

# City of Hermiston

## Volunteer Handbook



*Where Life is Sweet*

**Effective July 1, 2020**

## Welcome!

Welcome to the City of Hermiston! Thank you for donating your time and your talents as a volunteer. We are glad to have you and we believe that you will be a great complement to our team. At the City, we believe that our volunteers are one of our most valuable assets, and we endeavor to offer volunteer experiences that benefit both the community and the volunteer. The City understands that volunteering promotes service, life-long learning, and personal growth. Therefore, we hope that you will find your experience with the City of Hermiston successful and rewarding.

## Using This Handbook

We believe that you can contribute significantly to our success and want you to share in the growth of our future. You can do this best if you understand our organization and your role.

This Handbook has been prepared as a guide to give you a better understanding of the organization's foundation, philosophies, and the policies that make the City of Hermiston a great place to volunteer, learn, and live. The policies in this document are intended to guide and aid the City in achieving its goals through positive and efficient use of volunteer services. This handbook covers all board, committee, and commission members (referred to as "members" or "volunteers") of the City of Hermiston and supersedes any prior handbooks or written policies of the City.

Also, while it is the City's hope that every member associated with the City finds volunteering successful and rewarding; this handbook is not a guarantee of or contract for continued volunteer service. Rather, all members of the City are "at will." This means that either you or the City may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice, and without appeal rights or due process procedures.

The City reserves the right to change or discontinue any policy, procedure, or practices at any time as it determines appropriate for efficient operations of the City. However, in order to avoid misunderstandings, you should recognize that no City employee, besides the City Manager or designee, has the authority to enter into any agreement with you regarding the terms of your volunteer service. However, the City Council and City Manager/designee may make changes, at-will, or deviate from the provisions in this handbook.

Please contact City Recorder, Lilly Alarcon-Strong, CMC at [lalarcon-strong@hermiston.or.us](mailto:lalarcon-strong@hermiston.or.us) or at 541-667-5004 if you have any questions about any of the provisions in the handbook. After reviewing this handbook, please sign the attached Volunteer Handbook Receipt Acknowledgment Form indicating you have received the information attached and will adhere to the policy's in place and return it to Lilly, at City Hall, by the date she indicates.

Again, welcome and thank you for your service to the community. Please accept our wishes for success in your new volunteer position. We truly value both you and the contribution you make through your volunteer service, and we sincerely hope you will enjoy your volunteer service with the City.

Sincerely,



Byron D. Smith  
City Manager

cc: Volunteer File

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## Our Vision

The City of Hermiston aspires to support an excellent community. We strive to provide courageous leadership to create an inclusive community while providing an affordable, livable and growing economy.

## Our Values

Strong Work Ethic  
Inclusiveness  
Integrity  
Generosity  
Excellence  
People

## Our Goals

The most current Goal Setting Report is included. Previous Goal Setting Reports can be found on the City's website at: <https://www.hermiston.or.us/government/city-council>

## General Information, Policies, Rules, and Expectations

### Purpose and Applicability

This policy has been established to summarize policies regarding volunteers. The intent of this handbook is to help you understand the volunteer service at the City of Hermiston. It contains general information and guidelines; it is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all possible applications or exceptions to the policies and procedures described herein.

### Volunteer Definition

A volunteer/member is any person, approved by the City, who donates approved service to the City of Hermiston without payment or other compensation or benefits (including job experience workers, ie: CAPCO and/or other programs).

### Who is Not a Volunteer

- Elected Officials
- Persons not approved, by the City of Hermiston, for volunteer service.
- Individuals under the age of 18 without a Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgment Receipt form signed by a parent or guardian.
- Individuals or groups that are volunteering for another agency. Example: Boys Scouts performing services at a public event or volunteers of another entity responding in a mutual aid agreement.
- Court ordered community service workers.
- Work release inmates.

### General Statement of Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to effective supervision, and the right to recognition for work accomplished. In return, volunteers shall agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. They are also expected to act in accordance with all appropriate codes, laws, regulations, and policies, regardless of whether they are set by the City or outside regulatory bodies.

### Confidentiality

Although the City is a public entity, some information obtained in the course of your time with the City is confidential and may not be subject to public disclosure. Volunteers must not access, use or disclose sensitive

or confidential information or data except in accordance with City of Hermiston policies, practices and procedures, and as authorized by state or federal laws or regulations. Volunteers who access, use or release confidential information contrary to Oregon or federal laws may be subject to civil or criminal penalties under those laws.

## Volunteer Photos, Audio Recordings, and Videos

Commonly, volunteers of the City of Hermiston have photographs, audio recordings, and/or videos taken of them participating in functions of their volunteer duties. Please know that these items may be used for outreach, education, or documentation purposes, without compensation, by the City of Hermiston and outside organizations.

## Communication- With Public, at Meetings, With Media

Please always be courteous and professional when communicating both verbally and in writing. Be mindful when speaking at meetings and with the press that anything said may end up in print. In discussions about City business or issues with the press or through social media, you should be careful to not represent a personal opinion as if it were the City’s position or your Board’s position on an issue (more information on electronic communication to follow). For example, please write e-mail communications, when conducting City business, with no less care, judgment, and responsibility than you would use for letters or internal memoranda written on organization letterhead. Remember, public records law (more information on public records to follow) makes all written communication a public record and accessible to anyone that requests it.

## Carrying Out Board Duties

It is important to know that as a representative of the City, you are a public official and are therefore held to a higher standard by the Council, staff, and the residents of Hermiston while performing your board responsibilities. You may be faced with difficult decisions and situations, civility and diplomacy are not only important, but expected in your role as a board member. Therefore, you should:

- Always review materials provided to you in advance of the meeting so you are prepared to give your full attention to the matters at hand.
- Treat other board members, Council, staff, and the public with:
  - Respect
  - Patience
  - Courtesy, and
  - Civility

Even when there are disagreements on what is best for the community.

- Recognize that even private conversations can have a public presence. As board members, you are often the focus of the public’s attention. Even casual conversations about City business, other public officials, the public, or staff may draw attention and be repeated.
- Board members are often asked to explain a board recommendation or action or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with the public. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of a board recommendation or action or project status, however, be careful to not promise that a City board or staff member will take any specific action.

## Parliamentary Procedures- Common Motions

Board members are expected to use the following concepts that are similar to Roberts Rules of Order when recommending or making actions. Below are a few common motions Board members make during meetings:

<b><u>If You Want To:</u></b>	<b><u>Move To:</u></b>
Propose the group take an action:	MOTION
Perfect/change the wording of a pending motion:	AMEND
Delay making a decision until a later time:	TABLE UNTIL (give specific time frame)
Take a short break during the meeting:	RECESS (give specific return time)

## Attendance

Each Board has its designated meeting schedule (annual calendar attached). Each member is expected to attend and be on time to each meeting. If, for some reason, you are unable to attend a meeting, please contact your primary City contact for the appropriate board you are a member of to ensure an excused absence and that a quorum will be present for that meeting. Continued absences or continued unexcused absences may result in termination of your board position.

## Dress Code

All volunteers are expected to present themselves in a way that helps generate trust, confidence and respect from the community they serve. As a result, all volunteers are required to be dressed and groomed appropriately for their position and duties, whether in the office or other worksites. In some positions, it may be required to wear a uniform or other job specific attire, your supervisor will inform you of any specific uniform or dress code requirements for your position. For positions that require a uniform to be worn, the City will provide you with the uniform at the City's expense. City uniforms and attire (with City logo, etc.) may not be worn off-duty except in the normal course of travel to and from City related activities. All City uniforms and attire must be returned once separated from the volunteer position.

In the event a concern arises regarding dress code compliance, the City will make the final determination regarding what is appropriate dress for each workplace in its discretion. Volunteers arriving to City functions and activities with an appearance that significantly disregards City standards or creates a safety hazard may be asked to return home for correction.

## Conduct and Behavior Standards

At the City of Hermiston, we strive to conduct all business affairs in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. We expect all volunteers to strictly comply with this standard and to refrain from engaging in activities that are unlawful or may bring discredit to the City, and avoid situations that may compromise their reputation or integrity, or that might cause their personal interests to conflict with their obligations to the City of Hermiston. Therefore, attitudes, words, and actions of board members in public and in private should demonstrate, support and reflect the qualities and characteristics of Hermiston. The City suggests these guidelines:

- Conduct yourself in a courteous and respectful manner at all times
- Strive to make independent, objective, fair, and impartial judgements
- Credit others' contributions to moving our community's interests forward
- Adhere to the Oregon Government Ethics Commissions Laws (OGEC) (more information on OGEC to follow)

## Criminal History Check

The City of Hermiston requires all potential and current volunteers to authorize an annual criminal history check. Volunteer positions where duties may involve any contact with vulnerable persons, including but not limited to: children under 18, senior citizens, and disabled persons will be disqualified from consideration or be released from their volunteer position(s) for: All felony convictions), Misdemeanor violent crime convictions, Misdemeanor drug/alcohol related crime convictions (allowable – 1 DUI in the last 7 years). (all requirements subject to review and change by recommendation of the city attorney)

Authorization for criminal history checks will be given to volunteers, each year, in January. Volunteers will have 30-days to return the completed authorization. Failure to authorize the annual criminal history check, within the time allowed, will terminate your volunteer privileges/committee position. Volunteer privileges/committee positions *may be* reinstated once a completed authorization for criminal history check has been submitted and approved. \*Please note- some volunteers (Parks and Recreation and/or other depts.) may be required to submit various criminal history check authorizations each year.

## Zero Tolerance Policy

The City has a "zero tolerance" policy for any actions that threaten its employees, volunteers, or customers while performing City duties, including but not limited to: violence, harassment, discrimination, drugs and alcohol, etc.

## At-Will/Termination of Volunteer Services

All volunteers of the City are "at will." This means that either you or the City may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice, and without appeal rights or due process procedures. However, if there is a concern about a volunteer's performance or conduct, we'll address the concern in a straightforward, timely, and respectful way.

# Public Meeting Law Summary

## Meetings & Social Gatherings

Oregon law defines a "meeting" as "the convening of the governing body of a public body for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or deliberate toward a decision on any matter". A "meeting" can include any on-site inspection of any project or program that has a quorum or a potential for a quorum. In the absence of a special definition, a quorum is defined as a majority of board members.

Under Oregon law, all meetings of the Board will be open to the public. Even if the Board meets solely for the purpose of receiving information in order to make a recommendation or decision, the public meeting law applies.

The public meeting law does not forbid a chance or social meeting of the members of a quorum of a governing body. However, if a majority of members of a Board happen to be attending the same social event, the members should avoid any discussion of official City business during such a social gathering.

As a general rule, board members are free to contact a City staff member or another Board member, outside of a public meeting, to discuss an item on an upcoming agenda. This general rule does not apply to quasi-judicial matters, such as land use proceedings which have their own unique set of rules and procedures. Board members should be aware that their discussions outside of public meetings should not result in decisions being made outside of public meetings. If these discussions significantly affect how a board member may vote on a particular issue, the board member should disclose the substance of those discussions at a public meeting so that the public can better understand the rationale for the decision.

Meeting requirements include:

- Giving at least a 24-hour notice;
- Providing an agenda;
- Being held within the public body's jurisdiction;
- Being accessible for those with disabilities;
- Providing minutes of the meeting as a true reflection of the matters discussed and what action was taken.

Oregon Public Meeting Law requires that meetings be open to the public but that does not mean public participation (comments, questions, etc.) has to be heard. The only exception to this is during land use and budget hearings. Keep in mind that if and when you allow public comment all speakers must be treated the same, you must ensure that content-based restriction is not permitted, meaning restricting one's speech because of their viewpoint or subject matter (during public comment at the beginning of the meetings). Content-based restrictions can be applied for the remainder of the meeting topics as stated in the agenda.

## Executive Sessions Meetings

An "Executive Session" is defined as "a meeting, especially a private one, of a legislative body for executive business". Executive Session Meetings are not allowed for Boards without prior approval from the City Manager, City Attorney and/or designee.

## Electronic Communication Meetings

Under Oregon law, any exchange of electronic communication (emails, social media, text messages, etc.) between board members which effectively would result in a decision concerning an issue, or where it appears that board members are deliberating on an issue, or appear to be gathering information to engage in future deliberation on an issue, could be construed to constitute a public meeting. The use of electronic messages by board members to engage in active deliberations or discussion, including the expression of opinions or the promotion and discussion of ideas related to a particular issue(s), is strongly discouraged.

## Meeting Minutes

The public meeting law requires that written minutes be taken at all meetings. The minutes, at a minimum, must include the following:

- The members present;
- All motions and proposals proposed and their disposition;
- The results of all votes and, except for public bodies consisting of more than 25 members unless requested by a member of that body, the vote of each member by name;
- The substance of any discussion on any matter; and
- Subject to the public records law, a reference to any document discussed at the meeting

Minutes need not be a verbatim transcript of what was said during the meeting, and the meeting does not have to be recorded. The City of Hermiston does audio record its meetings and has them available for one (1) year.

## Public Records Law Summary

The United States Supreme Court has explained that the, "basic purpose of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is to ensure an informed citizenry, vital to the functioning of a democratic society, needed to check against corruption and to hold the governors accountable to the governed." The FOIA is often explained as a means for citizens to know what their Government is up to.

We work for the public. And that means we are accountable to them and every person has a RIGHT to inspect any public record of the city, except records exempt from disclosure per Oregon law.

What is a public record? It is any information that is:

- Prepared, owned, used, or retained by the city;
- Related to any activity, transaction or function of the city; and
- Necessary to satisfy the fiscal, legal, administrative or historical policies, requirements or needs of the city

This means anytime you are taking "personal notes" that are city related, those notes are not private, they are the city's and can be requested for disclosure by the public. **It is your responsibility to make sure you retain those items per the time allowed by Oregon law or submit them to the City Recorder or designee for retention.** It is a crime to destroy, mutilate, conceal, remove, make a false entry in, or falsely alter any public record.

Items that are NOT public records include (examples):

- Extra copies of a document, preserved only for convenience of reference;
- Publications;
- Phone messages;
- Spoken communication that is not recorded

## Electronic Communication- Emails, Social Media, Text Messages, etc

As explained in the Public Records Law Summary Section, any city related item(s) prepared or retained by city officials is considered city business and can be viewed by the public, if requested. Therefore, please keep in mind, any personal social media pages and personal electronic devices used to communicate or comment regarding city related business can be a part of a public records request and possibly be confiscated for disclosure.



## Social Media-Prohibited Postings and Required Conduct

When posting or commenting on social media never represent yourself as a spokesperson for City of Hermiston unless you have been authorized, in writing, by the City Manager/designee or City Council to speak on behalf of the City. If the City of Hermiston is the subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are expressing your personal opinions and your views and they do not represent those of City of Hermiston, its employees and appointed and elected officials. Again, remember: commenting on City related business can be a part of a public records request and it is a crime to destroy, mutilate, conceal, remove, make a false entry in, or falsely alter any public record.

## Ethical Practices and Honesty

We, at the City of Hermiston, are also subject to the State of Oregon's ethics laws. In some cases, these laws provide limitations, such as prohibitions on gifts and strict definitions of conflict of interest. In the private sector, you may find that some activities that are common business practices are prohibited in the public sector. All board members are required to comply with the highest level of ethics under City policies and the Oregon ethics rules.

**Additional Information on Oregon Government Ethics Laws is available at the Oregon Government Ethics Commission website: <http://www.oregon.gov/OGEC>. Members who violate the Oregon ethics laws may be subject to civil or criminal penalties under those laws.**

### Conflict of Interest

The public trust and proper operation of the City requires board members to be independent, impartial and responsible to the public we serve. Therefore, board members are prohibited from engaging in any transaction or having a financial or personal interest that is incompatible with the proper discharge of their official duties or that would tend to impair their judgment or action in the performance of their official duties. No board member may use his/her position to obtain financial or personal gain for themselves or any member of their immediate family or household, or for any business with which the board member or immediate family member or household member is associated with.

What is a Conflict of Interest? Participation in a discussion or taking action in an official capacity that would or could result in a financial benefit to the public official, a relative or a business in which either are associated.

Actual Conflict of Interest vs. Potential Conflict of Interest.

- Actual conflict: when the action taken by the public official would have a financial impact on that official, relative, household member, or business.
- Potential conflict: when the action taken by the public official could have a financial impact on that official, relative, household member, or business.

What to do when you have an actual or potential or conflict of interest.

- Actual Conflicts of Interest: The public official must announce or disclose the conflict and recuse them self completely by remaining silent in the discussion and, if willing, leave their seat at the dais during the duration of the discussion.
- Potential Conflicts of Interest: The public official must announce or disclose the conflict. They may also (most do) recuse themselves completely as they would if it were an actual conflict of interest.

How to announce/disclose the potential or actual conflict of interest.

- Publicly announce the nature of the conflict at each meeting or at each occasion the issue is discussed or debated.
- The announcement must be recorded in the official records of the public body (City Recorder responsibility).

### Gifts

Likewise, board members are not permitted to accept gifts of cash or merchandise from customers or organizations that are doing, reasonably anticipated to do, or seeking to do business with the City. As very

limited exceptions board members may be permitted to accept incidental gifts of nominal value in accordance with public ethics rules.

What is considered a gift? A gift is something given to a public official not offered to a member of the public that is something of economic value given to a public official, a candidate, a relative, or member of the household of the public official or candidate, including partial discounts:

- Without valuable consideration of equivalent value, including the full or partial forgiveness of indebtedness, which is not extended to others on the same terms and conditions; **or**
- For valuable consideration less than that required from others who are not public officials or candidates.

What is NOT considered a gift:

- Items received from relatives or household members;
- Reasonable expenses paid by certain entities if:
  - The entity is a governmental entity, Native American tribe, membership organization to which the governing body pays dues, or a 501(c)(3) non-profit; or
  - The public official is participating in a convention, fact-finding mission/trip, or meeting where he or she is scheduled to speak, participate in a panel discussion or represent his or her governmental unit.
- Admission, food and beverages, travel and lodging expenses for the public official, relative, household member, or staff while accompanying the public official at a reception, meal or meeting held by an organization where the public official represents his or her governmental body:
  - An officially sanctioned fact-finding mission or trade-promotion; or
  - In officially designated negotiations, or economic development activities, approved in advanced.
- Food, beverage and entertainment that is incidental to the main purpose of the event.
- Food or beverage consumed by the public official acting in an official capacity in association with a financial transaction or business agreement with another government agency, public body or private entity, including review, approval or execution of documents or closing a borrowing or investment transaction.
- An unsolicited token or award of appreciation in the form of a plaque, trophy, desk or wall item or similar with a resale value of under \$25.
- Anything of economic value offered, solicited or received as part of the usual and customary practice of the recipient's private business or the recipient's employment or position as a volunteer with a private business, corporation, or other legal entity operated for economic value
  - The item must bear no relation to the official business and must be historical or established long standing traditions or practices for those not in public office.
- Informational material related to the performance of official duties.
- Waiver or discount of registration expenses or materials provided at a continuing education event that the public official may attend to satisfy a professional licensing requirement.
- Legal defense trust fund contributions
- Campaign contributions.

### Gift Limitations

A public official, relative, or household member may not solicit or receive any gift with a value exceeding \$50 from any single source reasonably known to have a legislative or economic interest. Economic interest is any matter that would be subject to the decision or vote of an elected official or candidate acting in the public official's capacity as a public official.

- Example: A salesperson from a software company offers to take the city's IT manager out to lunch. The IT manager has purchasing authority.
  - The IT manager may accept the offer for lunch, but it would be considered a gift subject to the \$50.00 per year limitation.
- Example: A council member attends a city-related conference paid for by the city. When checking out of the hotel, the councilor is offered a coupon for two nights of free lodging. The councilor is in charge of making their own lodging arrangements.
  - The councilor may accept the coupon if they will be using it in the future for city-related business or allowing other city officials/staff to use it for city related business.
  - The councilor may NOT use it for personal use as it has a value of over \$50.00 in the year.

## Political Activity

The City does not restrict the right of its board members to express their personal political views or engage in political activity. However, no political activity furthering the cause of any party, candidate, or ballot measure, etc. is allowed while performing City duties.

## Oregon Government Ethics Commission Statement of Economic Interest

Every year, by April 15<sup>th</sup>, members of the Planning Commission are required, by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC), to file a Statement of Economic Interest (SEI). Public officials who fail to file their SEI could be liable for civil penalty of up to \$5,000. This penalty is the responsibility of the public official, not the City.

Planning Commissioners will receive additional information (included in this packet) regarding this process to include:

- City of Hermiston- General OGEC and SEI Information- 1 page
- League of Oregon Cities- SEI: What You Need to Know- 1 page
- League of Oregon Cities- Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Annual SEI- 5 pages
- 2017 Oregon Revised Statutes: 244.050, 244.060, 244.070, and 244.090- 10 pages
- Sample copy of the SEI form- 6 pages
- State of Oregon- Oregon Government Ethics Law, A Guide for Public Officials- 57 pages
- And, a separate Acknowledgement Receipt which will be included in the volunteers file.

# Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgment Receipt

## City of Hermiston

Effective July 1, 2020

As a volunteer of the City of Hermiston, I acknowledge the following:

1. I understand that this Handbook is not a contract or a guarantee for continued volunteer service. Rather, all volunteers of the City are "at will." This means that either I or the City may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice, and without appeal rights or due process procedures. I understand that this Handbook supersedes all prior Handbooks, policies and understandings on the subjects contained in it.
2. I understand that no City employee has the authority to enter into any agreements with me regarding the terms of my volunteer service. However, the City has the right to, at-will, change, modify, add to, substitute or eliminate, interpret and apply, in its sole judgment, the policies and rules described in this Handbook. I understand that should the content be changed in any way, the City will require an additional signed acknowledgment from me to indicate that I am aware of the changes.
3. I understand that I am donating my service to the City with no expectation of compensation or any fringe benefit for my service.
4. I am aware that I may be given confidential information during the course of my appointment and agree not to disseminate or use such information outside of appropriate City settings. In the event my assignment ends, either voluntary or involuntary, I agree not to use this information or communicate it to any other individual, organization, or entity.
5. I acknowledge that any photograph, audio recording, or videotape taken of me participating in the City of Hermiston volunteer program may be used for outreach, education, or documentation purposes, without compensation, by the City of Hermiston.
6. I have received a copy of the Volunteer Handbook. I understand that the Handbook contains important information about the City's policies and rules. I also understand that the Handbook outlines my responsibilities as a volunteer of the City. I also understand that I have the responsibility to read and understand the information in the Handbook, and to ask the City Recorder or designee (contact information below) for clarification of any information I do not understand, and did so before signing it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lilly Alarcon-Strong, CMC, City Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

City Hall  
180 NE 2nd St  
Hermiston, OR 97838  
541-567-5521, City Hall  
541-667-5004, Direct Line  
[lalarcon-strong@hermiston.or.us](mailto:lalarcon-strong@hermiston.or.us)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Name and Signature  
(If volunteer is under 18 years of age)