



**CITY OF DUBLIN**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS**  
**OF THE CITY MANAGER**

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 1.4</b>
<b>TO:</b> City of Dublin Employees
<b>FROM:</b> Megan D. O'Callaghan, City Manager <i>Megan O'Callaghan</i>
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Council-Manager Form of City Government - Adherence to Organizational Structure and Communication System
<b>DATE:</b> March 1, 2023
<i>Supersedes and replaces Administrative Order 1.4 Adherence to the Organizational "Chain-of-Command", dated May 1, 2000.</i>
<b>PROPONENT:</b> Office of the City Manager

**1. PURPOSE**

A. The purpose of this Administrative Order is to formalize and communicate the City policy regarding adherence to the Council-Manager form of City government, Section 3.03(b) of the Revised Charter of Dublin, Ohio, and organizational structure (also commonly referred to as the "chain-of-command"), and to provide direction and guidance to City employees regarding adherence to this policy. This Administrative Order shall be applicable to all employees of the City of Dublin (other than the Clerk of Council and Legislative Services staff and the Law Director) and shall be strictly enforced by all Department/Division Heads and supervisory personnel. Questions regarding this Administrative Order should be directed to your supervisor, Department/Division Head, or the Office of the City Manager.

B. It is the City's intent, through this Administrative Order, to enhance the operational effectiveness from an organizational perspective and to ensure that appropriate information is transmitted to the proper administrative officials through the proper organizational channels. As the City continues to grow as an organization, it is essential that accurate information be directed to the proper officials in the proper manner in order for the City to effectively address organizational concerns, solve problems and provide higher levels of service to meet the ever-increasing service demands from the community we serve.

## 2. POLICY

A. The City of Dublin operates under the Council-Manager form of City government. This system combines the strong political leadership of elected Council Members with the strong managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. In this form of government, Council is the central legislative body responsible for representing the broad interests of the community. Council develops guiding policies and enacts legislation that reflects these interests. The City Manager is hired to serve Council and the community in administering government projects, programs, and services in accordance with Council's vision. The City Manager serves as Council's chief advisor, overseeing the provision of public services and executing Council's policies. In this system, all City employees report directly or indirectly to the City Manager, who has complete administrative authority over all departments. The City Manager serves as the link between the elected representatives of the community and the administration of public services.

B. Out of respect for and adherence to the organizational structure, all questions, informational inquiries, problems, reports, communications, etc., originating within any Department/Division shall be directed to the City Manager via the established organizational structure and communication system.

C. **In no instance, or under any circumstances, shall any communications, information, etc. be transmitted either in writing or verbally to the Mayor and/or any member of Council unless the City Manager approves the transmittal of such information.** In order to maintain effective Council-Manager relations, the City Manager needs to be informed regarding all communication prior to its transmittal to Council in the event Council Members require an explanation from the City Manager on such information.

D. All employees are hereby formally advised that, pursuant to Section 3.03(b) of the Charter, the Council and its members are **required** to deal with employees who are subject to the overall direction and supervision of the City Manager **solely through the City Manager**. In addition, Council, nor any of its members are permitted to give any orders, either publicly or privately, to any such employee.

## 3. STAFF EXPECTATIONS

A. The City Manager will play a leadership role in facilitating two-way communication between staff and Council by acting as the liaison.

B. City staff will treat Council Members with respect, courtesy and professionalism at all times, which includes addressing them by their last name.

C. If a Council Member requests information, a meeting or content from City staff without the referral of the City Manager, staff will request that the Council Member contact the City Manager's Office.

D. Staff will not contact Council Members with problems, concerns or content without the City Manager's expressed approval or oversight.

Additional guidance can be found in the attached Dublin City Council and Staff Expectations and Communication Guidelines.

Attachment: Dublin City Council and Staff Expectations and Communication Guidelines

## City Council and Staff ... Working Together

### What City Council Can Expect From Staff:

<p><b>Staff Serves City Council</b></p>	<p>The City Council is the governing body of the City. While we serve Council Members individually for the purpose of inquiry and constituent concerns, we take direction from Council as a whole through the City Manager on policy matters, and priority of effort.</p>
<p><b>We Are Here To Serve</b></p>	<p>Our work is guided by the principles outlined in the ICMA Code of Ethics, which requires the highest ethical behavior of local government professionals. <a href="https://icma.org/page/icma-code-ethics">https://icma.org/page/icma-code-ethics</a>. We also comply with State of Ohio Ethics laws and regulations.</p> <p>As public servants, we put the needs of our citizens first. We are here to take care of citizens in a timely, courteous and professional manner and to provide them with the highest quality customer service.</p>
<p><b>Minimize Surprises</b></p>	<p>If there is a media story on a City matter and we know about it, you will know about it. We will help you be ready to respond to citizens' questions about important matters. Likewise, we ask Council to keep us informed so we are not surprised.</p>
<p><b>Courteous And Professional Treatment</b></p>	<p>Staff will treat Council Members with respect and courtesy at all times. As professionals, we request the same treatment.</p>
<p><b>We Are A Learning Organization</b></p>	<p>We are not perfect, but we take time to learn from both our mistakes and major incidents in the community. By studying our response to crises/complaints, we are better able to respond to the next community issue.</p>
<p><b>Information Is Shared With The Full Council</b></p>	<p>When Council Members request information through the City Manager, generally the response is provided to the full Council. The only potential exception to this is an inquiry specific to one resident that does not have a broader implication.</p>

# City Council and Staff ... Working Together



## What Staff Asks of City Council:

<b>Let The City Manager's Office Be Your Conduit</b>	Please call or email the City Manager's Office when you need assistance. We will ensure the proper City staff attends to your needs quickly. (Section 3.03(b) Revised Charter of Dublin, Ohio)
<b>Work As Our Partners In Customer Service</b>	Let us help you resolve a citizen concern, provide you with information about an issue, and use our experience and expertise to help you determine a course of action. City employees have rich and diverse backgrounds in public administration and other fields.  Experience with similar situations, our professional experience and network with local government colleagues are valuable and can help guide your decisions.
<b>Give Staff The Benefit Of The Doubt</b>	City employees are committed to ethical behavior and first-class service to the public. When an angry citizen or business owner calls, please give us a chance to explore the issue and offer our side of the story. We will do everything we can to find a solution.
<b>Staff Work Assignments</b>	The City Manager prioritizes and assigns work to City staff. Council Member requests for information and analysis are shared with the full Council.

## Communication Guidelines

Effective communication approaches should be used to build positive relations.

- Council Members will consult the City Manager before speaking directly with any member of staff.
- City Manager will include the rest of the Council in communications raised by any Council Member about substantive policy issues.
- Check who is being cc'd before sending sensitive emails.
- A best practice for emails that include all City Council members is to include a reminder to "please direct any comments or questions to the City Manager and do not reply all".
- Emails or text messages regarding City business are publicly accessible. Do not put anything in writing that you do not want to see in the newspaper the next day.
- Council Members and the City Manager should always feel comfortable contacting one another, at any time; however, out of respect for work-life balance, will not expect one another to immediately respond to emails after hours or on the weekend. In the event of a time sensitive issue or an emergency, a phone call is likely the most effective method of communication.
- Reply to one another's emails when there are requests for actions, even if the response is that no action can be taken in the short run. Mark "urgent" if it is. Mark "no need to respond" if it is informational. Mark as "no need to read/respond except during working hours" if appropriate.
- As Dublin residents, Council Members may use the GoDublin app and any other standard service request mechanisms or contact the appropriate City staff for needed services (as any citizen would).