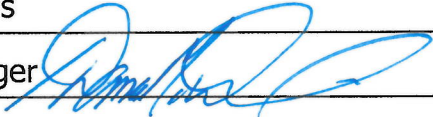




CITY OF DUBLIN
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERS
OF THE CITY MANAGER

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 1.21
TO: All City of Dublin Employees
FROM: Dana McDaniel, City Manager 
SUBJECT: Media Relations Policy Manual
DATE: August 9, 2022
<i>Supersedes and replaces Administrative Order 1.21, dated May 20, 1997 regarding Same Subject.</i>
PROPONENT: Division of Communications & Public Information

1. PURPOSE

The attached Media Relations Policy Manual is established in order to provide a record of media relations policies, procedures, rules, regulations and guidelines. It is the City's intent through this manual to assist in developing a successful working relationship with the media by outlining a comprehensive policy governing dissemination of official City information. Any questions regarding the Media Relations Policy Manual should be directed to the Office of the City Manager or the Division of Communications & Public Information (CPI).

2. INTERPRETATION & POLICY

You shall use the Media Relations Policy for the following:

- (1) Disseminating official City information
- (2) Understanding the role of the CPI Director
- (3) Identifying which staff members should respond to media inquiries and when
- (4) Providing timely response and accurate information to the media
- (5) Assisting the media in accurately covering official City business
- (6) Identifying information available to the media and specifying information not for public disclosure

(7) Ensuring timely and accurate media coverage of City Council actions

(8) Correcting inaccurate media reports on City business

(9) Identifying the place of articles written on innovative City programs in professional publications

3. MEDIA

A. The media (including online social media) is one of the most effective tools to disseminate accurate and timely coverage of City policies, programs and events to residents and other stakeholders. It is important to use these tools wisely to ensure the City's message is accurate and consistent.

(1) Media referred to throughout this policy is defined as:

a. Local, regional and national print outlets (e.g. daily/weekly newspapers; professional and commercial magazines; journals; etc.)

b. Radio, podcasts and broadcast television

c. Wire services (e.g. United Press International, Associated Press)

d. Web-based media services and online social networking sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.)

4. MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

A. The CPI Division is the City's primary liaison with the media and is responsible for ensuring information released by the City is accurate, consistent and distributed to appropriate outlets in a timely manner.

B. In instances in which media coverage is required or anticipated, or for any issue that could affect the City's public image, division directors shall refer to the CPI Director at the earliest opportunity.

C. To ensure consistency and accuracy of messages, the CPI Director or designee will help identify the proper spokespeople for any given subject, determine key

messages, and prepare employees for media interviews and public presentations where the media may be present.

D. The CPI Division will determine when it is appropriate to contact the City Manager and/or City Council regarding information released to the media.

E. Media requests for information regarding a police policy matter or specific field incident shall be referred to the CPI Director or Dublin Police Department Public Information Officer (PIO).

(1) Certain investigations, incidents or events involving police activities could be jeopardized with early or inappropriate release of information. In these situations, information may be released only by the Chief of Police, Deputy Chief or CPI Division.

a. If possible, the Dublin Police Department shall contact the CPI Division immediately when a breaking story occurs and assist in responding to press inquiries when necessary.

5. COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC INFORMATION DIVISION

Responsible for communication counsel and strategies for citywide initiatives and events; promotes and enhances Dublin's image through marketing, communications and community engagement; serves as the voice of Dublin by developing and delivering unified key messages and manages overall brand alignment. Key stakeholder and target audiences include fellow employees, residents, corporate citizens, visitors, investors, influencers and the media.

6. MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

A. Media Inquiries — Interviews with reporters are usually held in person, over the phone or via a video conferencing platform during a pre-scheduled time. Before being interviewed, it is important to determine the focus of the story and the specific information desired by the reporter. It is acceptable to ask the reporter from what angle he/she is approaching the story. During the interview, always assume all your statements will be made public, even if you believe the conversation is "off the record." The reporter may also ask to record the interview.

(1) Depending on the story, a photographer or videographer may accompany the reporter or schedule a follow-up session. The photographer or videographer will

appreciate any assistance you can provide in appropriate photographs, which could enhance the story. Staff members may decline to be photographed.

B. Video — Television reporters will be most interested in interviewing a staff spokesperson on camera or recording an activity with high visual appeal. Interviewees should wear appropriate business attire, Dublin-branded clothing or uniforms. All interviews are subject to editing by the media before airing.

C. Audio — Radio and podcast interviews are usually pre-recorded in person or over the phone. When interviewed over the phone, most reporters will ask permission before recording. All interviews are subject to editing by the media before airing.

D. Unscheduled media interviews — Members of the media who arrive in the City with no pre-arranged interview appointment should be directed to the CPI Director for assistance. If a television crew requires footage with no interview (commonly referred to as a B-roll), the CPI Director or a Public Information Officer should accompany the videographer.

7. PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA

A. Employees shall alert the CPI Division regarding any formal public records request by the media. They should also alert CPI to potentially controversial public records requests from individuals or organizations.

B. Media and public requests for inspection and copying of public information and records shall be accommodated during normal business hours as outlined in Administrative Order 1.18.

C. Closed records, including City records regarding issues of individual privacy, confidential legal matters or City litigation, are exempt from public disclosure. Such records include:

(1) Medical records of City employees, which are exempt from public disclosure. (Most personnel records are public records and must be released to the public. Social security numbers may be redacted from personnel files.)

(2) Confidential memos between the City Law Director and City officials/staff (attorney/client privilege).

D. Determining whether a record can be disclosed:

(1) In situations where there is a discrepancy or uncertainty on the part of a City employee regarding release of an official record to a member of the media, the City Manager should be contacted to make the final determination. Specific categories of records may be exempted by the Public Records Act.

8. PUBLIC MEETINGS

A. Every effort should be made to encourage accurate media coverage of City Council, board and commission meetings, actions and decisions.

B. The CPI Division posts the agendas for all City Council, board and commission meetings on the City's website at least 24 hours before the meeting. Preparation of the Council agenda is the responsibility of the Clerk of Council. City administrative staff members prepare the other agendas.

C. Audio/video recordings of City Council and board and commission meetings are allowed provided it does not disrupt the proceedings in progress as determined by the Mayor or meeting chair person.

D. The Sunshine Law requires the City to provide twenty four (24) hour advanced notice to those media contacts who have requested notification of public meetings. Such notification must also include the purpose or agenda for the meeting. City Council meeting packets are prepared by the Clerk of Council and posted on the City's website.

E. City Council regular meetings are recorded and streamed live on the City's website. Elected and appointed officials and staff should bear in mind that their statements, actions and body language can be viewed by a broad audience. Past meetings can also be streamed online, and can be found on the City's website. These recordings are not the official records of the meetings.

9. CORRECTING MEDIA INFORMATION

A. It is the responsibility of the CPI Division to contact the media when a story that has been published or aired contains a factual error that significantly affects the public's perception. Depending on the nature of the error, the request for correction can be made by email or phone call.

B. City Council members should immediately notify the CPI Director if they believe incorrect information is being communicated by the media regarding a City program or issue. Other City division directors should also immediately notify CPI.

C. Letters to the Editor

(1) When appropriately presented, letters to the editors of newspapers and electronic media may be effective tools in clarifying a misconception of City policies and programs and for correcting inaccurate information that has been reported by the press. Elected and appointed officials and division directors who believe a City letter to the editor is warranted should discuss their concerns with the CPI Director, who will determine if a response is appropriate and who should prepare and sign the letter.

(2) Any letters to the editor or other opinion-based written materials created by employees in their official capacities or that will reflect upon the City of Dublin must be approved by the CPI Director before submittal.

D. Responding to Media Stories as Private Citizens

(1) The following guidelines should be followed for those staff members or employee groups who choose to contact or respond to City-related news stories as private citizens.

a. Letters may not be prepared on City time, distributed on City stationary or mailed at City expense.

b. Telephone contact may not be made on City time using City telephones.

c. Use of City facilities or supplies is prohibited.

d. Staff members should avoid including their official title or indicating that the response is on behalf of the City. If the staff member is identified as a City employee, they must include language that states the opinions set forth in their communication do not necessarily represent the views or position of the City.

10. EMERGENCIES, PROBLEMS, SENSITIVE SITUATIONS

A. Immediately report to the City Manager, department director and the CPI Director any issue that could have a negative effect on the City's public image.

B. This includes errors, litigations, embarrassing incidents, mismanagements, disgruntled employees who complain to the media, important personnel actions, such as firings or layoffs, or conflicts with other agencies or among key people.

C. The CPI Director or a Public Information Officer will work with City staff to determine the plan of action in managing these types of stories with the media. The plan includes:

(1) Determining the best way to release any information, including when, by whom and where. The CPI Director or a Public Information Officer can help by writing and issuing a media release, calling reporters, or, if necessary, arranging a news conference.

(2) Designating one or more spokespersons on the issue and, if more than one, ensuring that they speak with "one voice."

(3) Providing timely updates to the media for a "developing" situation. Be sure the spokespersons receive accurate, up-to-date information. Inaccurate and out-of-date information can lead to the public's loss of confidence in City departments' ability to respond to problems. It is advisable to keep apprised of challenging situations rather than having the media "uncover" them. Once a department or the City's credibility is lost, it can take years to regain.

(4) Informing other affected departments or individuals of what happened and what the spokesperson is going to say.