	1.54 hours	40 hours	Up to 40 hour
>1 -<10 years	3.08 hours	80 hours	110 hours
10 - 20 years	4.62 hours	120 hours	150 hours
>20 years	6.15 hours	160 hours	190 hours

- Employees cannot accrue PTO beyond their **annual accrual plus 30 hours**.

- Once an employee reaches this cap, PTO accrual will pause until the balance falls below the cap.

PTO Buyback Program

- Employees may **sell back** accrued PTO at their **regular hourly rate** throughout the year.
- Employees may sell back PTO multiple times during the year, provided that their PTO balance does not fall below **30 hours** after the buyback.
- PTO buyback requests must be submitted through the City's **electronic timekeeping software** and are subject to approval by the **Department Head** and **City Manager**.
- Approved PTO buybacks will be included in the next available payroll cycle.

Using PTO

- All PTO requests must be submitted through the **City's electronic timekeeping software**.
- PTO requests are subject to the approval of the employee's **Department Head** based on operational needs.
- PTO may be requested in increments of **one (1) hour**.
- Employees may be recalled to work during PTO if operational needs require it.

PTO and Separation from Employment

- Employees who separate from the City will be paid for any unused accrued PTO, up to the allowed accrual cap.

Carry Over and Maximum Accrual

- PTO will **not** carry over beyond the maximum accrual limit (annual accrual + 30 hours).
- Any PTO accrued beyond this limit will be **forfeited** unless used or sold back.

Chapter 22: Paid Time Off: Sick Leave

General Policy

The City of Taft grants sick leave to eligible employees for the purpose of a bona fide illness. The use of sick leave for unauthorized purposes will be considered an abuse of sick leave and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Eligibility for Sick Leave

Full-time employees begin accruing sick leave upon hire at the rate of **3.08 hours bi-weekly**. However, sick leave cannot be utilized within the first **90 days of employment**. Probationary employees who are unable to work due to illness will be placed on leave without pay during this period.

Accrual and Usage

- Sick leave accrues on a **bi-weekly basis**.
- Employees may accumulate sick leave up to a **maximum cap of 240 hours**. Any employee with a balance above this limit at the time of adoption of this policy will be grandfathered in and retain their balance until it falls below the cap.
- Sick leave is charged in **one-hour increments**.

Proof of Illness

Employees absent for **two or more consecutive workdays** are required to provide a statement from a healthcare provider corroborating their illness. The City Manager may waive this requirement under special circumstances.

Carryover and Separation

- Unused sick leave carries over from year to year up to the accrual cap.

Sick Leave for Family Care

Sick leave may also be used for the care of an **immediate family member**, which includes a spouse, child(ren), or parent. For other relatives, this definition extends only to those who reside in the employee's household.

Sick Leave Use Adjacent to Holidays

If sick leave is taken on a workday immediately before or after a recognized holiday, employees forfeit their holiday pay unless the sick leave is corroborated by a healthcare provider's note.

Chapter 23: Paid Quarantine Leave

General Policy

Paid Quarantine Leave applies to employees who are ordered to quarantine or isolate by the City's health authority or an authority designated by the City Manager due to possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty.

Leave Entitlements

1. Employees on paid quarantine leave will continue to receive full employment benefits, including leave accruals, pension benefits, and health benefits during the duration of the leave.
2. Employees will not be required to use any other paid leave types (e.g., vacation, sick leave, or holiday) while on paid quarantine leave.
3. If an employee is required to quarantine, they may be eligible for reimbursement for reasonable quarantine-related costs, such as lodging, medical, and transportation, subject to City Manager approval and applicable policy limits.

Quarantine Expectations

1. Employees on paid quarantine leave are expected to remain at home during the quarantine period, unless otherwise directed by the City Manager or health authority.
2. Telework may be approved for employees whose job duties allow remote work, as determined by the City Manager. Telework approval will depend on the employee's position and current operational needs.
3. Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in secondary employment or volunteer work while on paid quarantine leave. Any exceptions to this policy must be pre-approved in writing by the City Manager.

Workers' Compensation

1. Employees exposed to a communicable disease while on duty are required to file a workers' compensation claim.
2. If the claim is approved and workers' compensation benefits are received, the employee's salary payments will be adjusted to reflect the total paid compensation from both the City and the workers' compensation program.

Definitions

- **Health Authority:** As defined by Section 121.021 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.
- **Peace Officer:** As described in Article 2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, referring to law enforcement personnel employed or appointed by the City.

Legal Alignment

This policy must be reviewed regularly to ensure alignment with any state or federal updates related to quarantine leave requirements, including the interaction between paid quarantine leave and workers' compensation claims.

Telework Considerations

The City Manager will designate which positions are eligible for telework during quarantine leave, ensuring a clear distinction between essential duties that may or may not be performed remotely.

Secondary Employment

The prohibition of secondary employment or volunteer work during paid quarantine leave is to prevent any potential conflicts of interest or health risks during the employee's quarantine period.

Chapter 24: Sick Leave Donation

General Policy

The City allows employees to donate accrued paid time off (PTO) to another employee as sick leave, provided the receiving employee has exhausted their own leave balances. The sick leave donation is governed by the following criteria:

Eligibility Criteria for Receiving Donations

1. Must have exhausted all paid time off accrual accounts.
2. Must be in **good standing** with the City, meaning the employee has no active disciplinary actions, maintains a satisfactory performance record, and complies with City policies.
3. Must provide documentation from a healthcare provider demonstrating a reasonable probability of returning to work on a full-time basis.

Eligibility Criteria for Donating Employees

1. Must be on active work status.
2. Must have a minimum of forty (40) accrued sick leave or PTO hours.
3. Must sign a form permanently donating leave to a specific employee.

Donation Process

1. Donations may be initiated through a written request to the City Manager, specifying the identity of the employee to receive the leave, the amount of leave to be donated, and the reason for the donation.
2. The City Manager holds sole discretion over whether a donation will be allowed and the extent to which it is allowed.
3. Donations should generally be in increments of no less than five (5) hours, although this standard may be adjusted by the City Manager.
4. Donated leave cannot be revoked, and once donated, it becomes the permanent property of the recipient.
5. An annual cap may be established on the number of hours an employee may receive through donations in a fiscal year, determined by the City Manager, to ensure fair use of this benefit.

Payment of Donated Leave

1. Donated leave will be paid at the recipient's hourly rate, not at the donor's rate.
2. The City Manager shall prepare and provide appropriate forms for the implementation of this benefit.

Coordination with FMLA

If the receiving employee is on leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), donated leave will be applied in accordance with FMLA regulations, ensuring that all leave types are utilized properly without conflicting with federal law.

Chapter 25: Paid Time Off - Bereavement Leave

General Policy

A full-time employee who is no longer on probation as a newly hired or rehired employee may be allowed up to 3 days of bereavement leave within any given fiscal year in connection with the death of a member of the employee’s immediate family. This benefit applies only to full-time employees.

Immediate Family Definition

For purposes of bereavement leave, “Immediate family” includes the following:

Relationship	Specific Family Members
Direct Family	Spouse, Son, Daughter, Parents, Grandparents, Brother, Sister
In-Laws	Parents-in-law, Son-in-law, Daughter-in-law, Sister-in-law, Brother-in-law
Extended Family	Grandson, Granddaughter, Great-grandparents, Great-grandchildren
Other Relatives	Uncles, Aunts, Nephews, Nieces, First cousins
Household Dependents	Any blood relative residing in the household and dependent on the employee for support

Use of Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave includes travel time to and from the location and attendance at funeral services, funeral rites, and any religious services or gatherings associated with the death of an immediate family member. Bereavement leave cannot be used to care for a sick or disabled family member or for generalized grief.

Leave Limitations

- Unused Bereavement Leave:** Unused bereavement leave cannot be carried over to the following fiscal year and will expire at the end of the fiscal year.
- Additional Leave:** If an employee requires additional time off for bereavement, they may request the use of accrued paid time off or unpaid leave. **Sick leave** cannot be utilized for bereavement purposes.

Chapter 26: Workers' Compensation Injury Leave

General Policy

The City is a subscriber under the Workers' Compensation Act, and the full benefits of the workers' compensation laws apply to City employees. The City is committed to an anti-retaliation policy to protect employees who properly invoke the provisions of workers' compensation laws.

Leave Entitlements

1. Employees on workers' comp injury leave will receive the benefits provided by law. The employee shall continue to hold a budgeted position with the City; however, workers' compensation leave will be treated as unpaid leave.
2. An employee on workers' comp leave shall not accrue sick or paid time off during the leave period.
3. Employees on workers' comp leave will have the usual deductions for insurances and other benefits, with the City continuing to pay its portion of health and insurance premiums. The employee is responsible for paying their portion of these premiums while on leave.
4. Employees may utilize accrued paid leave (sick leave, and paid time off) for salary continuation, in that order. While an employee is receiving workers' compensation benefits, the employee may elect to receive previously accrued sick leave benefits in an amount equal to the difference in the workers' compensation benefits and the weekly compensation the employee was receiving before the injury that resulted in the claim, with a proportionate deduction in the employee's sick leave balance, provided that the employee provides the city with documentation of the amount of workers' compensation payments in the form of a photocopy of each worker's compensation check received by the employee.
5. Once all paid leave benefits are exhausted, employees will receive only the benefits provided under the workers' compensation plan.

Flexible Return Options

1. All employees returning after a medical or personal leave of more than 30 days are eligible for Flexible Return Options.
2. Employees requiring flexible return options should inform the HR Director at least two weeks before their intended return date. A medical fitness certificate, where applicable, must be submitted.

The City of Taft is committed to making necessary adjustments to ensure the successful reintegration of our employees. This might include modified work hours, ergonomic adjustments, or additional training.

Chapter 27: Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

General Policy

The City is committed to implementing the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to the fullest extent required by law. Eligible employees are entitled to all leave (paid or unpaid) as required by the FMLA. FMLA leave qualifies only under the following circumstances:

1. To care for a child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care.
2. To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition.
3. For an employee's own serious health condition that makes them unable to perform their job.
4. Due to a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status.
5. To care for a spouse, child, parent, or next of kin who is a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

Leave Duration and Eligibility

- Eligible employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave per year (City's Fiscal year) for qualifying FMLA reasons. The leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule, subject to medical necessity and approval.
- FMLA leave related to the birth, adoption, or placement of a child must be used within one year of the event.

The term "eligible employee" means an employee who has been employed—

- (i) for at least 12 months by the employer with respect to whom leave is requested under section 2612 of this title; and
- (ii) for at least 1,250 hours of service with such employer during the previous 12-month period."

Concurrent Use of Paid Leave

Qualifying FMLA leave will be paid leave if the employee has accrued paid time off, such as sick leave or paid time off. Paid leave will be used concurrently with FMLA leave in the following order:

1. Sick leave
2. Paid time off

FMLA leave will also run concurrently with workers' compensation injury leave if the conditions for FMLA eligibility are met.

Requesting FMLA Leave

1. Employees must submit an **Application for FMLA Leave** to their department head as soon as possible prior to taking leave. If the employee is unable to submit the application prior to the leave, it must be submitted as soon as possible after the leave begins.
2. The City requires medical certification to support a request for leave due to a serious health condition. Employees must provide the certification within 15 calendar days of the request. The City may require additional medical opinions at its expense, and periodic re-certification may be required based on the length and nature of the leave.

Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave

Employees may take FMLA leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule for medical treatments or appointments related to a serious health condition. The City may temporarily transfer the employee to an alternate position with equivalent pay and benefits that better accommodates the employee's intermittent leave or reduced schedule, if applicable.

City-Required FMLA Leave

The City may require an employee to take FMLA leave if their health condition prevents them from performing essential job duties or presents a significant risk to others.

Maintenance of Benefits

The City will maintain the employee's health insurance coverage under the City's group health plan during FMLA leave on the same terms and conditions as for active employees. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure continued payment of their portion of health insurance premiums during unpaid leave. Failure to make these payments may result in loss of coverage.

Return to Work

1. Upon returning from FMLA leave, an employee is required to submit a **Fitness for Duty** report from their healthcare provider, certifying their ability to resume essential job functions.
2. The employee will be restored to their former employment status or an equivalent position with the same pay, benefits, and terms of employment, unless the position has been eliminated due to legitimate business reasons or organizational restructuring.

Failure to Return to Work

1. If an employee is unable or unwilling to return to work after FMLA leave is completed or fails to provide the Fitness for Duty report, they may be subject to disciplinary action or non-disciplinary separation.
2. Employees who do not return to work after FMLA leave may be required to repay the City for any health insurance premiums paid during the unpaid leave period, unless the reason for the failure to return is due to the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition.

Military Family Leave Protections

1. **Military Caregiver Leave:** Eligible employees may take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. This leave runs concurrently with any other FMLA leave.
2. **Qualifying Exigency Leave:** Up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave may be used for specific exigencies related to a family member's active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves.

Chapter 28: Temporary Disability Policy

General Policy

An employee who suffers a temporary impairment that precludes them from performing the essential functions of the job may request a temporary alternate duty assignment within the department. The department will consider such a request subject to position availability and provided that the temporary impairment is verified and documented by an appropriate health care provider.

Specific Definitions

1. **Temporary Impairment:** A condition, injury, maternity status, post-surgical recovery, or any other physical state that is temporary in nature and prevents the employee from performing the essential duties of their current position.
2. **Alternative Duty Assignment:** A temporary non-operational or modified duty position within the department, provided it accommodates the medical restrictions.
3. **Position Availability:** Refers to positions that are already open or can be created by modifying non-essential duties at the time a formal request for an alternative duty assignment is made.

Procedural Handling

1. If a temporary alternate duty assignment is available, the employee will be paid at the grade level for that position.
2. The employee must provide medical documentation, updated every 30 to 60 days, as requested by the City, to verify the continuing nature of the impairment and restrictions.
3. The department will engage in an **interactive process** with the employee to explore reasonable accommodations, including meetings between the employee, department head, and City Manager to discuss potential assignments.
4. If an alternative duty assignment is unavailable, the City Manager may offer a different job position that does not exceed the documented temporary medical restrictions. If the alternate job is accepted, it will be at the pay scale applicable to that position.
5. The employee is not obligated to accept such an offer, but doing so may allow them to avoid using accrued paid leave.
6. **Duration:** Alternative duty assignments shall not exceed 180 days.

7. If an employee's temporary impairment extends beyond 180 days and cannot be accommodated, the employee may be subject to non-disciplinary separation if they cannot return to full duty.
8. An employee may request a **voluntary leave of absence** if they expect to recover shortly after the 180-day limit, subject to approval.

Reassignment Limits

- Employees may be reassigned to an alternative duty position no more than two times within a calendar year unless special approval is granted by the City Manager.

Chapter 29: Jury Duty & Court Proceedings

Jury Duty

All jury duty must be verified by appropriate documentation. Employees who are placed under compulsory jury duty before any court of law will be excused from work with pay, subject to the following conditions:

1. Paid time for jury duty applies only to regularly scheduled work hours and does not apply to overtime, weekends, or non-standard workdays unless explicitly stated by the City.
2. Employees are responsible for keeping their supervisor advised of the anticipated length of jury duty once known, so that the staffing needs of the City can be addressed.
3. Employees who serve on a jury during regular working hours must immediately report to their supervisor when excused or released by the court from jury duty.
4. If an employee does not report to work when excused or released by the court, the employee may not be paid for unexcused time off and may be subject to disciplinary action for failure to report to work.
5. Employees must provide formal documentation, including the jury summons and proof of attendance, to their supervisor upon return to work.
6. Any fees tendered to the employee by the court for jury duty do not need to be signed over to the City in lieu of payment of salary and benefits.

Witness Subpoenas

1. Employees who are subpoenaed during working hours must notify their supervisors and provide a copy of the subpoena.
2. Employees subpoenaed to testify in cases related to City business or their employment will be allowed to treat this time as paid work hours.
3. Supervisors will determine whether to allow paid or unpaid time off for employees subpoenaed for non-City-related matters. Sick leave may not be used to comply with a subpoena.
4. Employees involved in their own personal legal proceedings, as plaintiffs or defendants, must request and receive leave from work. They must either use accrued paid time off or go on unpaid leave status.
5. Employees must provide proof of attendance for any court appearances related to a subpoena or legal proceeding.

Disciplinary Action

If an employee fails to report to work after being excused or released from jury duty or a subpoena, they may be subject to disciplinary action, which could include unpaid leave or further corrective measures based on the City's disciplinary procedures.

Chapter 30: Military Leave

General Policy

Employees who enter or are called to active duty with the armed forces of the United States or the Texas National Guard will be granted leave as required by law. This leave will ensure compliance with both state and federal regulations regarding military leave.

Deployment Notification

Employees who enlist, are inducted, or recalled to active military duty must provide the department head with deployment orders or official notification as soon as possible, ideally within a reasonable period after receiving the orders.

Unpaid Leave Status

Employees on active military leave will be placed on an unpaid leave status. Paid time off accruals, such as sick leave and paid time off, will continue to accrue only if the active duty status is less than 90 calendar days. If active duty exceeds 90 days, the accrual of paid leave will stop and resume when the employee returns to active employment.

Health and Insurance Benefits

Health and insurance benefits will continue during active military leave, provided that employees make arrangements to pay for their portion of the benefits. Employees are responsible for continuing payments toward insurance premiums for coverage beyond their own (e.g., family or dependent coverage).

Reinstatement and Employment Status

Upon return from military leave, employees will be reinstated to their former position or an equivalent position, with full benefits and seniority as required by state or federal law. Employees must notify the City of their intent to return to work within the legally required timeline under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), which may be up to 90 days depending on the length of service.

City Manager's Discretion

The City Manager is authorized to make any additional adjustments or accommodations as required by law for military personnel, including extensions of benefits or leave arrangements as necessary.

Chapter 31: Administrative Leave; Paid or Unpaid

General Policy

The City Manager and department heads have the authority to place an employee on administrative leave, either paid or unpaid, for disciplinary or investigatory purposes. Department heads, as immediate supervisors, may authorize unpaid administrative leave for up to five (5) days for disciplinary action. The City Manager has the authority to authorize unpaid administrative leave for disciplinary purposes for up to thirty (30) days. Sending an employee home for the remainder of the day without pay does not fall under this section and is left to the discretion of each supervisor based on the circumstances.

Paid Administrative Leave

Paid administrative leave may be granted when further investigation into a personnel matter is required before determining appropriate action. This type of leave shall not exceed fifteen (15) calendar days without additional approval from the City Manager.

Unpaid Administrative Leave for Disciplinary Purposes

Unpaid administrative leave may be authorized as a form of disciplinary action. Department heads may authorize unpaid administrative leave for up to five (5) days for disciplinary reasons, particularly in cases where other disciplinary measures have not been effective or where there is severe misconduct. The City Manager may authorize unpaid administrative leave for up to thirty (30) days.

Return of City-Issued Items

Employees placed on administrative leave, whether paid or unpaid, must return all City-issued items, including but not limited to keys, badges, and equipment, **at the time they are placed on leave**. These items must be returned either to the department head or directly to City Hall.

- If the employee's department head is unavailable, items must be returned to City Hall.
 - If the City-issued items are sensitive or hazardous in nature (e.g., weapons, specialized equipment, etc.), they must be returned to the second-in-command within that department to ensure proper handling and safety.

Restrictions During Administrative Leave

While on administrative leave, employees are prohibited from being at their worksite or visiting any City property unless:

- The visit is required for the purpose of cooperating with an investigation.
- They have been requested by the department head or City Manager to visit the worksite for a work-related matter.
- They are visiting City property as a resident or citizen to conduct personal business unrelated to their employment.

Supervisor Discretion for Sending Employees Home

Sending an employee home for the remainder of the day without pay, due to performance or behavioral issues, does not fall under this administrative leave policy. This action is at the discretion of the department head (immediate supervisor) based on the specific circumstances, and does not require the approval of the City Manager.

Employee's Responsibility

Employees on administrative leave are expected to remain available for contact and participate in any investigations or meetings necessary to resolve the issue that led to the leave.

Eligibility for Additional Leave

The approval of any leave of absence beyond the outlined administrative leave is strictly discretionary. No employee is entitled to such leave unless approved by the City Manager.

Separation for Extended Leave

An employee who exhausts all accrued paid time off (other than sick leave) and discretionary administrative leave authorized under this Chapter, and who remains unable to fulfill the duties of their position, may be separated from employment for non-disciplinary reasons.

Chapter 32: Travel and Expense Policy

Travel Expenses & Reimbursement

City employees who are asked or required to travel in connection with the performance of their job-related duties or on behalf of the City may request reimbursement for expenditures associated with such travel. This reimbursement will cover reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during City-authorized travel.

Travel Approval

- **Directors:** Directors must request approval to travel in writing from the City Manager prior to making any travel arrangements.
- **Non-Directors:** Travel requests for non-directors must be approved by the department director before arrangements are made.

Requests for reimbursement will be reviewed and approved by the City Manager or designee before being processed.

Subsistence Expenses

Employees engaged in necessary and authorized travel in the conduct of City business will receive a per diem allowance. This allowance will comply with the **US General Services Administration** (GSA) guidelines and rates for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. The rates may vary depending on location and type of travel.

Exceptions

1. **Monthly Automobile Allowance:** Employees who receive a monthly automobile allowance are not eligible for mileage reimbursement except for official travel that exceeds a 50-mile radius from the City.
2. **City-Owned Vehicle Use:** Employees who travel in a City-owned vehicle will be reimbursed only for the documented actual cost of fuel, oil, or other expenses directly related to the safe operation of the vehicle, **unless a fuel card is provided with the vehicle.**
3. **Shared Travel:** When two or more employees travel in the same vehicle, only one employee will receive mileage or automobile reimbursements.
4. **Conference Registration:** Registration fees for conferences will be paid directly to the organization sponsoring the conference. Registration checks will not be issued to employees for personal reimbursement.

Hotel Accommodations

Employees who travel less than 75 miles to or from a City-related business event that does not exceed one day will not be eligible for hotel accommodations.

Chapter 33: Dress Code Obligations

General Policy

Employees are required to be appropriately attired for the performance of their duties. This includes not only appropriate dress but also maintaining personal hygiene. Employees represent the City in their appearance, and this representation should reflect professionalism.

Office Personnel

Since office employees have regular contact with the public, they are expected to dress in a professional and business-appropriate manner. Overly casual attire, such as faded jeans, shorts, t-shirts, and revealing or distracting clothing (e.g., tight-fitting pants, blouses, or skirts), is not permitted during work hours.

Other Employees

The dress of non-office personnel should be suitable for their working environment while still maintaining a professional appearance as representatives of the City. Personnel who are issued uniforms must wear them during working hours unless specific exceptions are approved by their supervisor.

Uniform Requirements

Employees issued uniforms by the City are expected to maintain and wear them in good condition during work hours. Failure to do so may result in counseling or disciplinary action.

Special Occasion and Spirit Days

The City may designate certain days as "spirit days" or allow employees to wear shirts or attire that represents a specific occasion or raises awareness (e.g., community events, holidays, or awareness campaigns such as Breast Cancer Awareness). Such days will be communicated in advance by department heads or the City Manager, and attire must still be appropriate and professional in nature, even if it is more casual than standard dress code.

Enforcement

Determination of appropriate attire will be made by supervisory personnel, including the department head and City Manager, taking into account the needs and functions of each department. Employees who are not appropriately attired may be sent home to change and are expected to return in compliance with the dress code.

Refusal to Comply

Employees who refuse to comply with the City's dress code after counseling may be subject to disciplinary action for insubordination.

Chapter 34: Substance Abuse & Drug Testing

General Policy

The City of Taft maintains a drug-free workplace. The manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, concealment, use, sale, or transfer of alcoholic beverages, inhalants, drugs, or controlled substances, as well as the possession of drug-related paraphernalia or literature

promoting the use of illegal drugs, is prohibited while at work, on City premises (including parking lots), or worksites, in City vehicles, or while involved in City business.

This policy applies to all City employees, including full-time, part-time, seasonal, temporary employees, and volunteers. Strict compliance with this policy is a condition of both initial and continued employment. The City maintains a zero-tolerance policy for substance abuse. Any detectable level of a controlled substance in a positive drug test will subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Prescription drugs prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner for the person using or possessing them, and over-the-counter medications, are not prohibited under this policy provided that they are lawfully obtained and used as directed. However, any employee whose duties include operating motor vehicles or machinery, and who takes any prescription or over-the-counter drug known to impair judgment, coordination, or other senses, must notify their supervisor or the Personnel Officer prior to starting work. The supervisor or Personnel Officer will then decide if the employee may remain at work or determine any necessary restrictions. If the employee is unable to work, their absence will be treated as sick leave.

Substance Abuse Testing

Employees are subject to substance abuse testing under the following conditions:

- **Pre-Employment Testing:** Applicants will be subject to pre-employment screening for illegal drugs as a condition of employment. A job offer will be contingent on passing a drug test. Applicants who test positive will not be allowed to reapply for 12 months and must provide evidence of completing a physician-approved rehabilitation program before reapplying.
- **Probable Cause Testing:** If there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work, the City may require the employee to undergo testing. Suspicion may arise from behaviors such as impaired motor skills, erratic behavior, or other evidence of intoxication or drug use.
- **Post-Accident Testing:** Any employee involved in an accident while on duty or in a City vehicle may be subject to drug and alcohol testing.
- **Random Testing:** The City reserves the right to conduct random drug testing for safety-sensitive positions or as mandated by law.

Consequences of Positive Tests

Any employee who tests positive for illegal substances, fails to complete a requested drug or alcohol test, or refuses to consent to testing may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees who fail a test may be referred to a rehabilitation program or terminated, depending on the severity of the offense.

Chapter 35: Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited

Intent:

The City believes that respectful, professional conduct furthers the City's mission, promotes productivity, minimizes disputes, and enhances our reputation. The City expects every employee to show respect for all of our colleagues, customers, and vendors. Harassment by co-workers, supervisors, or any third parties is a form of misconduct that destroys our work environment and undermines the integrity of the employment relationship. The City is committed to providing a work environment that is free of unlawful discrimination, including harassment that is based on any legally protected status. The City will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment that violates this policy.

Non-Discrimination

The City does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, disability, national origin, genetic information, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression), marital status, protected veterans status, citizenship status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

Our policy of Non-discrimination in employment applies to recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotions, transfers, discipline, demotions, terminations, layoffs, access to benefits and training and all other aspects of employment.

Employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their Department Head or the Human Resources department. Employees can voice concerns and submit reports without fear of retaliation. Any City employee found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Harassment Prohibited

We will provide a safe and pleasant work environment where everyone is treated with fairness and respect. It is against Company policy for any employee to verbally or physically harass or discriminate against another employee on the basis of an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, genetic information, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and expression), marital status, protected veterans status, citizenship status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Harassment of employees in the workplace by any third party will not be tolerated either. Any employee who violates the City policy against harassment will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

The conduct prohibited by this policy, whether verbal, physical, or visual, includes any discriminatory employment action and any welcome or unwelcome conduct that is inflicted on someone because of that individual's protected status. Among the types of conduct prohibited by this policy are epithets, slurs, jokes, negative stereotyping, intimidating acts, and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward individuals because of their

protected status. The City prohibits that conduct in the workplace, even if the conduct is not sufficiently severe or pervasive to constitute unlawful harassment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct where:

- Submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit condition of employment.
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the person involved.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

This policy forbids harassment based on gender regardless of whether the offensive conduct is sexual in nature and regardless of whether it rises to the level of a legal violation. Any unwelcome conduct based on gender is also forbidden by this policy regardless of whether the individual engaged in harassment and the individual being harassed are of the same or are of different genders.

Examples of gender-based harassment forbidden by this policy include but are not limited to (1) offensive sex-oriented verbal kidding, teasing or jokes; (2) repeated unwanted sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; (3) verbal abuse of a sexual nature; (4) graphic or degrading comments about an individual's appearance or sexual activity; (5) offensive visual conduct, including leering, making sexual gestures, the display of offensive sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters; (6) unwelcome pressure for sexual activity; (7) offensively suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations; or (8) offensive physical contact such as patting, grabbing, pinching, or brushing against another's body.

Reporting Procedures

Any employee who believes he or she has experienced or witnessed any conduct that is in violation of this policy should report that concern to a Department Head, Human Resources representative, or the City Manager immediately. These are the individuals authorized by this policy to receive complaints on behalf of the City. This policy does not require reporting harassment to any individual who is creating the harassment.

Complaints may be made orally or in writing. If a complaint is made orally, the employee may be asked for a written statement during the investigation. All complaints, to the extent possible, should include dates, times, location, details of the incident(s), names of the individuals involved and the names of witnesses to the incident(s). All complaints will be forwarded immediately to Human Resources. Any supervisor who is aware of conduct inconsistent with this policy or who receives or learns of a report of conduct inconsistent with this policy must report such conduct immediately to Human Resources.

Responding To Complaints

All reports describing conduct that is inconsistent with this policy will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. Employees are required to cooperate in investigations. The City is committed to maintaining confidentiality to the extent possible. The City will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the situation is divulged only to those with a need to know.

Corrective Action

We will not tolerate any harassment or discrimination in violation of this policy. If an investigation reveals that a violation of this policy or other inappropriate conduct has occurred, then the City will take corrective action, including discipline, up to and including termination of employment, as is appropriate under the circumstances, regardless of the job positions of the parties involved. The City may discipline an employee for any inappropriate conduct discovered in investigating reports made under this policy, regardless of whether the conduct amounts to a violation of law. If the person who engaged in conduct in violation of this policy is not a City employee, then we will take whatever corrective action is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances.

Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliatory treatment of any employee for reporting discrimination, harassment or other prohibited behavior or for cooperating in a harassment investigation is strictly forbidden. All employees who experience or witness any conduct they believe to be retaliatory should immediately report such conduct to a Department Head, Human Resources representative, or the City Manager.

CHAPTER 36: CITY ISSUED DEVICES

Purpose

To establish clear guidelines for the use, care, and accountability of all City-issued equipment and property to ensure responsible use and protection of City assets.

General Policy

All City equipment, devices, and property are provided to employees strictly for official use in conducting City business. Employees are responsible for the proper maintenance, security, and use of any City-issued property.

City-Issued Devices and Equipment

Assignment and Use

- City-issued devices and equipment (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, tablets, radios, tools) must be used exclusively for City-related purposes.
- Limited personal use is permissible if it does not interfere with City operations or result in additional costs.

City-Issued Device Agreement

- Employees receiving City-issued devices must sign the **City-Issued Device Agreement** (*Exhibit E*), acknowledging their responsibility for proper care and use of the equipment.
- All issued devices and property must be returned upon separation from employment or when requested by a supervisor.

Device Care and Security

- Employees must take reasonable precautions to prevent the loss, theft, or damage of City property.
- Devices must be stored securely when not in use and handled responsibly at all times.
- Any loss, damage, or malfunction must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor.

Mobile Device and Cell Phone Usage

Authorized Use

- City-issued mobile devices are to be used primarily for work-related communication.
- Personal calls, texts, or data usage should be minimal and must not result in additional charges to the City.

Prohibited Activities

- Use of City-issued devices for illegal, unethical, or inappropriate activities is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to harassment, discrimination, or accessing inappropriate content.
- Use of mobile devices while operating a vehicle must comply with all applicable laws, including hands-free usage.

Privacy and Monitoring

- Employees have no expectation of privacy when using City-issued devices.
- The City reserves the right to access, monitor, and inspect all devices and data stored or transmitted through City-owned equipment at any time.

Return and Replacement of Equipment

Return of Property

- Upon separation of employment or when requested, employees must return all City-issued property in good working condition.
- Failure to return equipment may result in payroll deductions or legal action to recover the cost.

Replacement of Lost or Damaged Equipment

- Employees may be held financially responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged equipment due to negligence or misuse.
- The City will assess damages and determine if replacement costs should be deducted from the employee's wages, consistent with applicable laws and the **City-Issued Device Agreement**.

Personal Device Usage (Bring Your Own Device - BYOD)

Authorization

- Employees must receive written authorization from their Department Head before using personal devices for City business.
- Approved personal devices must comply with the City's cybersecurity and data protection policies.

Data Security

- Personal devices used for City business must have appropriate security measures (e.g., password protection, encryption) and may be subject to monitoring or access by the City for work-related data.

Compliance and Enforcement

Policy Violations

- Unauthorized or improper use of City property or equipment may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Violations may also result in personal liability for damages, loss, or misuse.

Supervisory Oversight

- Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees understand and comply with this policy.
- Regular audits of City-issued equipment may be conducted to ensure compliance.

Exhibit E:

- **City-Issued Device Agreement** (*Refer to Exhibit E for the full agreement outlining employee responsibilities regarding City-issued devices.*)

CHAPTER 37: OPERATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Purpose

To ensure the safe, lawful, and responsible operation of motor vehicles by all City of Taft employees, safeguarding public safety and City resources.

General Policy

- City vehicles are for official business only unless prior written approval is obtained from a department head or the City Manager.
- All employees must operate vehicles safely, lawfully, and responsibly.

Driver's License and Insurance Requirements

- Employees must maintain a valid driver's license appropriate for the class of vehicle they operate.
- Employees using personal vehicles for City business must maintain state-required insurance and submit proof annually.
- Failure to maintain a valid license or proper insurance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Vehicle Operation Standards

- All vehicles must be operated in compliance with state laws, local ordinances, and City policies.
- Unauthorized passengers are prohibited in City vehicles.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Usage

- The use of handheld mobile devices while operating City vehicles is strictly prohibited, including texting, calling, or browsing, in accordance with the City's Cell Phone Usage Policy.
- Hands-free devices are permitted only if they do not distract from safe vehicle operation.
- Employees must pull over safely if it is necessary to use a mobile device.
- City-owned devices must not be used for illegal, unethical, or non-City-related activities while operating a vehicle.

Prohibited Conduct

- Operating a City vehicle under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate termination.
- Aggressive or reckless driving behaviors are not tolerated.

Accident Reporting

- Accidents involving City vehicles must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor, law enforcement (if necessary), and the City Manager.
- A City Vehicle Accident Report must be completed within 24 hours.
- If damages exceed \$1,500.00, the employee must undergo a post-accident drug and alcohol test.
- Detailed photographs of the accident scene, vehicle damage, and property damage must be submitted.
- Witness statements must be collected when possible.

Vehicle Maintenance and Fuel Logs

- Employees must maintain a fuel log documenting fuel usage and report any maintenance concerns.
- Regular vehicle inspections are required, and maintenance issues must be reported promptly.
- Department heads are responsible for ensuring vehicles follow maintenance schedules.

Personal Vehicle Use for City Business

- Prior approval is required to use personal vehicles for City business.
- Annual proof of insurance must be provided to the Personnel Department.
- The City is not responsible for damages to personal vehicles used for City business.

Employee Fitness for Duty

- Employees unable to safely operate a vehicle due to physical or mental limitations may be reassigned if a suitable position is available or may be discharged.

Violations Leading to Termination

Immediate termination will result from a conviction or plea of guilty/nolo contendere to:

- Driving while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Hit and run/failure to stop and render aid
- Manslaughter with a motor vehicle
- Driving without a valid or proper license

Employees may be terminated for:

- Two or more moving violations in one year
- Two or more at-fault accidents in one year
- One at-fault accident and one moving violation in one year
- One negligent collision causing serious injury or major property damage
- Submission of a certified defensive driving course may mitigate termination but does not guarantee job security.

Use of City Vehicles for Political Activities

City vehicles shall not be used to transport employees, clients, or others to political activities, voting precincts, or any events unrelated to City operations.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

CHAPTER 38: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Purpose

To establish clear guidelines preventing conflicts between personal interests and official duties, ensuring all City of Taft employees and officials act in the City's best interests.

General Policy

It is the policy of the City that no employee or official shall engage in any activity or practice that creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest with their position. All employees and officials must avoid situations where personal, financial, or other interests could interfere with their responsibilities to the City.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, a conflict of interest includes, but is not limited to, the following situations:

1. **Outside Interests**

Holding a direct or indirect position or material financial interest in any entity that:

- Does business with the City.
- Competes with the City in purchasing, selling property, or services.

2. **Outside Activities**

Providing directive, managerial, or consultative services to an external entity that:

- Does business with the City.
- Competes with the City's services.

3. **Gifts and Gratuities**

Accepting gifts, gratuities, entertainment, or other favors from entities doing or seeking to do business with the City, or competing with the City, except for:

- Items of nominal or ceremonial value unrelated to specific transactions (e.g., pens, calendars, or gifts valued at \$5.00 or less).

4. **Disclosure of Information**

Using or disclosing confidential City information for personal profit, gain, or advantage.

Prohibited Activities

- Using City resources, equipment, or influence for personal gain.
- Accepting personal benefits, remuneration, or gifts beyond allowable thresholds.
- Participating in decisions that directly or indirectly benefit a family member or close associate financially or professionally.
- Borrowing money from or exploiting other City employees.
- Buying or selling items for personal profit on City premises.

Dual Employment and Jurisdictional Conflicts

- No City employee shall hold a position in another law enforcement or regulatory agency that overlaps in jurisdiction, authority, or duties with their role in the City, unless explicitly approved by the City Manager and City Council.
- Employees must disclose all outside employment related to law enforcement or regulatory roles to the City Manager in writing.
- Approval will only be granted if the outside role does not conflict with City responsibilities, authority, or create the appearance of impropriety.
- In cases where dual roles are approved, the employee must recuse themselves from decisions or actions where a conflict of interest exists between the two positions.
- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Vendor Relationships and Procurement Conflicts (Reference Resolution 240626-01)

- For the purpose of this policy, an employee has a nexus to a vendor when the employee would be required to file a conflicts disclosure statement under Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code, if the employee were a local public officer.
- When a possible vendor has a nexus to a City employee, a minimum of three (3) quotes must be obtained from different vendors for the same goods or services. These quotes must be documented and included in the procurement file.
- All purchases involving a vendor with a nexus to a City employee must receive prior approval from the City Manager. The City Manager will review the quotes to ensure compliance with this policy before authorizing procurement.
- City employees must disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to vendor selection to the City Manager immediately upon identification. This disclosure must be documented in writing and included in the procurement file.
- Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as determined in accordance with the City's disciplinary procedures and policies.

Political Activities

Employees may engage in political activities during personal time but are prohibited from:

- Using City resources to support political causes or candidates.
- Leveraging their City position to influence political outcomes.

Responsibilities and Enforcement

1. Employees must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in writing to their supervisor or the City Manager immediately upon recognition.
2. Employees must follow the City's purchasing procedures and avoid accepting personal benefits from vendors.

3. Questionable situations should be reported to the Personnel Officer or designee for guidance.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and potential legal consequences.

CHAPTER 39: CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Purpose

To ensure that all confidential and sensitive information related to the operations of the City of Taft is protected from unauthorized disclosure. This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and volunteers.

Scope

This policy covers:

- Information shared verbally, electronically, or in written form.
- Documents, records, data, and financial information concerning the City's operations.
- Communication between employees about City business.

Definition of Confidential Information

Confidential Information includes, but is not limited to:

- Information about business operations, financials, plans, and employees that is not publicly accessible.
- Verbal communications, meetings, and discussions about City business.

Employee Obligations

Each employee is expected to:

- Uphold the confidentiality of all City information during and after their tenure.
- Not disclose or use confidential information without written permission or legal requirement.
- Protect the integrity of City information through reasonable security measures.

Public Records Requests

- Employees must adhere to the **Open Records Request** process as outlined by applicable laws.
- Unauthorized release of information outside of this process is strictly prohibited.

Violations

- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.
- The City will pursue legal or equitable measures to protect its confidential information and enforce this policy.

Return of Materials

- Upon termination or at the City's request, employees must return all documents, data, and materials containing confidential information.

Policy Acknowledgment

- All employees must sign and acknowledge their understanding and compliance with this policy.
- The signed acknowledgment will be kept on file in the employee's personnel record.

Reference: Confidentiality Agreement (Exhibit F)

CHAPTER 40: PUBLIC, MEDIA, AND SOCIAL MEDIA RELATIONS

Purpose

To establish consistent and comprehensive guidelines for all City of Taft departments regarding interactions with the public, media, and use of social media to ensure all communications are professional, accurate, and reflective of the City's values.

General Policy

The City of Taft prioritizes transparent, accurate, and professional communication with the public and media. Official communications, including social media engagement, must align with the City's mission, vision, and policies.

Authorized Spokespersons

- 1. City Manager and Public Information Officer (PIO)**
 - The **City Manager** or a designated **PIO** is the primary spokesperson for general City matters.
 - Department heads must receive approval from the City Manager before communicating with the media unless otherwise authorized.
- 2. Police Department Communications**
 - The **Police Chief** or designee may issue official statements regarding investigations or public safety.
 - In urgent situations where public safety is at risk, the Police Chief may engage with media without prior approval but must:
 - Communicate professionally and factually.
 - Represent the City positively.
 - Notify the City Manager as soon as possible.
 - Media statements must not be used to criticize or undermine the City or its officials.

Social Media Policy

1. **Official City Social Media Accounts**

- Only accounts approved by the **City Manager** or **PIO** may represent the City of Taft.
- Designated personnel are responsible for managing and updating official accounts.

2. **Content Guidelines**

- Content must be accurate, professional, and align with City values.
- Prohibited content includes:
 - Political endorsements or opposition.
 - Discriminatory, defamatory, or offensive material.
 - Confidential or sensitive information.

3. **Employee Personal Social Media Use**

- Employees must not present personal opinions as official City positions.
- Employees are prohibited from sharing confidential City information.

4. **Crisis Communication on Social Media**

- Only the **City Manager**, **PIO**, or designated officials may post crisis-related updates.
- Pre-approved templates should be used where applicable.

5. **Monitoring and Interaction**

- Designated staff will monitor social media mentions and respond to misinformation or public concerns professionally.
- Public comments violating the City's content standards may be moderated in compliance with applicable laws.

Media Interaction Procedures

1. **Approval Process**

- All media inquiries must be directed to the **City Manager** or **PIO** unless specified otherwise.
- Department heads must receive approval before speaking to the media.

Prohibited Conduct

- Employees are prohibited from:
 - Sharing confidential or sensitive information.
 - Using City accounts for personal or political purposes.

Disciplinary Action

- Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with the City's **Progressive Discipline Policy**.
- The **City Manager** holds discretion in determining the severity of disciplinary action based on the offense.

CHAPTER 41: POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Purpose

To establish clear guidelines for City of Taft employees regarding participation in political activities, ensuring that personal political involvement does not interfere with official duties or the operations of the City.

General Policy

The City of Taft respects the constitutional rights of its employees to engage in political activities on their personal time. However, employees must avoid any activity that creates a conflict of interest or undermines the integrity and neutrality of City operations.

Permitted Political Activities

- Employees may participate in political campaigns, run for public office, and engage in political discussions outside of working hours and away from City premises.
- Employees may display political bumper stickers or magnets on their personal vehicles parked on City property, provided it does not cause disruption to the orderly conduct of city business.

Prohibited Political Activities

1. **Use of City Resources:**
 - Employees may not use City funds, equipment, vehicles, supplies, uniforms, communication systems, or facilities for political purposes.
2. **Political Advocacy in the Workplace:**
 - Employees are prohibited from displaying political materials (e.g., posters, flyers, buttons) in City offices or workspaces.
 - Wearing political apparel or accessories during work hours is prohibited to maintain a politically neutral environment.
3. **Campaigning and Solicitation:**
 - Employees may not campaign for political candidates or solicit political contributions during working hours or on City premises.
 - Employees may not pressure, coerce, or influence other employees in support of or against any political candidate or issue.
4. **Social Media Conduct:**
 - Employees may not use their official City title, email, or position when engaging in personal political advocacy online.
5. **Conflict of Interest for Political Office Holders:**
 - Employees running for or holding public office must disclose their candidacy or position to the City Manager in writing.
 - The City Manager will assess potential conflicts of interest and may adjust work responsibilities or take appropriate measures to avoid conflicts.

Reporting and Enforcement

- Employees must report any suspected violations of this policy to their supervisor or the City Manager.
- Violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, consistent with City disciplinary procedures.

Exceptions

- This policy does not restrict employees from voting or participating in nonpartisan civic engagement activities.
- Employees engaging in political activities as part of their official duties (if applicable) are exempt when authorized by the City Manager.

Administration

- The City Manager is responsible for the enforcement and interpretation of this policy and may delegate authority as necessary.
- Employees with questions about permissible political activities should consult their supervisor or the City Manager.

CHAPTER 42: SMOKING, VAPING, AND TOBACCO USE POLICY

Purpose

To promote a healthy and safe work environment for all employees, visitors, and the public by regulating smoking and the use of tobacco products on City property.

General Policy

Smoking, vaping, and the use of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, vaping devices, smokeless tobacco, and synthetic nicotine products, are strictly prohibited in all City of Taft buildings, facilities, and City-owned motor vehicles.

Designated Smoking Areas

- Smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco products are permitted only in clearly marked, designated smoking areas located at least 25 feet away from entrances, exits, windows, and ventilation systems of City buildings and facilities.
- Designated areas will be equipped with proper disposal units to prevent littering and maintain cleanliness.
- Tobacco use is prohibited during City-sponsored events on City property unless in designated smoking areas.

Breaks

- Supervisors may schedule breaks in accordance with City break policies, ensuring they do not disrupt operations. Employees must use designated smoking areas during breaks.

Enforcement and Compliance

- All employees share responsibility for adhering to and enforcing this policy.
- Management is tasked with ensuring compliance and addressing violations.
- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action consistent with the City's disciplinary procedures.

CHAPTER 43: DISCIPLINARY ACTION, COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES, AND APPEALS

Purpose

To establish clear, fair, and consistent procedures for addressing employee conduct, performance concerns, workplace grievances, and appeals to ensure accountability, transparency, and professionalism within the City of Taft.

General Policy

The City of Taft is committed to fostering a positive and productive work environment. Employees are expected to comply with City policies, procedures, and applicable laws. The City will apply progressive discipline where appropriate but reserves the right to administer immediate disciplinary action for severe violations. Additionally, employees are provided with structured procedures for filing complaints, grievances, and appeals.

Disciplinary Actions

Unacceptable Conduct and Performance

Disciplinary action may result from, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Violation of City policies, procedures, or laws.
- Insubordination or refusal to follow instructions.
- Theft, fraud, or misuse of City property.
- Harassment, discrimination, or creating a hostile work environment.
- Negligence or misconduct impacting City operations.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Off-duty conduct that negatively affects the City's reputation.

Progressive Discipline

The City will endeavor to follow a **progressive discipline model**, escalating as necessary. However, management retains the right to impose immediate disciplinary action based on the severity of misconduct. Disciplinary actions include:

1. **Verbal Counseling or Warning** – A documented conversation to correct behavior.
2. **Written Reprimand** – A formal written notice describing the infraction and required corrective actions.
3. **Suspension (With or Without Pay)** – Temporary removal from duty accompanied by a formal **Notice of Suspension**.
4. **Demotion or Reassignment** – Reduction in position or pay with written justification.
5. **Termination** – Dismissal from employment with a written **Notice of Termination** specifying the reason.

Supervisor Responsibilities

- Supervisors must **document all disciplinary actions** and ensure proper communication with the employee.
- Department heads must consult the **City Manager** before issuing suspensions, demotions, or terminations.

Investigation of Misconduct

- The **City Manager** or designee will conduct prompt, impartial, and confidential investigations.
- Employees will be informed of allegations and given the opportunity to respond.

Prohibition of Retaliation

- Retaliation against employees who report misconduct or participate in investigations is strictly prohibited and may result in further disciplinary action.

Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Definitions

- **Complaint:** A concern regarding general workplace conditions, treatment, or City policies.
- **Grievance:** A formal dispute concerning the interpretation or application of City policies or disciplinary actions.
- **Retaliation:** Any adverse action taken against an employee for filing a complaint or grievance or participating in an investigation.

Filing a Complaint or Grievance

1. **Informal Resolution**
 - Employees are encouraged to resolve concerns informally by discussing the issue with their immediate supervisor.
 - If unresolved or the supervisor is involved, the employee may escalate the matter to the **Department Head**.
2. **Formal Submission**
 - If informal resolution is unsuccessful, employees may submit a **written complaint or grievance** to the **City Manager** within **10 business days** of the incident.
 - The submission must include:

- A detailed description of the issue.
- Relevant dates, times, and individuals involved.
- The desired resolution.

3. Investigation and Resolution

- The **City Manager** or designee will investigate the complaint or grievance, which may involve interviews and document review.
- A **written response** will be provided within **15 business days**.
- If additional time is needed, the employee will be informed in writing.

Special Circumstances

- Complaints involving a supervisor may be submitted directly to the **City Manager**.
- Complaints against the **City Manager** may be submitted to the **City Council**.

Grievances Involving Discrimination or Harassment

- Must be reported immediately to the **City Manager** or designated personnel.
- Investigations will be handled confidentially in accordance with City policies.

Appeal Process and Procedure

Eligibility for Appeal

Employees may appeal the following actions:

- Written reprimands.
 - Suspensions without pay.
 - Demotions.
 - Terminations.
- Verbal warnings and counseling are not eligible for appeal.*

Filing an Appeal

- Appeals must be submitted in **writing** to the **City Manager** within **10 business days** of the action.
- Appeals must include:
 - A detailed explanation of the action being appealed.
 - Specific reasons for contesting the decision.
 - Any supporting documentation.
 - The desired resolution.

Review and Investigation

- The **City Manager** will review the appeal and may investigate through interviews and documentation.
- A **written decision** will be issued within **15 business days**.

Appeal Hearing (If Applicable)

- For suspensions, demotions, or terminations, the **City Manager** may hold an **Appeal Hearing**.
- The employee may present evidence and call witnesses but must notify the **City Manager** at least **3 business days** in advance.

Appeals Involving the City Manager

- Appeals regarding actions taken by the **City Manager** may be submitted to the **City Council** for final review.

Prohibition of Retaliation

- Retaliation for filing an appeal is strictly prohibited.

Documentation and Recordkeeping

- All grievances and appeals will be securely documented and maintained according to the City's **Records Retention Policy**.

CHAPTER 44: NON-DISCIPLINARY SEPARATIONS AND EXIT INTERVIEWS

Purpose

To establish consistent procedures for non-disciplinary employee separations and to implement a structured exit interview process that allows the City of Taft to gather valuable feedback, address operational improvements, and ensure proper handling of final employment matters.

General Policy

The City of Taft is committed to handling all voluntary and non-disciplinary separations professionally and respectfully while collecting constructive feedback to improve the organization.

Non-Disciplinary Separations

Types of Non-Disciplinary Separations

- **Voluntary Resignation in Good Standing:** Employees must submit written notice of resignation at least **eight (8) working days** before the intended separation date. The **City Manager** may waive this requirement.
- **Retirement:** Employees planning to retire should notify their supervisor as early as possible to allow for transition planning.
- **Completion of Temporary Employment:** Temporary or seasonal employees will separate upon completion of their assignment.
- **Job Abandonment:** Failure to report to work for **three consecutive days** without notice will be considered voluntary resignation.

Department Head Notification Requirement

- Department heads are **required to notify** the **Human Resources Department** and the **City Manager** of any employee resignation, retirement, or other non-disciplinary separation **within 24 business hours** of being informed.
- Timely notification ensures proper coordination of final payroll, benefits, return of City property, and scheduling of exit interviews.

Final Clearance

- Employees must return all City property (keys, ID cards, equipment, uniforms) before their final paycheck is released.
- Human Resources will coordinate final payroll processing and address remaining benefit matters, such as COBRA insurance.

Exit Interview Policy

Purpose

To establish a formal procedure for conducting exit interviews with departing employees, allowing the City to collect feedback for operational improvements, employee retention, and leadership development.

Scope

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, and temporary employees who voluntarily or involuntarily leave employment with the City of Taft.

Objectives

- Identify reasons for employee departures and trends that could improve retention.
- Collect feedback on workplace culture, management practices, policies, and job satisfaction.
- Ensure all City property is returned and final employment matters are addressed.
- Maintain positive relationships with departing employees.

Procedure

1. Notification and Scheduling

- Human Resources will contact the departing employee within **48 hours** of receiving notice to schedule an exit interview.
- The interview will be conducted during the employee's final week of employment.
- If an in-person interview is not feasible, an electronic or written exit interview form will be provided.

2. Interview Format

- A **semi-structured format** will be used, allowing for both structured and open-ended feedback.
- A standardized **Exit Interview Questionnaire** will cover:
 - Reasons for leaving.
 - Workplace culture and environment.

- Management and supervision.
- Training and career development.
- Compensation and benefits.
- Suggestions for improvement.

3. Compensation for Exit Interviews

- Employees will be paid for their participation in the exit interview.
- Employees returning after their last day for an exit interview will be compensated at their regular rate of pay.

4. Confidentiality

- All feedback will remain confidential and will only be shared in summary form unless immediate action is necessary.
- Human Resources will compile aggregated data and trends without identifying individuals.

5. Documentation and Reporting

- Human Resources will document key points and securely store records.
- A quarterly summary report will be presented to senior management and the **City Manager**, identifying trends and areas for improvement.
- Urgent concerns will be reported immediately to the appropriate department head or the **City Manager**.

6. Final Employment Clearance

- Human Resources will verify the return of all City property.
- Departing employees will be briefed on final payroll, COBRA insurance, and any outstanding obligations.

7. Employee Acknowledgment

- Employees will sign an acknowledgment form confirming their participation in the exit interview and understanding of how their feedback will be used.
- *Exhibit G – Employee Exit Interview Acknowledgment* contains the acknowledgment form.
- *Exhibit H – Employee Exit Interview Template* includes the standardized exit interview questionnaire.

8. Exceptions

- In certain cases (e.g., sudden terminations), Human Resources may not be able to conduct a full exit interview. Human Resources will document the reason and attempt to collect feedback when possible.

Compliance and Enforcement

- Participation in the exit interview process is voluntary, and employees will not face any negative consequences for declining to participate.
- Department heads and Human Resources are responsible for ensuring proper execution of this policy.

Exhibits

- **Exhibit G:** *Employee Exit Interview Acknowledgment*
- **Exhibit H:** *Employee Exit Interview Template*

CHAPTER 45: USE OF CITY EQUIPMENT AND PROPERTY

Purpose

To establish clear guidelines for the responsible use, care, maintenance, and protection of City-owned equipment and property, ensuring efficient operations and safeguarding public resources.

General Policy

All City equipment and property are public assets intended strictly for official City business. Employees are responsible for the proper use, care, security, and reporting of City property. Unauthorized use or neglect may result in disciplinary action.

Scope of City Property

City property includes, but is not limited to:

- Vehicles, tools, machinery, office equipment, furniture, and City-owned facilities.
- Technological devices such as computers, mobile phones, radios, and tablets.
- Software, data, digital files, intellectual property, and any proprietary information.

Use of City Equipment

1. Authorized Use Only

- City equipment shall be used solely for official City business.
- Limited personal use of City-owned technology (e.g., internet, email) may be permitted if it does not interfere with job duties or incur additional costs, subject to supervisor approval.
- Personal use of non-technology equipment (e.g., vehicles, tools) is strictly prohibited unless authorized in writing by the **City Manager**.

2. Check-Out/Check-In System

- Portable equipment (e.g., laptops, tools, vehicles) must be formally checked out and returned through a designated system.
- Employees must sign off when receiving or returning City property.

- Supervisors are responsible for maintaining accurate check-out records.

3. Care and Maintenance

- Employees are responsible for routine care and proper use of City property.
- Departments must adhere to preventative maintenance schedules for all equipment and vehicles.
- Negligence in maintenance or misuse resulting in damage may lead to disciplinary action or financial responsibility.

4. Reporting Theft, Damage, or Loss

- Theft, damage, or loss of City property must be reported to a supervisor and the **City Manager** within **24 hours**.
- Significant incidents must also be reported to appropriate law enforcement.
- An **Incident Report Form** must be completed to document the event.

5. Return of City Property

- All City-issued property must be returned in good condition upon separation from employment.
- Failure to return City property may result in deductions from final paychecks, legal action, or ineligibility for rehire.

Technology and Communication Devices

1. Computers and Internet Usage

- City computers and internet access must be used for official business.
- Unauthorized software installation, access to inappropriate content, or use for personal gain is prohibited.
- The City reserves the right to monitor all digital communications and internet usage.

2. Email and Communication

- City email accounts are for professional and business-related use.
- Limited personal use is allowed if it does not interfere with job performance or City operations.
- All communication through City systems is subject to monitoring and public records laws.

3. Mobile Devices

- City-issued mobile devices are for business purposes.
- Personal use should be limited and must not incur extra charges.
- Use of mobile devices while driving City vehicles is prohibited unless using hands-free technology.

4. Security of Digital Assets

- Employees must protect City data by using strong passwords, securing devices, and reporting cybersecurity incidents immediately.
- Unauthorized software or devices on City networks are prohibited.
- Confidential data must be stored securely and shared only with authorized personnel.

Use of City Vehicles

1. Authorized Drivers

- Only employees with a valid driver's license and written authorization may operate City vehicles.
- All employees must comply with traffic laws and City vehicle policies.

2. Vehicle Operation Standards

- City vehicles are for official business only unless prior written approval is granted.
- Unauthorized passengers are not allowed, except for official emergency services purposes.
- Use of City vehicles for personal errands is strictly prohibited.

3. Accident Reporting

- All vehicle accidents must be reported immediately to a supervisor and the **City Manager**.
- An official **Vehicle Accident Report** must be completed within **24 hours**.

4. Vehicle Maintenance

- Departments must follow preventative maintenance schedules.
- Employees must inspect vehicles before use and report maintenance issues promptly.
- Fuel and maintenance logs must be accurately maintained.

Facility and Property Use

1. Facility Access

- City facilities are to be used solely for authorized City functions.
- Access to restricted areas is limited to authorized personnel.

2. Personal Use of Facilities

- Personal use of City facilities requires written approval from the **City Manager** or department head.
- Fees or deposits may apply for personal or non-City events.

3. Security and Safety

- Employees must secure facilities after use, including locking doors and securing equipment.
- Safety procedures must be followed to prevent accidents and unauthorized access.

Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility

- Employees are encouraged to minimize resource waste, conserve energy, and recycle when possible.
- Proper disposal of hazardous materials and electronic waste must follow environmental regulations.
- Departments should prioritize sustainable practices when purchasing new equipment.

Prohibited Conduct

- Using City property for personal gain or private business ventures.
- Removing City property without authorization.
- Failing to report damage, loss, or theft of City property.
- Tampering with safety, security, or tracking devices.
- Unauthorized use of City vehicles or equipment for personal activities.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The **City Manager** has the discretion to determine the appropriate response based on the severity of the violation.

CHAPTER 46: CYBERSECURITY AND DATA PRIVACY POLICY

Purpose

To establish comprehensive guidelines for protecting the City of Taft's digital infrastructure, securing sensitive data, and ensuring compliance with cybersecurity and data privacy regulations.

General Policy

The City of Taft is committed to safeguarding its information systems and data from cybersecurity threats, unauthorized access, and data breaches. All employees, contractors, and third-party vendors must follow security practices to protect City resources, systems, and confidential information.

Scope

This policy applies to all City employees, contractors, volunteers, and third-party vendors who access, manage, or use the City's information systems, networks, hardware, software, or data.

Information Covered:

- Electronic files, documents, and communications.
- Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and confidential data.
- Financial records and payment processing systems.
- Internal and external communications through email and digital platforms.

- Physical IT infrastructure, including servers, computers, and mobile devices.

Cybersecurity Standards and Responsibilities

1. Access Control

- Access to City systems must be authorized by the **City Manager** or designated IT personnel.
- Employees must use unique usernames and strong passwords.
- Accounts will be deactivated immediately upon termination of employment or contract.

2. Password Management

- Passwords must meet complexity requirements and be changed every **90 days**.
- Password sharing is strictly prohibited.
- Multi-factor authentication (MFA) must be enabled for sensitive systems.

3. Software and System Use

- Only approved software may be installed on City devices.
- Unauthorized software and external devices are prohibited.
- Automatic software updates must be enabled to ensure security patches are applied.

4. Network Security

- Devices connected to City networks must meet security standards as established from time to time by the City's Information Technology team.
- Use of public or unsecured Wi-Fi for City business is prohibited unless connected through a secure VPN.

5. Physical Security of Devices

- City-issued devices must be physically secured when unattended.
- Lost or stolen devices must be reported immediately to the **City Manager** or IT staff.

Data Privacy Standards

1. Confidentiality of Information

- Employees must protect confidential and sensitive data in compliance with applicable laws, including the **Texas Public Information Act**.
- Sharing of confidential information is limited to authorized personnel.

2. Data Collection and Storage

- Only necessary data should be collected and stored.
- Data retention must follow the City's **Records Retention Policy**.

3. Data Disposal

- Data must be securely destroyed when no longer needed, following the City's Records Retention Policy.

Incident Response and Reporting

1. Incident Detection and Reporting

- All cybersecurity incidents (e.g., phishing, malware, unauthorized access) must be reported immediately to the **City Manager** or IT staff.
- Employees must not attempt to investigate or resolve security incidents themselves.

2. Incident Response Procedures

- The City will investigate and respond to all reported security incidents.
- Affected systems may be isolated to prevent further damage.
- Employees must cooperate with investigations.

3. Data Breach Response

- In the event of a data breach involving sensitive information, the City will notify affected individuals and regulatory bodies as required by law.

Third-Party Vendor Security

- Third-party vendors with access to City systems or data must adhere to security standards outlined in vendor agreements.
- Vendors must notify the City immediately of any security incidents affecting City data.

Prohibited Activities

Employees are strictly prohibited from:

- Bypassing security controls or disabling security software.
- Using City systems for unauthorized or illegal activities.
- Sharing login credentials or unauthorized access to City systems.
- Downloading or installing unapproved software.
- Connecting personal devices to City networks without approval.

Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and may result in legal action where applicable.

Prohibition of Retaliation

Retaliation against employees who report cybersecurity incidents or policy violations in good faith is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect new cybersecurity threats, technological advancements, and legal requirements.

CHAPTER 47: WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

To encourage and protect employees and officials of the City of Taft who report suspected misconduct, violations of law, fraud, waste, abuse, or other unethical behavior, ensuring a safe and transparent work environment free from retaliation.

General Policy

The City of Taft is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics and accountability in its operations. Employees are encouraged to report any suspected wrongdoing or violations of City policies without fear of retaliation. All reports will be handled confidentially and investigated promptly.

Scope

This policy applies to all City of Taft employees, officials, contractors, volunteers, and third-party vendors.

Protected Disclosures

Employees are encouraged to report, in good faith, any of the following:

- **Violations of federal, state, or local laws or regulations.**
- **Fraud, waste, or abuse of City resources.**
- **Ethical misconduct or violations of City policies.**
- **Gross mismanagement of public funds or resources.**
- **Public safety and health violations.**
- **Retaliation against employees for reporting misconduct.**

Reports must be based on a reasonable belief that the information is true and involves misconduct within the scope of this policy.

Reporting Procedures

1. Internal Reporting

- Reports of suspected misconduct should first be made to one of the following internal channels:
 - The employee's **immediate supervisor**.
 - The **City Manager**.
 - The **Human Resources Department**.
 - The **City Council**, if the report involves the **City Manager**.

2. Anonymous Reporting

- Employees may submit anonymous reports in writing or through any secure reporting mechanism provided by the City.
- While anonymity will be respected, the ability to investigate anonymous reports may be limited.

3. External Reporting

- If internal reporting is ineffective, inappropriate, or poses a conflict of interest, employees may report concerns to appropriate external agencies, including but not limited to:
 - The **Texas State Auditor's Office** for fraud, waste, or abuse of public funds.
 - The **Texas Ethics Commission** for violations of ethics laws.
 - The **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)** for discrimination or harassment.
 - The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** for workplace safety violations.
 - Local or state **law enforcement agencies** for criminal activity.
 - Other relevant **regulatory bodies** as applicable.
- **The media is not an appropriate reporting channel** under this policy. Disclosure to the media does not qualify for whistleblower protection.

Investigation Procedures

- The **City Manager** or a designated official will initiate an investigation upon receiving a report.
- Investigations will be conducted promptly, thoroughly, and impartially.
- Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible.
- The employee who filed the report will be informed when the investigation concludes, subject to confidentiality constraints.

Protection Against Retaliation

- Retaliation, harassment, intimidation, or any adverse employment action against employees who report suspected wrongdoing in good faith is strictly prohibited.
- Any employee who engages in retaliatory behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Employees who believe they have been subjected to retaliation should report it immediately to the **City Manager** or the **City Council** (if it involves the City Manager).

False or Malicious Reports

- Reports made in bad faith or with malicious intent may result in disciplinary action.

- Employees are expected to report concerns based on a reasonable belief that misconduct has occurred.

Accountability

- All employees are responsible for upholding the ethical standards of the City.
- Management is responsible for fostering an environment where employees feel safe reporting misconduct.

Disciplinary Action

- Confirmed violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- The **City Manager** will determine the appropriate course of action based on the severity of the violation.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with applicable laws and best practices. Revisions will be made as necessary.

CHAPTER 48: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

Purpose

To establish a safe and secure work environment for all employees, officials, contractors, volunteers, and visitors by preventing and responding to any form of workplace violence within the City of Taft.

General Policy

The City of Taft maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy for workplace violence. Acts or threats of violence—whether verbal, physical, or implied—against employees, the public, or City property will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and possible legal action.

Scope

This policy applies to all City employees, elected officials, contractors, volunteers, vendors, and members of the public interacting with City personnel or accessing City facilities.

Definitions

- **Workplace Violence:** Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening behavior that occurs in the workplace or affects the workplace.
- **Threat:** Any verbal or written statement or behavior that could be interpreted as intent to cause harm.

- **Intimidation:** Intentional behavior that causes another person to fear injury or harm.
- **Harassment:** Conduct that is unwelcome, offensive, or threatening, including bullying and stalking.
- **Physical Assault:** Hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking, or any form of physical attack.

Reporting Procedures

1. Immediate Danger

- If an employee is in immediate danger, they must **call 911** and notify their **supervisor** or the **City Manager** as soon as it is safe to do so.

2. Reporting Incidents

- Employees must report any incident of workplace violence to one of the following:
 - Their **immediate supervisor**.
 - The **City Manager**.
 - The **Human Resources Department**.

3. Anonymous Reporting

- Reports can be made anonymously in writing to the Human Resources Department.
- Anonymous reports will be investigated to the extent possible.

4. External Reporting

- Employees may also report workplace violence to external authorities such as local law enforcement if they feel internal reporting is insufficient or unsafe.

Investigation and Response

- The **City Manager** or designated personnel will promptly investigate all reports of workplace violence.
- Investigations will be conducted confidentially and thoroughly.
- Appropriate corrective actions will be taken based on investigation findings.
- Employees involved in violent incidents may be placed on administrative leave during the investigation.

Protection Against Retaliation

- The City strictly prohibits retaliation against employees who report workplace violence or participate in related investigations.
- Retaliation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Disciplinary Action

- Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Criminal acts will be reported to law enforcement agencies.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness and updated as necessary to reflect best practices and legal requirements.

CHAPTER 49: MISCELLANEOUS

Effective Date

The provisions of this updated Personnel Policy Manual shall take effect immediately upon formal approval by the **City Council of the City of Taft**.

Policy Transition

Policy Amendment Process

- **Amendments, additions, or deletions** to this manual must be formally adopted through the **ordinance process** by the **City Council**.
- No changes to this manual are valid unless approved in this manner and incorporated directly into the manual.
- Updates to this manual will be communicated in writing to all employees, and **acknowledgment of receipt** will be required.

Compliance with Applicable Laws

- All policies in this manual are designed to comply with **federal, state, and local laws**.
- In the event of a conflict between any provision of this manual and applicable law, the law will prevail, and the conflicting portion of this manual will be **updated accordingly**.

Severability Clause

- If any provision of this manual is determined to be **invalid** or **unenforceable** by a court of law, the remaining provisions shall continue in **full force and effect**.

Conflict Resolution

- In cases where ambiguity or conflict arises in the interpretation of these policies, the **City Manager** shall consult with the **City Attorney** for legal guidance.
- The **City Manager** will make the final determination on the appropriate course of action, subject to applicable laws and policies.

CHAPTER 50: DEFINITIONS

Accrued Leave:

Leave time that an employee has earned but not yet used, including sick leave, vacation leave, and other paid time off (PTO).

Administrative Leave:

Paid or unpaid leave granted at the discretion of the City Manager or Department Heads for investigatory or disciplinary purposes.

Paid Time Off (PTO):

Paid time off provided to eligible employees for vacation or personal time, accrued according to the employee's length of service.

Appeal:

A formal request made by an employee to challenge a disciplinary action, employment decision, or grievance resolution.

At-Will Employment:

Employment that may be terminated by either the employee or the City at any time, with or without cause or notice, except as otherwise governed by contract or law.

Bereavement Leave:

Paid leave granted to employees for the purpose of attending funeral services or mourning the death of an immediate family member.

City Manager:

The Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Taft, responsible for the overall management and administration of City operations.

Conflict of Interest:

A situation where an employee's personal interests could improperly influence the performance of their official duties or the City's decision-making processes.

Disciplinary Action:

Corrective measures taken in response to employee misconduct or policy violations, which may include verbal warnings, written reprimands, suspension, demotion, or termination.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA):

A federal law granting eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons.

Full-Time Employee:

An employee regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 40 hours per week. Under certain conditions, with City Manager approval, full-time status may apply to employees working at least 32 hours weekly.

Grievance:

A formal complaint filed by an employee concerning the interpretation or application of City policies or employment-related decisions.

Harassment:

Unwelcome behavior, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Immediate Family:

For leave purposes, immediate family includes an employee's spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, in-laws, and any dependent residing in the employee's household.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP):

Approved time off without pay for an employee who has exhausted all applicable paid leave balances or has requested unpaid leave.

Non-Exempt Employee:

An employee who is entitled to overtime pay under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

Overtime:

Hours worked by a non-exempt employee beyond 40 hours in a workweek, compensated at one and a half times the regular hourly rate, as governed by FLSA.

Paid Time Off (PTO):

Accrued leave available to employees for use as vacation, sick leave, or other approved absences.

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP):

A formal document outlining specific goals, timelines, and performance expectations for an employee needing improvement in their job performance.

Probationary Period:

An initial 90-day evaluation period for new employees or those promoted or transferred, during which job performance and suitability are assessed.

Progressive Discipline:

A disciplinary process aimed at correcting behavior through increasingly severe actions, up to and including termination, depending on the seriousness of the infraction.

Public Information Act:

A Texas law ensuring public access to government records, with certain exceptions for sensitive or confidential information.

Resign in Good Standing:

To resign in good standing, an employee must voluntarily resign their employment by providing eight days' written notice to their supervisor. The supervisor and the City Manager each shall retain the authority to accept the resignation and end the employment relationship earlier than the eight-day notice date; the employee shall still be deemed to have resigned in good standing.

Retaliation:

Adverse action taken against an employee for engaging in protected activities, such as reporting misconduct or participating in investigations.

Seasonal Employee:

An employee hired for a specific period or project, typically without eligibility for full City benefits.

Separation of Employment:

The end of an employee's service with the City, whether through resignation, termination, retirement, or layoff.

Sick Leave:

Paid leave provided for an employee's personal illness, injury, or medical appointments, or to care for immediate family members.

Supervisor:

An employee with direct authority over other employees, responsible for overseeing performance, assigning work, and enforcing policies.

Temporary Employee:

An employee hired for a limited duration or specific project without eligibility for regular benefits.

Timekeeping System:

The City's official system used to track employee work hours, including clock-in/out times and leave usage.

Vehicle Use Policy:

Policies governing the use of City-owned vehicles by employees during work-related activities.

Volunteer:

An individual providing services to the City without compensation, excluding members of the Taft Volunteer Fire Department.

Workplace Violence:

Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other disruptive behavior that occurs at the workplace or during work-related activities.

-end-

City of Taft PPM - Employee Acknowledgement Page (to be signed and included in personnel file)

EXHIBIT "A"

**CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS
RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the **City of Taft Personnel Policy Manual** and understand the following:

1. **Responsibility for Understanding Policies**
 - I am responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with all policies and procedures contained in the Personnel Policy Manual.
 - I understand that I can ask my **Supervisor, Department Heads, or the Personnel Office** for clarification on any policies or procedures I do not understand.
2. **Non-Contractual Nature of the Manual**
 - I understand that this manual is not a contract of employment, and the City of Taft may modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all of the policies, procedures, or benefits described in this manual at any time, with prior notice.
3. **Acceptance of Employment Conditions**
 - I acknowledge that acceptance of the provisions in this manual is a **condition of my employment** with the City of Taft.
 - By accepting employment or continuing employment after the effective date of this manual, I agree to comply with all policies and procedures in the manual.
4. **Updates and Revisions**
 - I understand that policy updates or changes will be communicated, and it is my responsibility to review and adhere to all updates.
5. **Compliance with Key Policies**
 - I acknowledge that I have read and agree to comply with the City's **Confidentiality Policy** and all other applicable policies.
6. **Acknowledgement of Receipt Copy**
 - I understand that a signed copy of this form will be placed in my personnel file, and I will receive a copy for my personal records.

Employee Name (Printed): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Human Resources: _____

EXHIBIT "B"

**CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS
Public Access Option Form
Texas Government Code Section 552.024**

Purpose:

Under the **Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code Section 552.024)**, current and former employees and public officials have the right to request that certain personal information be kept confidential. If you do not request confidentiality, the following information may be subject to public release upon request.

Please indicate your preference for each category of information by checking **YES** or **NO**.

Public Access Election

Information Category	YES (Allow Public Release)	NO (Keep Confidential)
Home Address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home Telephone Number	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal Cell Phone Number	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal Email Address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security Number (Full or Partial)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Contact Information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information that reveals whether you have family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Employee Acknowledgment

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of my rights under the **Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code Section 552.024)**. I understand that my selections above will determine the level of public access to the listed personal information.

I may change my selections at any time by submitting an updated form to the **Human Resources Department**.

Printed Name: _____

Department: _____

Date: _____

Employee Signature: _____

EXHIBIT "C"

CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS

Wage Deduction Authorization Form

Purpose:

This form authorizes the City of Taft to deduct specific amounts from an employee's wages in accordance with Texas Labor Code § 61.018 and applicable laws.

Authorization:

I, **[Employee Name]**, authorize the City of Taft to deduct from my paycheck any amounts I owe the City for the following reasons:

- Repayment of advance wages or loans issued by the City.
- Costs for lost, damaged, or unreturned City property.
- Benefit premiums or other employee-elected benefits.
- Reimbursement for unauthorized personal charges on City-issued devices or credit cards.
- Any other lawful deduction authorized under Texas law.

Conditions:

1. **Notice of Deduction:** I understand that before any wage deduction is made, I will receive written notice specifying the amount owed and the reason for the deduction.
2. **Dispute Resolution:** I have the right to dispute any proposed deduction. Disputes must be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Department within **5 business days** of receiving notice.
3. **Final Authority:** The City Manager will review and make a final decision on any unresolved disputes regarding wage deductions.
4. **Final Paycheck Deductions:** I authorize the City to deduct any outstanding amounts from my final paycheck upon termination or separation of employment.

Voluntary Acknowledgment:

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and voluntarily agree to the wage deduction terms outlined above.

Employee Name (Printed): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

EXHIBIT "D"

CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS

Sick Leave Donation Form

Purpose:

This form authorizes the voluntary donation of accrued sick leave hours from one employee to another, subject to City policies and approval by the City Manager.

Donor Information

Employee Name (Donor): _____

Department: _____

Recipient Information

Employee Name (Recipient): _____

Department: _____

Donation Details

Number of Sick Leave Hours to Donate: _____

Acknowledgments and Conditions

By signing below, I confirm and acknowledge the following:

1. **Voluntary Donation:** This donation is entirely voluntary, and I have not received nor will I receive any compensation, gifts, or remuneration in exchange for donating my sick leave hours.
2. **Minimum Balance Requirement:** My sick leave balance must be at least **40 hours** after the donation. If this donation would reduce my balance below 40 hours, it will not be accepted.
3. **Donation Limits:** The City Manager reserves the right to limit the number of hours I may donate.
4. **Irrevocable Donation:** Once approved, donated hours are **non-refundable**, even if the recipient does not use all of the donated leave.
5. **Payroll Adjustment:** I understand this is an official document authorizing Payroll to deduct the approved hours from my sick leave balance.

Donor Signature: _____

Date: _____

For City Manager Use Only

Donation Approval: Approved Denied

Approved Hours to be Donated: _____

City Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____

EXHIBIT "E"

City-Issued Device Agreement

This City-Issued Device Agreement ("Agreement") is made effective as of _____ between the City of Taft, Texas ("City") and _____, a city employee or elected official of the City ("Individual").

1. Agreement to Policy:

By signing this Agreement, the Individual confirms that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the City-Issued Device Policy.

2. Ownership and Data Management:

- The Individual acknowledges that all city-issued devices (including phones, laptops, tablets, etc.) are the property of the City of Taft.
- The Individual understands that any data, files, messages, and communications stored on these devices are considered city property and may be inspected or retrieved as required.

3. Acceptable Use:

- The Individual agrees to use city-issued devices primarily for conducting official city business.
- Limited personal use is permissible, provided it doesn't interfere with work responsibilities or violate other policies.

4. Return and Data Backup:

- The Individual will return all city-issued devices promptly when requested or upon leaving their position.
- The Individual understands that data will be backed up and sensitive information removed as required by law.

5. Security Measures:

- The Individual will take reasonable precautions to safeguard city devices and their data.
- Password protection or other security measures will be used to prevent unauthorized access.

6. Acknowledgment of Legal Compliance:

- The Individual recognizes the importance of following all relevant state and federal laws, including the Texas Public Information Act, related to data retention and disclosure.
- The Individual agrees to cooperate with the City in complying with these regulations.

7. Violations:

Any violations of this Agreement or the City-Issued Device Policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination (for city employees), or appropriate legal consequences (for elected officials).

8. Signature:

By signing below, the Individual acknowledges that they have read, understood, and agree to the terms of this Agreement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

City Representative Signature: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT

EXHIBIT "F"

Confidentiality Agreement for Employees of the City of Taft, Texas

This Confidentiality Agreement ("Agreement") is made effective as of [Date] by and between the City of Taft, Texas ("City") and [Employee Name], an employee of the City ("Employee").

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to ensure that all confidential and sensitive information pertaining to the City's business, operations, and affairs is kept secure and undisclosed to unauthorized persons.

2. Definition of Confidential Information

For the purposes of this Agreement, "Confidential Information" shall include, but is not limited to, all information, records, documents, and data pertaining to the City's business, operations, finances, plans, employees, and any other information that is not publicly available. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal communications, discussions, and meetings between employees regarding City affairs and business.

3. Obligation of Confidentiality

The Employee agrees to:

a. Maintain the confidentiality of all Confidential Information during and after their employment with the City. b. Not disclose, reveal, or make use of any Confidential Information without the prior written consent of the City or as required by law. c. Take all reasonable precautions to protect the integrity and confidentiality of Confidential Information.

4. Open Records Requests

The Employee acknowledges that the proper channel for the release of information to the public is through Open Records Requests, as governed by applicable laws and regulations. The Employee shall not release any information outside of this established process.

5. Violations

Any violation of this Agreement may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The City reserves the right to take any legal or equitable action necessary to protect its Confidential Information and enforce the terms of this Agreement.

6. Return of Materials

Upon termination of employment or at the request of the City, the Employee agrees to return all materials, documents, and any other items that contain Confidential Information.

7. Acknowledgment

The Employee acknowledges that they have read and understood this Agreement and agree to be bound by its terms.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

City Representative Signature: _____

Date: _____

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas. Any disputes arising under or related to this Agreement shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts located in the State of Texas.

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EXHIBIT "G"

Employee Exit Interview Acknowledgment Form

Employee Information:

- **Name:** _____
- **Position:** _____
- **Department:** _____
- **Date of Exit Interview:** _____
- **Date of Final Employment:** _____

Acknowledgment Statement:

I, _____, acknowledge that I have participated in an exit interview conducted by the Human Resources Department of the City of Taft. I understand that the purpose of this interview is to provide feedback on my employment experience and contribute to the continuous improvement of the organization.

I acknowledge that the information I have shared during this interview will be used solely for the purposes outlined in the City of Taft's Exit Interview Policy. I understand that aggregated data and trends from exit interviews may be shared with senior management to inform future initiatives, but my individual identity will remain protected unless disclosure is necessary for addressing significant or urgent issues.

Confidentiality Waiver Clause:

I understand that if I request action to be taken based on the information I have provided during this exit interview, I may waive the confidentiality clause to allow the City of Taft to proceed with an investigation and/or appropriate action. This waiver will enable the city to utilize my statements for the purpose of addressing and resolving the specific matter.

- **I choose to waive the confidentiality clause:** Yes No
- **Details (if applicable):**

Compensation for Exit Interview:

I acknowledge that I will be compensated for participating in this exit interview. If this interview takes place after my last day of employment, I will receive compensation at my regular rate as if I were still employed.

Employee Confirmation:

- **Employee Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____

HR Representative Confirmation:

- **HR Representative Name:** _____
- **Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____

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EXHIBIT "H"

Employee Exit Interview Template

Employee Information:

- **Name:** _____
 - **Position:** _____
 - **Department:** _____
 - **Date of Exit Interview:** _____
 - **Date of Final Employment:** _____
-

1. Reason for Leaving

- What is your primary reason for leaving the City of Taft? (Select all that apply)
 - Career advancement
 - Compensation/benefits
 - Work-life balance
 - Relocation
 - Management/supervision
 - Job dissatisfaction
 - Personal reasons
 - Other (please specify): _____
 - Please elaborate on your reason for leaving:

-

2. Job Satisfaction

- How would you rate your overall job satisfaction during your time with the City of Taft?
 - Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
- What aspects of your job did you find most satisfying?

- What aspects of your job did you find least satisfying?

3. Work Environment and Culture

- How would you describe the work environment and culture of the City of Taft?

- Were there any factors that contributed positively or negatively to your work environment?

4. Management and Supervision

- How would you rate the support and guidance provided by your supervisor/manager?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Average
 - Poor
 - Very poor
- Please provide any feedback on management practices or areas for improvement:

5. Training and Development

- Were you provided with adequate training and development opportunities?
 - Yes
 - No
- What training or development opportunities did you find beneficial?

- What additional training or resources would have improved your performance?

6. Compensation and Benefits

- How satisfied were you with the compensation and benefits provided?
 - Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied

- Do you have any suggestions for improving the compensation and benefits package?

7. Future Recommendations

- What suggestions do you have for the City of Taft to enhance employee retention and overall job satisfaction?

8. Final Thoughts

- Would you recommend the City of Taft as an employer to others?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Please explain: _____
- Is there any other feedback or information you would like to share?

9. Confidentiality Waiver (Optional)

- If you would like action to be taken based on your feedback, you may waive the confidentiality clause:
 - Yes, I waive the confidentiality clause and authorize the city to use my feedback for investigation/action.
 - No, I wish my feedback to remain confidential.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

HR Representative Use Only:

- **Interview conducted by:** _____
- **Date:** _____
- **Comments/Follow-up Actions:**

EXHIBIT "I"

City of Taft, TX

Employee Acknowledgment and Consent Form for Biometric Timekeeping

By signing below, you acknowledge and consent to the collection, use, and/or storage of your biometric data, specifically fingerprint identifiers, by The City of Taft. This biometric data is used solely for the purpose of verifying your identity in connection with the timekeeping system.

The timekeeping device does not store any actual images of your fingerprint. Instead, it converts your fingerprint into a randomized, de-identified code or number. This code may be shared with our timekeeping system vendor, SwipeClock. You understand and agree that The City of Taft may share this anonymized data with SwipeClock to facilitate identity verification, system management, and troubleshooting.

SwipeClock will store this anonymized data only as long as necessary to perform these functions, and in no event longer than three (3) years after your last use of the timekeeping service.

By signing this consent form, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this agreement and agree to the collection, use, and storage of your biometric data as described above.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY FORM

MEETING DATE: 28 FEB 2025

PREPARED BY: Ryan Smith, BSBA, City Manager

AGENDA CONTENT: Discussion and possible action to approve Ordinance Number 2025-1306 establishing a Building and Standards Commission, delegating authority to hear and determine cases concerning alleged violations of municipal ordinances, appointing members to the commission, repealing conflicting ordinances, providing for severance, and declaring an effective date.

AGENDA SECTION: Regular Agenda

BUDGETED AMOUNT: N/A

FUNDS REQUESTED: N/A

FUND: N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City Council is considering an ordinance establishing a Building and Standards Commission for the City of Taft, Texas. This commission will serve as a quasi-judicial body responsible for hearing and determining cases concerning alleged violations of municipal ordinances as authorized under Chapter 54 of the Texas Local Government Code. The commission's jurisdiction will include enforcement of ordinances related to building safety, fire safety, property maintenance, dangerous structures, refuse accumulation, and water conservation measures.

Key Provisions of the Ordinance

- **Creation of the Commission:** The ordinance formally establishes the Building and Standards Commission, which will serve as the primary enforcement body for certain municipal code violations.
- **Membership & Terms:** The commission will consist of five members appointed by the City Council, each serving a two-year term. Members will serve without compensation.
- **Meetings & Quorum:** The commission will follow procedures outlined in the ordinance, with three members constituting a quorum for conducting business.
- **Authority & Responsibilities:** The commission will have the power to conduct hearings, review evidence, and issue determinations on cases related to municipal code violations.

- **Modification of Existing Ordinances:** The ordinance amends Sections 10-26 and 10-341 of the City Code to reflect that the Building and Standards Commission, rather than the City Council, will conduct hearings on building safety violations and appeals.
- **Appointment of Members:** The City Council will appoint five initial members, with terms set to expire two years from the ordinance's effective date.

Purpose & Justification

The establishment of a Building and Standards Commission will allow for more efficient enforcement of building, fire, and property maintenance codes, streamlining the adjudication process for violations. This change aligns with best practices in municipal governance and provides a dedicated body for handling code enforcement cases.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance establishing the Building and Standards Commission and appointing its initial members.

Recommended Motion:

"I move to approve Ordinance No. 2025-1306 establishing the Building and Standards Commission and appointing members as outlined."

Ordinance No. 2025-1306

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS, ESTABLISHING A BUILDING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION, DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO HEAR AND DETERMINE CASES CONCERNING ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES, APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE COMMISSION, REPEALING CONFLICTING ORDINANCES, PROVIDING FOR SEVERANCE, AND DECLARING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Recitals

Whereas, Chapter 54 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the governing body of a municipality to appoint a building and standards commission to hear and determine cases concerning alleged violations of municipal ordinance; and

Whereas, Chapter 54 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes a properly constituted building and standards commission to exercise quasi-judicial enforcement of a broad range of municipal ordinances, including for the preservation of public safety, relating to the materials or methods used to construct a building or improvement; relating to the fire safety of a building or improvement; relating to dangerously damaged or deteriorated buildings or improvements; relating to conditions caused by accumulations of refuse, vegetation, or other matter that creates breeding and living places for insects and rodents; relating to a building code or to the condition, use, or appearance of property in a municipality; relating to animal care and control; or relating to water conservation measures, including watering restrictions.; and

Whereas, Chapter 54 of the Texas Local Government Code requires that a building and standards commission consist of one or more panels, each composed of at least five members, to be appointed for terms of two years; and

Whereas, the City Council desires to establish a Building and Standards Commission of the City of Taft to allow for efficient and timely quasi-judicial enforcement of municipal ordinances; and

Whereas, the City Council finds that a sufficient written notice of the date, hour, place and subject of this meeting of the City Council was posted at a place convenient to the public at the City Hall of the City for the time required by law preceding this meeting as required by the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, and that this meeting has been open to the public as required by law at all times during which this ordinance and the subject matter thereof has been discussed, considered and formally acted upon.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAFT, THAT:

1. **Findings.** The findings contained in the recitals of this ordinance are declared to be true and correct and are hereby adopted as part of this ordinance for all intents and purposes.
2. **Building and Standards Commission Established.** The Municipal Code of Ordinances of the City of Taft is hereby amended by adding Chapter 2, Subchapter IV, Division 4, "Building and Standards Commission," comprising the following sections:

DIVISION 4. – BUILDING AND STANDARDS COMMISSION

Sec. 2-190. - Building and standards commission established.

There is hereby established a building and standards commission, to hear and determine cases concerning alleged violations of city ordinances, as authorized by Chapter 54, Subchapter C, Texas Local Government Code.

Sec. 2-191. - Appointment; terms of office; compensation.

(a) The members of the commission shall be nominated and appointed by the city council, and the commission shall comprise one five-member panel.

(b) Members shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years. Vacancies shall be filled for an unexpired term in the manner in which original appointments are required to be made.

(c) Members shall serve without any form of compensation.

(d) At the first meeting of the Commission after the each appointment of new members by the City Council, the members of the Commission shall elect from their members a chair, a vice-chair, and a secretary.

Sec. 2-192. - Meetings; procedure; quorum; secretary.

(a) The chair of the commission, or in his absence the vice chair, shall preside over all hearings and meetings. The presiding officer shall determine all questions of order, procedure, and as to the reception of evidence.

(b) The commission may establish rules and regulations for its own procedures consistent with state law, the city Code of Ordinances. Hearings shall not be required to be conducted in accordance with the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, or the Texas Rules of Evidence.

(c) Three (3) members of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

(d) The secretary for the commission shall make a detailed record of its proceedings which shall set forth its decisions, the vote of each member participating therein, the absence of a member and any failure of a member to vote.

Sec. 2-193. - Commission decisions.

The decisions of the commission shall be determined by the concurring vote of a majority of members of the commission present and voting. Any member of the commission who did not hear the evidence during a hearing or who has a personal interest in the case shall not vote or take part in the decision.

3. **Conforming Amendments to the City Code.** The City Council hereby delegates to the building and standards commission the authority to hear and determine certain cases concerning alleged violations of municipal ordinance by amending Sections 10-26 and 10-341 of the Code of Ordinances, City of Taft to read as follows, with the ~~struck through~~ text to be deleted from the Code, and **bold, underlined** text to be added to the Code:

Sec. 10-26. - Notice of violation.

(a) Whenever a violation of this article has been discovered and reported by the building inspector, or his designee, a public hearing shall be held by the ~~city council~~ **building and standards commission** to determine whether a building complies with the standards set out in this article.

...

Sec. 10-341. - Board of appeals.

(a) The ~~city council~~ **building and standards commission** shall hereby act as the board of appeals and shall conduct hearings to determine whether a structure complies with the requirements of this article when the enforcement authority deems a structure a dangerous building or distressed property.

4. **Appointment of Members of the Building and Standards Commission.** The City Council hereby appoints the following members to the building and standards commission, with terms set to expire two years from the effective date of this Ordinance.

Name	Term Expires
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5. **Repeal of Conflicting Ordinances.** Any and all ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent or in conflict herewith are, to the extent of such inconsistency or conflict, hereby repealed.

6. **Severability.** If any provision, section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance, or the application of same to any person or set of circumstances, is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, void, or invalid, the validity of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance shall not be affected, and it is the intent of the City Council in adopting this Ordinance that no portion, provision, or regulation herein shall become inoperative or fail by reason of any unconstitutionality, voidness, or invalidity of any other portion, provision or regulation, and all provisions of this Ordinance are declared to be severable for that purpose.

7. **Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the City Council of the City of Taft.

Passed and approved this _____ day of _____ 2025.

Leonard Vasquez, Mayor

Attest:

Jessica Gonzalez, City Secretary

Approved as to form:

Thomas A. Gwosdz, City Attorney

From: [Ryan Smith](#)
To: [Jessica Gonzalez](#)
Cc: [Thomas Gwosdz](#)
Subject: Building and Standards Commission
Date: Friday, February 28, 2025 12:48:19 PM

Good Afternoon,

The following Individuals will be the nominees for the BSC

David Smith - Business owner
Felipe Rodriguez - Business owner
Peggy Chavez - Realtor
Ismael Soto - Professional Engineer
Gilberto Rodriguez - Registered Architect

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Ryan Smith
City Manager

