

City of China Grove, Texas

Employee Handbook

This Employee Handbook applies to civic department personnel of the City of China Grove, Texas, including the City Secretary, Municipal Court Clerks, Permitting Officer, Code Compliance Officer, and Animal Control Officer. It is designed to guide staff policies, expectations, and procedures for **non-police personnel**.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Welcome from the Mayor

Welcome to the City of China Grove, Texas! As Mayor, I want to thank you for your service and dedication to our community. This handbook has been created to serve as a resource for you — our valued city staff — and outlines the policies, expectations, and benefits that support your work. Our goal is to foster a positive, respectful, and efficient workplace where everyone can thrive and contribute to the public good.

1.2 Purpose of the Handbook

This Employee Handbook outlines general policies and procedures that apply to civic employees of the City of China Grove, Texas. It is intended to provide guidance, clarify expectations, and support consistency in how we work. The Police Department maintains a separate handbook and is not governed by this document.

1.3 Scope and Applicability

This handbook applies to the City Secretary, Municipal Court Clerk, Permitting Officer, Animal Control Officer, and Code Compliance Officer, as well as any part-time or seasonal staff working in administrative or field roles under city operations. It does not apply to sworn police personnel.

1.4 At-Will Employment Disclaimer

All employment with the City of China Grove, Tx is "at-will," unless otherwise specified by employment contract or state statute. This means that either the employee or the City may terminate employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, in accordance with applicable laws.

1.5 Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

The City is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in any employment practice on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other category protected by law.

1.6 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

In compliance with the ADA, the City will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities, unless doing so would cause undue hardship. Employees should direct accommodation requests to the Mayor.

1.7 Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

The City is committed to a workplace free of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Harassment of any kind — verbal, physical, or visual — will not be tolerated. Employees are encouraged to report any concerns immediately through the grievance process outlined in Section 8.

Section 2: Employment Policies

2.1 Hiring and Employment Classification

All hiring decisions are made in accordance with applicable laws and based on qualifications, experience, and the needs of the City. Employees may be classified as:

- Full-Time: Employees regularly scheduled to work at least 28 to 32 hours per week.
- Part-Time: Employees regularly scheduled to work fewer than 20 hours per week.
- Temporary or Seasonal: Employees hired for a specific project or time-limited task.
- Exempt vs. Non-Exempt classifications will be determined based on Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) guidelines.

2.2 Job Descriptions and Responsibilities (see Appendix B for Job Descriptions)

Each position covered by this handbook has a written job description that outlines essential duties, reporting structure, and qualifications. These documents help clarify expectations and guide performance evaluations. Job descriptions may be updated from time to time to reflect organizational needs. Refer to Appendix B for each Job Description.

2.3 Bonding Requirement for Key Officials

As a best practice and in the interest of financial integrity and public trust, the City of China Grove requires that the City Secretary, Permitting Officer, Municipal Court Clerks, and the Mayor be bonded. These individuals are entrusted with handling significant financial transactions, including the collection of payments, oversight of public funds, issuance of permits, and execution of financial documents on behalf of the City. Bonding serves as a protective measure for the City, ensuring accountability and providing financial recourse in the event of error, negligence, or misconduct. The cost of the bonds shall be borne by the City, and proof of bonding must be maintained in the personnel files of each applicable position.

2.4 Introductory/Probationary and Termination

All new employees are subject to a probationary period of [typically 90 days unless otherwise specified] from their date of hire. During this time, the City evaluates the employee's performance, conduct, and suitability for continued employment.

At the conclusion of the probationary period, employment may be:

- Continued,
- Extended for an additional probationary term, or
- Terminated if performance or conduct does not meet expectations.
- Termination at the end of the probationary period does not require cause and may occur without prior disciplinary action.

2.5 Performance Evaluations

City staff will receive a written performance evaluation at least once per year, conducted by the Mayor or designated supervisor. Evaluations are intended to recognize strengths, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for professional development.

Performance evaluations are a key part of an employee's personnel record. The City of China Grove shall retain these documents in accordance with state guidelines as follows:

During Employment: All annual performance evaluations and related documentation shall be maintained in the employee's official personnel file for the duration of their employment.

After Separation: Upon an employee's resignation, termination, or retirement, the City shall retain the complete personnel file—including all performance reviews—for a minimum of five (5) years from the date of separation, in accordance with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission Retention Schedule (GR1040-20).

This policy supports transparency, compliance, and accurate employment history documentation.

2.6 Promotions, Transfers, and Reassignments

The Mayor has the authority to authorize promotions, reassignments and transfers of nonpolice, nonappointed staff as deemed necessary for effective administration of City operations. These actions do not require approval by the City Council, except where a position is specifically designated by ordinance or policy as Council approved. Personnel actions that result in salary changes beyond approved budget thresholds or create new positions must be presented to Council for approval.

Department heads will recommend staff actions to the Mayor, including job classification changes, salary adjustments within budget, and transfers across departments. The Mayor will review recommendations and implement changes if approved. All personnel changes will be reported to the Council as part of regular staff updates without requiring separate Council action.

Texas Legal Context

Local Government Code § 141142 allows the governing body to determine municipal staffing structure, including salaries and "personnel appointments."

In a Mayor-Council form of government, especially where there is no city manager, the Mayor serves as the chief executive officer empowered to direct staff — unless the ordinance or Council policy says otherwise.

2.7 Separation of Employment

Employment may end due to resignation, retirement, layoff, or termination. Employees are requested to provide at least two weeks' written notice of voluntary resignation. Exit procedures will include returning City property, final timesheet submission, and participation in an exit interview.

2.8 Exit Interviews (see Appendix I for Exit Interview Template)

Departing employees will be invited to participate in an exit interview with the Mayor or designated representative. Feedback provided during the interview helps identify opportunities to improve the workplace and employee experience.

Section 3: Work Hours, Pay, and Attendance

3.1 Work Schedule and Office Hours

Standard City business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Employees are expected to maintain a regular work schedule during these hours unless otherwise approved by the Mayor. Department-specific hours may vary slightly based on operational needs or public service demands.

Municipal Clerk Work Schedule Oversight

Municipal Clerks are limited to working 28 hours per week. To ensure coverage of business hours, the Mayor shall confirm that an annual rotating schedule is created:

- One Clerk shall work 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM with a 1-hour combined lunch/break time.
- One Clerk shall work 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM with a 1-hour combined lunch/break time.

This schedule is established and approved by the City Secretary at the beginning of each fiscal year.

3.2 Work From Home Policy

The City of China Grove operates under the principle that all municipal employees are expected to perform their duties at their designated City offices during established working hours. Regular in-office attendance ensures effective communication, accountability, and quality service to the residents of China Grove.

Limited Exception

The Mayor may, at their discretion, grant limited work-from-home privileges to the City Secretary and Permitting Officer. This flexibility supports continuity of operations when physical presence is not essential to task completion. This arrangement:

- Is a privilege, not a right, and is not guaranteed as part of employment;
- Requires prior written approval from the Mayor before any remote work is undertaken;
- May be rescinded at any time by the Mayor, with or without cause and with short notice, based on operational needs or performance concerns.

Remote Work Expectations

Employees approved for remote work must adhere to the following expectations:

Work Hours & Availability Employees must be available and responsive during standard City business hours and must promptly respond to emails, phone calls, and meeting invitations.

Productivity & Performance Employees are expected to maintain full productivity while working remotely and complete assigned tasks and deadlines as if working in the office.

Technology All technology used must comply with the City's cybersecurity and records retention policies.

Confidentiality & Records Management Employees must safeguard confidential information and adhere to the same privacy standards required in the office. Any documents created or handled remotely must be returned and filed appropriately at City Hall.

Communication & Reporting Employees working remotely must check in with the Mayor as directed and provide status updates on work completed, pending tasks, and any issues affecting progress.

Workspace Requirements Remote work must be performed from a quiet, secure, and distraction-free environment. Public locations (e.g., cafes, libraries) are not appropriate unless expressly approved.

Use of Leave Remote work is not a substitute for taking sick leave, vacation, or other forms of paid time off. If an employee is unable to work a full day remotely, they must report this to the Mayor and use leave as appropriate.

3.3 Timekeeping and Payroll

Employees are required to accurately record all hours worked on their timesheets. Falsifying time records is considered serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action. Payroll is processed bi-weekly, and paydays fall on every other Friday.

3.4 Overtime and Compensatory Time

All overtime must be approved in advance by the Mayor. Unauthorized overtime will result in disciplinary action, but employees will still be paid for hours worked.

Non-exempt employees will be compensated at one-and-a-half times their regular rate for all hours worked beyond 40 hours in a workweek, in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). With prior approval, compensatory time off may be granted in lieu of overtime pay. (See Appendix J: FLSA and Texas Local Government Code § 142.0015)

3.5 Attendance and Tardiness Policy

Reliable attendance is essential to city operations. Employees are expected to report to work on time each scheduled day. If an employee will be late or absent, they must notify the Mayor or their designated supervisor as early as possible, preferably before the start of the workday. Excessive unexcused absences or tardiness may result in disciplinary action.

3.6 Meal and Rest Breaks

Employees working more than six hours in a day are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid meal break. Two 15-minute paid rest breaks (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) may be provided, workload permitting. Employees are encouraged to take their breaks away from their primary workstations. Employees may choose to take a longer lunch break but must adjust their rest break time to fit into the 1 hour total break time.

3.7 On-Call Expectations (If Applicable)

Some positions, such as Animal Control or Code Compliance, may occasionally require after-hours or weekend on-call availability. These expectations will be communicated in advance and compensated according to the City's on-call or standby policy if one is in place.

Section 4: Benefits and Leave

4.1 Holidays

The City observes the following paid holidays each calendar year:

New Year's Day – January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Third Monday in January
Presidents' Day – Third Monday in February
Memorial Day – Last Monday in May
Juneteenth National Independence Day – June 19
Independence Day – July 4
Veterans Day – November 11
Thanksgiving – Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Eve – December 24
Christmas Day – December 25

4.2 Vacation Leave

The City provides paid vacation after one year of service. Employed 2 – 5 years receive 4 days of vacation. Employed 6 – 10 years receive 8 days of vacation. Employed more than 10 years 12 days of vacation.

Unused vacation leave does not roll over year to year and has no cash value upon separation. Vacation leave may not be transferred between employees.

4.3 Sick Leave & Accrual Timing

The City of China Grove offers limited paid sick leave to support employee health and minimize the spread of illness in the workplace. Employees regularly scheduled to work 28 to 32 hours per week shall receive eight (8) days of paid sick leave each calendar year. Sick leave may be used for the employee's personal illness or injury, medical appointments, or to care for an immediate family member.

Sick leave usage must be reported as early as possible and is subject to approval by the Mayor or the employee's supervisor. The use of sick leave shall not result in total compensation exceeding the employee's annual budgeted salary, and leave may not be used in advance of accrual.

Unused sick leave does not roll over year to year and has no cash value upon separation. Sick leave may not be transferred between employees. Misuse of sick leave may result in disciplinary action. This policy is reviewed annually and is subject to change based on budget and operational needs.

4.4 Family and Medical Leave

FMLA (See Appendix J: 29 U.S. Code § 2611)

Although the City of China Grove is classified as a covered public employer under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), employees of the City are currently not eligible for FMLA leave. This is because FMLA eligibility requires the employer to have 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius, a threshold the City does not meet at this time. As a result, while the City recognizes the provisions of FMLA, its employees are not entitled to FMLA leave

protections under federal law. Should the City's workforce expand to meet the eligibility threshold, this policy will be revised accordingly. Discretionary unpaid medical or personal leave may be granted by the Mayor on a case-by-case basis.

4.5 Bereavement Leave

The City of China Grove recognizes that the loss of a loved one can be a difficult time and supports employees in managing their personal needs during such events. The City provides up to three (3) workdays of paid bereavement leave in the event of the death of an immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild).

Bereavement leave must be taken within a reasonable time of the loss, is subject to supervisory approval, and may require appropriate documentation. The use of bereavement leave shall not result in total compensation exceeding the employee's annual budgeted salary and may not be advanced or used beyond this limit.

Employees may request additional time off using accrued compensatory time (if available) or unpaid time.

Sick leave may not be used for Bereavement Leave unless the absence is due to illness and may require appropriate documentation.

The City will reassess FMLA eligibility annually or upon workforce expansion to ensure compliance and consider offering comparable leave as needed.

4.6 Jury Duty and Court Appearances

The City of China Grove supports civic responsibility and will provide leave to employees who are summoned for jury service. Employees must notify their supervisor as early as possible and provide a copy of the jury summons and verification of jury service.

Employees will be allowed time off to serve on a jury without penalty. Paid jury duty leave will be provided for scheduled work hours missed but shall not result in total compensation exceeding the employee's annual budgeted salary.

If jury service results in extended absence or would cause total compensation to exceed the budgeted amount, the time may be taken as unpaid leave or, if available, covered using accrued compensatory time.

Sick leave may not be used for jury duty unless the absence is due to illness.

4.7 Military Leave

The City of China Grove supports employees who serve in the military, whether in the Texas Military Forces or the United States Armed Forces.

In accordance with Texas Government Code § 437.202, employees who are members of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or other Texas Military Forces are entitled to up to 15 workdays of paid military leave per fiscal year (October 1– September 30) for training or active duty under state orders. An additional 7 workdays of paid leave may be granted if called to active state duty during a declared disaster. This leave will not be deducted from other accrued leave and shall not result in compensation exceeding the employee's annual budgeted salary. (see Appendix J for statutory references)

Employees called to service in the United States Armed Forces or Reserve components are covered by the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). While military leave for federal service is unpaid, employees may use available compensatory time. Upon timely return from service, employees are entitled to reinstatement with full seniority and benefits in accordance with USERRA.

Documentation of military orders will be required. This policy is subject to state and federal law and may be updated as applicable regulations change.

Military leave is provided as required by law; however, the use of paid military leave shall not result in total compensation exceeding the employee's annual budgeted salary. If the combination of military leave and other paid leave (e.g., sick leave, jury duty, bereavement) is projected to exceed the employee's total salary allocation, the City may require a portion of military leave to be taken as unpaid or delay payment until within budget. The City will work with the employee to ensure compliance with all applicable laws while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

4.8 Retirement Benefits – Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS)

The City of China Grove participates in the Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS) to provide retirement benefits for eligible employees. Participation is mandatory for all employees who meet eligibility requirements under TMRS rules. Employees contribute a set percentage of their gross compensation each pay period, and the City matches those contributions at the rate established by the City's TMRS plan.

TMRS provides retirement, disability, and death benefits, with vesting and retirement eligibility based on a combination of age and years of credited service. Employees can monitor their account and benefits through the TMRS Member Portal at my.tmrs.com

This is the City's only retirement benefit. No other pension, 401(k), or deferred compensation plan is offered at this time.

Section 5: Code of Conduct and Ethics

5.1 Standards of Conduct

City employees are expected to demonstrate professionalism, integrity, and courtesy in all interactions. Employees must:

- Carry out duties responsibly and impartially
- Treat coworkers, officials, and the public with respect
- Refrain from using their position for personal gain
- Follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws

5.2 Conflicts of Interest

Employees must avoid any activity that conflicts with the interests of the City or could compromise impartiality. This includes:

- Using City resources for personal benefit
- Participating in decisions where there is a personal or financial interest
- Accepting gifts, services, or benefits that could influence official actions
- Potential conflicts must be disclosed in writing to the Mayor for review.

5.3 Confidentiality

Employees may have access to sensitive or confidential information. This information must not be shared with unauthorized individuals or used for personal advantage. Breaches of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

5.4 Use of City Property

City equipment, vehicles, tools, and supplies must be used only for official business, unless specifically authorized. Employees are expected to maintain City property with care and report any damage, loss, or misuse immediately.

5.5 Political Activity and Public Statements

- Employees may engage in political activity (See Appendix J: Texas Election Code § 255.003) on their own time and as private citizens but must not:
- Use their official position to influence an election or campaign
- Engage in political activity (See Appendix J: Texas Election Code § 255.003) while on duty or using City resources
- Represent personal opinions as official City policy
- Public statements on behalf of the City must be coordinated with the Mayor.

5.6 Dress Code and Appearance

Employees are expected to dress in business casual attire appropriate to their job duties and maintain a neat, professional appearance at all times. Logo t-shirts (except China Grove), shorts, and flip-flops are not permitted during working hours.

Specific dress expectations may vary by department (e.g., uniforms or field-appropriate clothing for Code Compliance or Animal Control staff). When representing the City in Municipal Court or other formal proceedings,

employees must wear professional business attire, such as slacks or skirts with collared shirts, jackets, or equivalent clothing that reflects the formality of the setting.

The final determination of appropriate dress rests with the Mayor or the employee's department head. Employees may be asked to return home and change if attire is deemed inappropriate for City duties.

5.7 Social Media Guidelines

Employees must use discretion when posting on social media. Personal posts that negatively impact the City's reputation, disclose confidential information, or interfere with job duties may lead to disciplinary action. Employees should not use City logos or images in personal accounts without written approval. (full policy in appendix G-2)

5.8 Drug-Free Workplace Policy

The City maintains a drug-free workplace. The use, possession, sale, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or on City premises is strictly prohibited. Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

5.9 Smoking and Tobacco Use

In order to maintain a healthy and professional environment for employees and the public, smoking and use of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes and vaping devices) is permitted only in designated outdoor areas on City property, outside of all buildings and at least 20 feet away from all entrances, windows, and ventilation systems.

There are no designated smoking areas indoors. Employees may use scheduled break times to smoke, provided they do not exceed break durations or interfere with job responsibilities. Smoking during working hours must occur in accordance with this policy.

The City prohibits the use of tobacco products—including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and chewing tobacco—in city-owned vehicles at all times.

Violation of this policy may result in progressive disciplinary action.

5.10 Harassment and Discrimination Policy

The City of China Grove maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward any form of workplace harassment or discrimination, including but not limited to harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.

This policy applies to all employees, officials, contractors, and members of the public who interact with City staff. Harassment may include verbal, physical, or visual conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Any employee who believes they have been subjected to harassment or witnessed inappropriate conduct must promptly report it to the Mayor. Reports will be investigated confidentially to the extent possible and without retaliation. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The City also maintains a zero-tolerance stance toward knowingly false or malicious accusations of harassment or discrimination. While good-faith reports are always protected, making a deliberately false or malicious report undermines the integrity of this policy and may itself result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

This policy is in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Texas Labor Code Chapter 21, and applicable federal and state laws.

5.11 Workplace Violence Prevention

Violence, threats, intimidation, or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Employees must report any concerns about potential workplace violence to the Mayor immediately. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

Section 6: Administrative Procedures

6.1 Investment Oversight

The City of China Grove appoints a volunteer, unpaid Investment Officer to oversee the prudent management of City financial assets in accordance with the Texas Public Funds Investment Act (PFIA), Government Code Chapter 2256.

Duties of the Investment Officer include:

- Developing and implementing the City's investment policy- Monitoring the safekeeping and diversification of City funds- Providing quarterly reports to the City Council on investment performance and compliance (as required by §2256.023)- Ensuring the City's funds are invested only in authorized instruments, such as U.S. government obligations, CDs, or FDIC-insured accounts- Participating in the annual review and approval of the City's investment policy

Training Requirements:

- 10 hours of PFIA-compliant training within the first 12 months of appointment- 8 hours of continuing education every two years- Training must be from an independent provider approved by the City Council (e.g., TML, TMRS, or a public university)

6.2 Financial Services Review

The Mayor shall oversee the City's financial services review process and present findings and recommendations to the City Council for approval. The Mayor is advised by the appointed City Investment Officer, who provides expertise regarding compliance with the Public Funds Investment Act and the City's adopted investment policies.

Mayor advised by the appointed City Investment Officer prepares quarterly investment reports as required by Government Code §2256.023:

- Q1 Reporting Ending in December is delivered at the February Council Meeting
- Q2 Reporting Ending in March is delivered at the May Council Meeting
- Q3 Reporting Ending in June is delivered at the August Council Meeting
- Q4 Reporting Ending in August is delivered at the October Council Meeting

The City Secretary shall maintain all financial documentation and ensure that contracts, reports, and disclosures are available for audit, regulatory compliance, or public inspection. (See Appendix J for statutory references and training compliance requirements.)

The City, with input from the Investment Officer, shall review all financial service agreements at least once every five years to ensure:

- Legal compliance with state statutes
- Competitive pricing and fee structures
- Alignment with best practices in municipal financial stewardship

While not all financial services are subject to mandatory bidding, it is recommended practice to periodically solicit proposals for key services such as banking, auditing, and investment advisory support.

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Key Requirements and Guidelines

Depository Contracts: Under Local Government Code §105.017, competitive bidding is not required for depository contracts unless mandated by City policy. Nonetheless, the City should review these contracts at least every five years.

Auditing Services: An annual audit by an independent certified public accountant is required under Local Government Code §103.001. To maintain transparency and independence, the City is encouraged to consider rebidding audit services every 3 to 5 years.

Investment Services: Any third-party investment advisor must enter into a written agreement with the City and disclose all fees and compensation in accordance with Government Code §2256.003.

Procurement Thresholds: Financial service agreements exceeding \$50,000 may trigger competitive bidding requirements under Local Government Code Chapter 252.

The City Council is responsible for:

- Approving the investment policy annually
- Authorizing contracts for financial services
- Receiving and reviewing quarterly investment reports as required by Government Code §2256.023
 - Q1 Reporting Ending in December is delivered at the February Council Meeting
 - Q2 Reporting Ending in March is delivered at the May Council Meeting
 - Q3 Reporting Ending in June is delivered at the August Council Meeting
 - Q4 Reporting Ending in August is delivered at the October Council Meeting

6.3 Public Works Policy for the City of China Grove

Purpose: Provides a systematic and transparent process for the evaluation, planning, and execution of public works, including street maintenance and drainage projects, within the City of China Grove. This policy ensures all city streets are regularly assessed and that necessary projects are prioritized and funded across budget cycles.

Annual Street Evaluation:

By the first business day in March, the Mayor or their designee shall commission the City Engineer to evaluate one-third of the city's streets, focusing on drainage and street maintenance needs not currently on the approved projects list. Each street or area must undergo an evaluation at least once every three years.

Engineer's Report and Project Prioritization:

At the regularly scheduled City Council meeting in June, the Mayor or designee shall present the Engineer's report for discussion.

The City Council will determine which projects are necessary and should be prioritized.

A list of prioritized projects, pending budget approval, shall be posted on the City's message board and website immediately following the June meeting.

These projects will be considered in the budget process and included in the annual budget as funds allow.

Project Management Assignment:

During the August City Council meeting, the Mayor will announce a project manager for each approved project.

The project manager may be a city employee or an external contract specialist but may not be a sitting alderman.

Budget Finalization and Project Funding:

At the September City Council meeting, the Council will finalize the budget, addressing the approved projects based on available funds.

Projects that do not receive funding will be deferred for reconsideration in the next fiscal cycle.

Bidding Process:

On the first business day of October, the Mayor or designee shall solicit bids for the execution of projects that have been approved and funded in the annual budget.

Ongoing Project Oversight:

The Mayor or designee will report on the progress of all active projects at each subsequent City Council meeting, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the project's lifecycle.

Project Continuity:

Any budgeted project that is not completed by the end of the City's Fiscal Year (September 30) shall remain an active project and continue to receive attention until its completion.

Conclusion:

This policy ensures that public works projects within the City of China Grove are regularly assessed, prioritized, and managed efficiently across budget cycles, promoting the well-being of the community through systematic planning and execution.

6.4 Records Management and Open Records

Employees are expected to maintain accurate and complete records in accordance with City policy and state law. All records — including emails, documents, permits, and court files — are the property of the City and may be subject to the Texas Public Information Act (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code § 552.012). Requests for public records must be referred to the City Secretary for proper handling.

6.5 Purchasing and Procurement

All purchases must follow the City's purchasing procedures and approved budget. Employees may not make purchases on behalf of the City without prior authorization from the Mayor.

Receipts, invoices, and justification for purchases must be annotated with the correct budget line-item code. They must be submitted promptly for financial tracking and accountability.

6.6 Use of City Vehicles and Equipment

City vehicles and equipment must be used only for official business. Drivers must hold a valid driver's license and follow all applicable traffic laws.

- Vehicles must be secured when not in use.
- Equipment should be operated safely and maintained responsibly.
- Personal use of City vehicles is prohibited unless authorized in writing by the Mayor.
- Any accidents, malfunctions, or safety issues must be reported immediately.

6.7 Travel and Expense Reimbursements

City-related travel must be approved in advance by the Mayor. Reimbursable expenses may include mileage, lodging, meals, and registration fees for approved events or training. To receive reimbursement:

- Submit receipts and a completed reimbursement form within 10 business days of returning.
- Use per diem limits as outlined by the City or based on IRS guidelines.
- Include the GL Code from your departments budget
- Unauthorized or excessive expenses will not be reimbursed.

6.8 Communication and Technology Use

City-issued software, and email systems are provided for official business. Employees are expected to:

- Use technology resources responsibly and ethically
- Protect passwords and login credentials
- Avoid excessive personal use during work hours
- Refrain from downloading unauthorized programs or accessing inappropriate content

All electronic communications may be monitored and are subject to open records (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code, Chapter 552) laws. Confidential or sensitive City information shall not be stored, transmitted, or accessed on personal devices without the Mayor's prior written authorization.

6.9 City Secretary – Council Agenda and Administrative Duties

To support effective Council governance and compliance with Texas law, the City Secretary shall perform the following administrative functions:

Agenda Management and Posting Deadlines

To comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act, accommodate the City's 4-day work week, and respond to Council's request for earlier information, the following practices are in place:

1. Agenda Submission & Posting

- **Deadline for Requests:** All requests for agenda inclusion must be submitted to the City Secretary by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday that is one full week prior to the Thursday Council meeting.
- **Agenda Posting:** The City Secretary will finalize and post the official Council agenda by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before the Council meeting (meeting the statutory requirement of three full business days).
- **Late Additions:**
 - Supporting documents for items already on the agenda may still be added to the Council Packet as late as Monday before the meeting.

- New agenda items required by state law may be added by end of day Friday before the meeting through a posted addendum, provided the 3-day posting rule is satisfied.

Agenda Management and Posting Deadlines (continued)

2. Council Packets

- Distribution: Council packets (agenda + available supporting documents) will be assembled and distributed (email or pickup) no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before the meeting.
- Ongoing Updates: If additional documents become available after initial distribution, they will be added to the packet and shared with Council up until Monday before the meeting.

Records and Transparency

Maintain both digital and physical archives of posted agendas, packets, minutes, ordinances, and resolutions.

Ensure ordinances and resolutions are properly numbered and filed for reference and compliance.

Maintain all signed employee training acknowledgment forms in the appropriate personnel file and verify completion using the Annual Employee Training Checklist (see Appendix I).

For each newly hired employee approved by Council, retain a copy of the completed new hire form in the Council Meeting record for that session and file the original form in the individual's official personnel file.

Public Information and Website Maintenance

Post agendas, approved minutes, and Council actions to the City website to promote transparency.

Coordinate with IT or website administrators to ensure timely updates of legislative documents and notices.

These duties are in addition to the City Secretary's broader responsibilities related to elections, open records, legal filings, and records management. They ensure the timely, lawful, and transparent operation of the City Council. The City Secretary shall sign an enhanced confidentiality agreement. This agreement shall be reaffirmed and re-signed upon the election of a new Mayor.

6.10 Municipal Court – Administrative Duties of Court Clerks

To ensure the fair and efficient operation of the City's judicial functions, the Chief Municipal Court Clerk and Deputy Municipal Court Clerk shall carry out the following administrative responsibilities:

Case Management and Court Docketing

Maintain accurate court calendars and dockets for all scheduled hearings, trials, and juvenile appearances.

Coordinate with the Presiding Judge, Mayor, and City Attorney to schedule court sessions and ensure adequate courtroom staffing.

Generate and distribute dockets in advance of court sessions and ensure all required parties are notified.

Records Management and Compliance

Maintain case files and court records in accordance with the Texas Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) retention schedules.

File and archive citations, motions, notices, and judgments in a consistent and organized manner.

Ensure timely reporting to the Office of Court Administration (OCA), OMNI, and other required state databases.

Financial and Payment Processing

Accurately record and reconcile payments, fines, fees, and bonds received.

Prepare daily cash and deposit logs, and submit to the Mayor or designated financial officer for review and deposit.

Ensure compliance with state-mandated court cost reporting and remittance schedules.

Juvenile Case Management (Chief Clerk)

Maintain confidential juvenile case files.

Monitor compliance with court-ordered terms, referrals, and educational programs.

Track deadlines for hearings and diversion outcomes and prepare summary reports for the Presiding Judge.

Public Interaction and Customer Service

Respond professionally to inquiries from defendants, attorneys, law enforcement, and the general public.

Provide accurate information regarding court procedures, payment plans, warrant status, and compliance options.

Ensure counter and phone service is available during posted hours and that voicemails and correspondence are returned promptly.

Technology and Reporting

Maintain court management software with current case data, payment history, and docket notes.

Generate monthly activity reports, citation volume statistics, and outstanding warrant lists as requested by the Mayor or Judge.

Ensure secure handling of confidential and sensitive information in compliance with Texas judicial privacy rules.

Administrative Coordination

Provide backup and support to each other during absences or high-volume periods.

Assist in coordinating interpreter services, bailiff scheduling, and courtroom logistics as needed.

Maintain training logs and certification status in accordance with JBCC and TMCEC guidelines.

These duties reinforce the accountability, compliance, and professionalism required in the administration of justice for the City of China Grove's Municipal Court. Municipal clerks shall sign an enhanced confidentiality agreement. This agreement shall be reaffirmed and re-signed upon the election of a new Mayor.

6.11 Permitting Officer – Administrative Duties and Compliance Responsibilities

To ensure consistent enforcement of municipal codes and efficient permitting operations, the Permitting Officer shall perform the following administrative duties:

Permit Intake, Processing, and Tracking

Maintain a permit log tracking all applications received, including:

- Date of submission
- Type of permit (building, signage, driveway, fence, etc.)
- Applicant contact information
- Status (pending, approved, denied, expired)
- Ensure all applications are reviewed for completeness before processing.
- Assign permit numbers and file documents according to the City's retention policy.

Records Management and Public Access

Maintain digital and hardcopy records of all issued permits, supporting plans, inspection reports, and correspondence.

Ensure that permit records are accessible for open records requests and available for internal reference.

Coordinate with the City Secretary to update and archive public-facing permitting documents (e.g., forms, fee schedules, checklists) on the City website.

Inspection Scheduling and Documentation

Schedule site inspections as required by permit type and ensure inspection documentation is attached to the corresponding permit file.

Maintain an inspection log indicating the date of inspection, results, required corrections, and reinspection dates if applicable.

Monthly Reporting and Council Updates

Provide the Mayor with a monthly summary report of permitting activity, including:

- Number and type of permits issued
- Total estimated project valuation (if applicable)
- Notable trends or compliance concerns
- Prepare and submit additional reports for City Council or TCEQ-related permitting compliance, as needed.

Ordinance and Code Coordination

Maintain familiarity with current City ordinances governing development, signage, and construction.

Provide feedback and proposed revisions to the Mayor when ordinance conflicts or outdated standards are identified.

Assist in drafting or updating ordinance language related to permitting when requested by the Mayor or Council.

Public Communication and Support

Provide information to applicants, residents, and contractors about permitting requirements, timelines, and fees.

Ensure that all communications are documented in the permit file, especially those involving exceptions, denials, or code interpretations.

Offer procedural guidance to the public in a courteous and consistent manner.

These administrative duties ensure that permitting functions are transparent, consistent, and legally compliant, supporting both development goals and community standards in the City of China Grove. The Permitting Officer shall sign a standard confidentiality agreement. This agreement shall be reaffirmed and re-signed upon the election of a new Mayor.

6.12 Code Compliance Officer – Administrative Duties and Reporting

The Code Compliance Officer role may be filled a sworn police officer, but in carrying out the duties of code compliance acts in a civilian capacity supports the City's enforcement of zoning, property maintenance, nuisance, and signage ordinances. In addition to field inspections and enforcement, the officer performs the following administrative duties to ensure proper documentation, legal compliance, and public accountability:

Case Documentation and File Management

Maintain a complete case file for each code enforcement action, including complaints, inspection notes, photographs, notices, citations, and correspondence.

Ensure that records are maintained in accordance with the City's records retention policy and are available for review or open records requests.

Close out cases in a timely manner upon resolution and archive all associated documents.

Reporting and Communication

Submit regular code enforcement activity summaries to the Mayor, including:

- Number of new cases opened and closed
- Types of violations observed
- Notices and citations issued
- Cases escalated to court or requiring legal action
- Provide monthly updates for inclusion in the Mayor's report to City Council, or more frequently as requested.

Coordination with Other Departments

Collaborate with the Permitting Officer on violations related to unpermitted work or signage.

Coordinate with Animal Control and Public Works when cross-departmental action is required (e.g., abandoned vehicles, trash, animal hazards).

Refer violations beyond municipal jurisdiction to appropriate county or state agencies and track outcomes.

Public Communication and Service

Maintain a log of citizen complaints and responses to ensure accountability and follow-up.

Provide educational materials or verbal guidance to residents and property owners regarding common code violations and compliance methods.

Support the City Secretary with updates on active enforcement actions that may require public notice or legal posting.

Legal and Court Support

Prepare evidence packets for Municipal Court when enforcement actions proceed to formal hearings.

Appear and testify in court as required, maintaining professionalism and impartiality.

Coordinate with the Presiding Judge and Chief Court Clerk regarding scheduling and documentation needs for code-related dockets.

These administrative duties reinforce the Code Compliance Officer's role as both an enforcement official and a documentation officer responsible for lawful and fair application of municipal codes. The Code Compliance Officer shall sign a standard confidentiality agreement. This agreement shall be reaffirmed and re-signed upon the election of a new Mayor.

6.13 Animal Control Officer – Administrative and Civic Duties

The Animal Control Officer is a civilian public safety officer, this role may be filled a sworn police officer, but in carrying out the duties of animal control acts in a civilian capacity. This role serves the community through the humane enforcement of animal ordinances and the protection of both animal welfare and public health. Administrative responsibilities include the following:

Case Management and Documentation

Maintain an accurate log of service calls, incidents, and outcomes including date, location, and response.

Document and file all warnings, citations, impoundments, bite reports, and public complaints.

Prepare case files for Municipal Court when citations are contested or court-ordered action is needed.

Public Health and Rabies Control

Track rabies vaccination compliance and ensure required follow-up for unvaccinated or exposed animals.

Maintain bite case files and submit required reports to the appropriate county or state health authority.

Shelter Coordination and Records

Maintain records of animals impounded, transferred to shelters, returned to owners, or euthanized.

Work with shelters to ensure required holding times and humane care are observed.

Document daily shelter coordination, transfers, and final animal dispositions.

Community Communication and Education

Respond to citizen inquiries and complaints with courtesy and professionalism.

Provide educational information on leash laws, rabies prevention, animal registration, and nuisance issues.

Document outreach or education efforts and any voluntary compliance gained as a result.

Monthly Reporting

Submit a monthly report to the Mayor summarizing:

- Number and type of animal-related service calls
- Number of warnings, citations, and impoundments
- Rabies cases and bite investigations
- Public education and outreach activities

Interdepartmental Coordination

Coordinate with Code Compliance on property-related violations involving animals.

Provide support to the Municipal Court for cases involving animal violations.

Refer serious neglect or cruelty concerns to appropriate state or nonprofit agencies as needed.

These duties ensure that Animal Control services in the City of China Grove are transparent, well-documented, and aligned with the City's commitment to public safety and responsible animal care. The Animal Control Officer shall sign a standard confidentiality agreement. This agreement shall be reaffirmed and re-signed upon the election of a new Mayor.

Section 7: Safety and Risk Management

7.1 General Workplace Safety

The City of China Grove, Tx is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. Staff are expected to:

- Follow all safety guidelines and training procedures
- Use protective equipment when required
- Report unsafe conditions or hazards immediately
- Operate vehicles, tools, and equipment responsibly

Department heads may provide job-specific safety instructions, especially for field roles such as Animal Control and Code Compliance.

7.2 Reporting Injuries and Incidents

All work-related injuries, accidents, or near misses must be reported immediately to the Mayor or designated supervisor, regardless of severity. A written incident report must be completed within 24 hours.

The City will ensure appropriate follow-up, medical care, and reporting to the Texas Department of Insurance (if applicable).

7.3 Emergency Procedures

Employees must be familiar with basic emergency procedures for:

- Fire evacuation
- Severe weather or shelter-in-place
- Medical emergencies
- Workplace violence or active threat

The City will conduct periodic drills and ensure that emergency contact numbers and exit plans are posted in each facility.

7.4 Incident and Complaint Reporting

Employees are encouraged to report to the Mayor any unsafe behavior, threats, or potential risks they observe—whether physical, environmental, or behavioral — as soon as possible. Reports may be made confidentially and without fear of retaliation.

If the issue involves the Mayor, the individual reporting the complaint may choose to submit to the Mayor Pro-tem or to the City Council.

Section 8: Complaint and Grievance Procedures

8.1 Employee Complaint Process

The City encourages open communication and resolution of concerns at the lowest level possible. If an employee has a workplace concern or disagreement, the following steps should be taken:

- **Informal Discussion:** Discuss the concern directly with your immediate supervisor or the Mayor, if appropriate.
- **Written Complaint:** If the issue is not resolved, submit a written complaint outlining the concern and desired resolution to the Mayor.
- **Review and Follow-Up:** The Mayor will review the complaint and respond within a reasonable time, typically within 10 business days. In some cases, an outside party may be consulted.
- If the complaint involves the Mayor, it may be submitted to the Mayor Pro-tem or referred to the City Council as appropriate under local policies and legal guidance.

8.2 Harassment Complaint Process

Harassment of any kind is strictly prohibited. Employees who believe they have been subjected to harassment, discrimination, or retaliation should report the behavior immediately.

Reports can be made verbally or in writing to the Mayor or other designated official. All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and confidentially to the extent possible. Retaliation against employees who file complaints or participate in investigations is strictly prohibited.

The City also maintains a zero-tolerance stance toward knowingly false or malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation. While good-faith complaints are always protected, making a deliberately false or malicious complaint undermines this process and may itself result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Appropriate corrective action will be taken if a violation is found.

8.3 Appeals and Disciplinary Review

Employees who wish to appeal disciplinary actions (such as written reprimands, suspensions, or termination) may submit a written appeal to the Mayor within five (5) business days of receiving the action. The Mayor will review the appeal and provide a final decision in writing. In cases involving significant disputes or potential legal concerns, the City Council may review the matter in executive session (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code § 551.074), in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code § 551.005).

Section 9: Disciplinary Action

9.1 Grounds for Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be taken for violations of City policy, failure to perform duties, or misconduct. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated tardiness or unexcused absences
- Insubordination or refusal to follow instructions
- Violation of safety protocols
- Misuse of City equipment or resources
- Breach of confidentiality
- Theft or dishonesty
- Harassment or discriminatory behavior
- Falsification of records
- Substance abuse while on duty

The severity of the disciplinary response will depend on the nature of the offense and the employee's history.

9.2 Progressive Discipline Policy

The City generally follows a progressive discipline process to address performance or conduct issues, which may include:

- Verbal Warning – Informal notice of concern, documented for reference.
- Written Warning – Formal notice placed in the employee's personnel file.
- Suspension Without Pay – Temporary removal from duties, duration based on severity.
- Termination – Permanent separation from employment.
- However, depending on the circumstances, the City reserves the right to bypass steps and move directly to more serious actions when warranted.

9.3 Immediate Termination Situations

Some actions may result in immediate termination without prior warnings, including:

- Theft or fraud
- Workplace violence or threats
- Possession or use of illegal substances on City property
- Gross insubordination
- Serious safety violations
- Willful misconduct or criminal behavior

The Mayor after consulting with the City's Legal service, will make the final determination regarding all disciplinary actions, unless City policy or legal obligations require City Council involvement.

Section 10: Acknowledgments and Forms

10.1 Employee Acknowledgment of Receipt

Each employee must sign an acknowledgment form confirming receipt of this handbook. This form will be kept in the employee's personnel file and states that the employee:

Has received a copy of the Employee Handbook

Understands that it is their responsibility to read and follow all policies

Acknowledges that employment is at-will (unless otherwise specified by law)

Understands that the handbook is subject to change at the discretion of the City

10.2 Confidentiality Policy

Certain City positions require access to sensitive, private, or legally protected information. Employees in these roles may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement appropriate to the level of access and responsibility associated with their position.

Positions such as the City Secretary and Municipal Court Clerk will be required to sign an Enhanced Confidentiality Agreement, which includes more detailed provisions regarding the handling of legal, personnel, or court-related records. Other employees may be required to sign a General Confidentiality Agreement based on their access to financial records, personnel data, or other protected information. (see Appendix C and the City website for Confidentiality Agreements)

All confidentiality agreements will outline:

The categories of information considered confidential

Restrictions on disclosure or misuse of that information

Legal and disciplinary consequences for violations

These agreements are binding for the duration of employment and, in some cases, may continue beyond separation from City service, as specified in the agreement. Violation of confidentiality obligations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

10.3 Vehicle/Equipment Use Agreement (If Applicable)

Employees assigned to operate City vehicles or equipment may be required to sign a separate agreement acknowledging responsibility for:

- Safe operation and maintenance
- Restrictions on personal use
- Reporting accidents or mechanical issues

Returning equipment in good condition

Section 11: Environmental Compliance and MS4 Responsibilities

As a regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) under the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the City of China Grove is required to comply with the Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) General Permit for Phase II MS4s.

City employees have specific responsibilities to support MS4 compliance, including:

11.1 Stormwater Pollution Prevention (REQUIRED for City of China Grove)

Employees shall take reasonable steps to prevent pollution from entering storm drains, ditches, and natural drainage systems during their work activities. Examples of prohibited discharges include:

- Dumping chemicals, paint, or wash water into storm drains- Allowing sediment, trash, or oil to enter stormwater outfalls- Disposing of grass clippings, soil, or animal waste into ditches

11.2 Minimum Control Measures (MCMs)

The City's MS4 program must address the following six categories, which may involve staff duties:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Involvement and Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE)
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

City employees, particularly those in permitting, code enforcement, and public works, may have assigned responsibilities within these categories.

11.3 Training and Reporting

Employees whose duties affect stormwater (e.g., field staff, permitting) must complete annual training as required by the TCEQ MS4 permit. This includes identifying and reporting:

- Illicit discharges- Spills or dumping into storm drains- Erosion or sediment control failures at construction sites

Reports must be submitted to the Mayor or the designated MS4 Coordinator.

11.4 Documentation and Recordkeeping

The City must maintain documentation of its MS4 program, including inspection reports, public education activities, training logs, and enforcement records, in accordance with TCEQ requirements and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) retention schedules.

Applicable References

- Texas Water Code Chapter 26- 30 Texas Administrative Code § 281 & § 319- TPDES General Permit TXR040000 (Small MS4 General Permit)

11.5 Quarterly Council MS4 Compliance to Council

The City Hall/Firehouse complex is located in an area identified by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) as a region of concern for localized pollution runoff, especially during periods of heavy rainfall. In coordination with TCEQ and in support of our MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) responsibilities, all employees are expected to follow enhanced environmental protection practices at or near this site.

Spill Prevention

- All chemicals, fuels, and other hazardous materials must be stored in properly labeled, sealed containers.
- Spills of oil, fuel, paint, or cleaning agents must be reported immediately to the Mayor or MS4 Coordinator and cleaned up using absorbent materials; never hose or wash spills into drains or ditches.
- Equipment must be inspected for leaks or deterioration before use on City Hall premises.

Pest Control

- Pesticides, rodenticides, and herbicides must only be applied by trained personnel using approved products and techniques that minimize runoff.
- Employees must avoid over-application near drains, curbs, or landscaping that slopes toward stormwater inlets.
- Food waste and trash should be sealed and properly disposed of to avoid attracting pests.

Waste Handling

- Waste materials, including trash, debris, used oil, paint cans, and cleaning rags, must be stored under cover and disposed of using approved City or contractor services.
- Dumping of any waste into the storm drain system is strictly prohibited under federal and state law.
- Recyclables and solid waste must be segregated and stored in designated bins with lids.

Employee Responsibilities- All staff working on or around the City Hall/Firehouse area must complete annual training on pollution prevention and MS4 compliance. - If an employee observes illegal dumping, leaks, or any discharge to storm drains or surface water, they must immediately report the issue to the Mayor or designated MS4 Coordinator.

Reference Resource Employees are encouraged to review additional pollution prevention resources on the San Antonio River Authority website at: <https://www.sariverauthority.org> This policy helps the City meet its obligations under the Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) and supports the health of the San Antonio River Basin ecosystem.

11.6 Local Pollution Risk Area – City Hall/Firehouse Site

The Mayor will ensure that the Permitting Officer prepares and delivers reporting during the second month of each Fiscal Year quarter end

Q1 Reporting Ending in December is delivered at the February Council Meeting

Q2 Reporting Ending in March is delivered at the May Council Meeting

Q3 Reporting Ending in June is delivered at the August Council Meeting

Q4 Reporting Ending in August is delivered at the October Council Meeting

11.7 State Energy Report Compliance (SECO)

In accordance with Texas Health & Safety Code §388.005, the City of China Grove must submit an annual energy usage report to the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) no later than ****March 1**** each year. The City Secretary shall serve as the ****primary point of contact**** for gathering electricity usage data, organizing the required reporting materials, and coordinating with the Mayor and Investment Officer for review and assistance. While the City Secretary oversees submission, this is a collaborative process requiring support from multiple departments to ensure full compliance.

Section 12: Additional State Compliance and Reporting Requirements

12.1 Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Reporting (N/A to China Grove at this time)

If the City operates solid waste activities regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), an annual Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) report must be submitted by November 10 each year for the prior fiscal period. This report must be filed through the TCEQ STEERS system. See Appendix J: TCEQ Reporting Deadlines.

12.2 Air Emissions and Chemical Storage Reporting (N/A to China Grove at this time)

City operations such as vehicle maintenance may trigger air quality or chemical storage reporting. If applicable, an annual Emissions Inventory Report and Tier II hazardous chemical inventory must be filed. Reporting is mandated under the Texas Health and Safety Code and federal EPCRA regulations. See Appendix J: Tier II Reporting & Air Compliance.

12.3 TCEQ Permit Renewal and Fee Compliance

The City must ensure timely renewal of all environmental permits and payment of associated fees (e.g., stormwater, wastewater, MS4). A compliance calendar should be maintained by the Mayor or designated staff. See Appendix J: Permit Renewal & Fee Schedule.

12.4 Labor Law Posting and Distribution Requirements

The City must ensure that mandatory labor law notices are posted in visible locations or distributed to employees. These include notices under the Texas Payday Law (Labor Code Chapter 61), Workers' Compensation (Chapter 401), and Unemployment Insurance programs. See Section 5.1 and Appendix J: Required Workplace Postings.

12.5 Take-Home Vehicle Policy and Usage Tracking

If employees are assigned City-owned vehicles for use beyond work hours, the City shall document eligibility, vehicle assignment, and usage policies annually. Accident reporting and IRS mileage documentation (if applicable) must be maintained. See Section 6.3 and Appendix J: Vehicle Use Reporting Policy.

Section 13 Annual Budget Timeline Overview for Department Heads

Department heads play a central role in preparing, refining, and presenting the City's annual budget and tax rate proposals. While the Mayor and Aldermen make the final policy decisions, staff ensure compliance with state law, prepare supporting documents, and provide accurate information for Council review. This section outlines the employee responsibilities in the timeline below, which runs from May through September and aligns with the Texas Local Government Code (Chapter 102) and the Texas Tax Code (Chapter 26).

Annual Budget & Tax Rate Adoption Timeline

Budget Process (LGC Chapter 102)	Tax Rate Process (Tax Code Chapter 26)
May 1–15 – Mayor & City Secretary begin planning; review actuals; update templates; prepare First Draft Budget.	*(No Tax Rate steps in May) *
May 15–31 – Dept. Heads submit requests; Mayor & City Secretary prepare First Draft; salary tables prepared; First Draft Budget Workbook posted before June Council Meeting.	*(No Tax Rate steps in May) *
June Council Meeting Budget discussion No Action. <i>*Optional Council Workshop for continued budget review and adjustments (commonly scheduled).*</i>	*(No Tax Rate steps in June) *
Post June meetings – Mayor revises draft using Workshop Template; updates from Dept. Heads; numbers verified with City Secretary & Investment Officer; Updated Budget posted before July Meeting; Mayor files Proposed Budget with City Secretary (LGC §102.005).	*(No Tax Rate steps in June) *
<i>Early July – no later than the 1st Monday: Final Proposed Budget posted on City website (30-day rule); July Council Meeting: budget discussion only.</i>	*(No Tax Rate steps in July) *
Mid-July – Submit Budget Public Hearing Notice to Wilson County News (17 days before August meeting; LGC §102.006).	*(Tax Rate notice not yet required) *
August Council Meeting – First Thursday: Budget Public Hearing (LGC §102.006) and Budget Adoption (LGC §102.009(a)). - Quorum of 3 → all 3 must vote yes - Quorum of 4 → 3-to-1 vote carries (60%).	*(Tax Rate notice step is next) * <i>*Optional Council Workshop to review tax rate scenarios and worksheets (commonly scheduled).*</i>
Mid-August – (No budget steps)	Submit Tax Rate Public Hearing Notice to Wilson County News (17 days before September meeting; Tax Code §26.05).
September Council Meeting – (No budget steps)	First Thursday: Tax Rate Public Hearing and Tax Rate Adoption (Tax Code §26.05(c)). - Quorum of 4 required - 3-to-1 vote carries (60%) - If adopted rate > voter-approval rate, election required.
Post-Adoption – Upload adopted budget to website; notify Bexar County & Appraisal District; update internal systems.	Same post-adoption tasks: upload adopted tax rate; notify Bexar County & Appraisal District; update systems.

**Note: Workshops are optional but commonly scheduled to allow additional Council discussion of the budget (July) and tax rate (August).*

13.1 Post-Budget Staff Activity (October–December)

- Conduct a **post-budget debrief** with department heads
 - to evaluate what worked well and where processes can improve.
 - ensure they understand **budget line items affecting daily operations**.
- Compile a **lessons-learned summary** for discussion with Council.
- Begin **tracking budget implementation** (e.g., major purchases, new hires, capital projects) to ensure Council decisions are carried out.
- Start **early planning for capital projects** and upcoming grant cycles; coordinate with external partners if needed.
- Update **internal procedures and templates** for the next budget cycle (agenda forms, budget request templates, fund balance reports).
- Confirm that the **final adopted budget and tax rate** are posted on the City's website and available in the City Secretary's office for public access.
- Provide any required **budget copies or certifications** to the County Clerk, Appraisal District, and other authorities.

13.2 Budget Legal Support References

- **LGC §22.039** – Quorum for governing body is majority of full membership, including vacancies.
- **LGC §102.005** – Proposed budget must be filed with the City Secretary.
- **LGC §102.006** – Budget hearing and 10-day notice requirement in newspaper of general circulation.
- **LGC §102.009(a)** – Budget must be adopted before start of fiscal year (October 1).
- **Tax Code §26.05** – Tax rate adoption, notice, and hearing requirements.
- **Election Code §41.001** – Uniform election dates if quorum is lost and a special election is required.
- **LGC §102.008** – Amendments to the budget are allowed by Council ordinance; staff must prepare supporting documentation.
- **Tax Code §26.04** – County appraisal district's role in certifying tax rolls; staff must monitor deadlines to ensure compliance.

Appendices

Appendix A: Department Head Meeting Procedures

1. Department Head Meeting Procedures

The Mayor works closely with each Department Head to ensure city operations are responsive, efficient, and aligned with the priorities set by the City Council and the needs of our community. To support that goal, we will adopt a structured meeting process designed to foster communication, encourage collaboration, and maintain clarity in decision-making.

1. Monthly Department Head Meetings
Purpose: To debrief following City Council meetings and to assess and assign any new work required based on Council direction.

These meetings will be held monthly, immediately following the City Council meeting. All department heads are expected to attend. The agenda will focus on action items resulting from Council discussions, as well as updates from each department.

2. One-on-One Meetings with the Mayor

Purpose: To prepare for upcoming City Council meetings and ensure each department is ready to present or respond to inquiries.

Each department head will meet with the Mayor once per month during the week before the Council meeting. These meetings are an opportunity to review ongoing work, preview upcoming items, and address any departmental needs or concerns.

3. Ad Hoc Meetings

Purpose: To provide focused attention on specific issues as they arise.

These meetings will be scheduled by the Mayor as needed. Participants will be limited to the relevant staff or departments required to address the matter at hand. Occasionally, these meetings may involve multiple departments when cross-functional input is needed.

Important Note: If you are not invited to an ad hoc meeting, please do not attend unless you have first spoken with the Mayor. This helps maintain the focus and scope of the meeting. If your participation would be valuable, the Mayor will either invite you or schedule a separate follow-up meeting.

4. Department Head-Initiated Meetings

You are encouraged to request a meeting with the Mayor at any time for guidance, support, or to raise emerging issues. These requests are always welcome and help ensure open communication.

5. Department Head Collaboration

Approved by City Council: 10/2/2025

To maintain alignment and accountability, Department heads may not meet with one another without the Mayor present to chair the meeting. This ensures consistent direction and avoids duplication or miscommunication. Department heads are always free to meet with their own team or direct reports without the Mayor's involvement.

6. Final Notes

These procedures are designed to create a shared rhythm and clarity around communication. The Mayor values the contributions each department head brings to the table and supports and encourages staff to work together in a focused, respectful, and productive way.

Appendix B: Job Descriptions

The official job descriptions for the following positions are maintained on the City of China Grove website and may be updated from time to time as approved by Council:

- City Secretary
- Chief Municipal Court Clerk / Juvenile Case Manager
- Permitting Officer
- Code Compliance Officer
- Animal Control Officer

The version posted on the City of China Grove website is the official and current version. Employees are responsible for reviewing the posted version when needed.

Appendix C: Required Employee Forms

The City uses a number of standardized forms, including:

- Employee Handbook Acknowledgment Form
- Employee Self-Assessment
- Annual Performance Review Form
- Exit Interview Template
- Confidentiality Agreements (Standard and Enhanced Versions)
- Vehicle/Equipment Use Agreement
- Technology Use and Security Policy Acknowledgment

Official versions of these forms are available on the City of China Grove website. The version posted online is the official and current version. Some forms (such as performance reviews, acknowledgments, or exit interviews) will be distributed directly by the Mayor or City Secretary to the employee at the time they are required.

Appendix D: Holidays and Leave Summary

The City of China Grove recognizes the following paid holidays each calendar year:

New Year's Day – January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – Third Monday in January
Presidents' Day – Third Monday in February
Memorial Day – Last Monday in May
Juneteenth National Independence Day – June 19
Independence Day – July 4
Veterans Day – November 11
Thanksgiving – Fourth Thursday in November
Christmas Eve – December 24
Christmas Day – December 25

The City of China Grove observes a four-day workweek, with offices closed on Fridays. When a recognized holiday falls on a Friday, employees will not receive an alternate day off in place of the Friday holiday, since the City is already closed that day. All holidays are subject to change based on City Council action.

The City provides paid vacation after one year of service. Employed 2 – 5 years receive 4 days of vacation. Employed 6 – 10 years receive 8 days of vacation. Employed more than 10 years 12 days of vacation.

Appendix E: Emergency Contacts & Procedures

This appendix provides emergency contact information and general response procedures to be followed in case of fire, weather events, workplace incidents, or other emergencies affecting City facilities or staff. Each department is responsible for reviewing and discussing these procedures during staff meetings.

Emergency Contacts

In the event of an emergency, use the following contacts:

- Mayor: David Johnson 210-854-7728
- City Secretary: Melinda Saucedo 210-648-4923
- Fire/Police/EMS: 911 (for immediate emergencies)
- Bexar County Emergency Management: [County Contact or Hotline]
- City Hall Main Line: [Main Office Number]
- Facilities/Maintenance Emergency: [Insert Name or Vendor Contact]

General Emergency Procedures

Follow these procedures based on the type of incident:

- Fire – Evacuate the building immediately using the nearest exit. Call 911 and notify the Mayor.
- Severe Weather – Follow designated shelter-in-place protocols. Avoid windows. Remain indoors until given all-clear.
- Medical Emergency – Call 911. Provide assistance only if trained. Notify the Mayor or supervisor immediately.

- Power Outage – Notify City Secretary or the Mayor. Remain in place unless otherwise directed.
- Suspicious Activity or Threats – Report immediately to the Mayor or 911 depending on severity. Do not confront individuals.
- Building Evacuation – Follow posted routes. Assist others as needed. Report to designated assembly area and check in.

Appendix F: Organizational Chart

The official City of China Grove Organizational Chart is maintained on the City website and may be updated as staffing or Council changes occur.

The version posted on the City of China Grove website is the official and current version. Employees and citizens should refer to the posted chart for the most accurate organizational structure.

Appendix G: Technology and Communication Policy

This appendix outlines acceptable use and responsibilities related to City-provided technology and communication tools. All employees issued email accounts, or other digital systems are expected to comply with these standards. Violations may result in loss of privileges and disciplinary action.

1. General Use Policy

Technology and communication systems are provided for official City business. Limited personal use is permitted if it does not interfere with work duties or consume excessive resources. All City-issued technology remains the property of the City of China Grove. Employees must protect passwords and access credentials and may not share them with unauthorized individuals.

Employees are advised that violations of technology or communication policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, and may also subject the employee to personal legal liability if violations involve unlawful activity or disclosure of protected information.

2. Social Media Policy

The official City of China Grove Social Media Policy is maintained on the City website and may be updated as staffing or Council changes occur.

The version posted on the City of China Grove website is the official and current version. Employees and citizens should refer to the posted policy for the most accurate organizational structure.

Prohibited Activities:

- Accessing or distributing offensive, illegal, or inappropriate content.
- Using City systems for political activity (See Appendix J: Texas Election Code § 255.003), personal gain, or outside employment.
- Unauthorized installation or downloading of software or apps.- Attempting to bypass City firewalls, filters, or security protocols.

3. Email and Communication Etiquette

All written communications should be professional, respectful, and free of discriminatory or harassing language. Email messages may be subject to the Texas Public Information Act (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code § 552.012) and should not contain confidential or sensitive content unless protected. City email accounts should not be used for personal subscriptions or unrelated correspondence.

4. Monitoring and Records

City communications may be monitored, audited, or accessed as part of open records (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code, Chapter 552) requests or legal compliance. Employees have no expectation of privacy when using City-owned technology or communication systems. All electronic records must be preserved in accordance with the City's records retention policies.

Appendix H: Records Retention and Management Policy

This appendix summarizes the City of China Grove's commitment to proper records retention and outlines key guidelines for managing, storing, and disposing of City records. All employees are responsible for following applicable state laws and internal procedures, particularly the guidelines set by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC).

1. General Policy

All records, whether physical or digital, must be maintained in accordance with the City's adopted records retention schedule. Records include emails, letters, forms, permits, case files, reports, and any other documentation related to City operations. Employees should not destroy or delete any City record without proper authorization from the City Secretary.

2. Role of the City Secretary

The City Secretary serves as the Records Management Officer and is responsible for implementing and updating the City's retention policy. The City Secretary maintains the master records retention schedule and coordinates destruction of records in compliance with state law.

3. Employee Responsibilities

Employees must store records in designated systems or locations approved by the City Secretary. Retention periods vary depending on the record type and must be followed strictly. Questions about how long to retain a document or where to store it should be directed to the City Secretary.

4. Access and Confidentiality

Records must be protected from unauthorized access, loss, or damage. Public records may be disclosed in response to an official request under the Texas Public Information Act (See Appendix J: Texas Government Code § 552.012). Confidential records must be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws and internal policies.

Appendix I: Training and Compliance Log

- Required Training (as applicable to position)
- Training Completion Log Template

The official Training and Compliance Log template is maintained on the City of China Grove website. Employees must use the posted version. Completed logs will be filed with the City Secretary.

Appendix J: Regulatory References and Legal Citations

This appendix lists statutory references supporting this handbook, including:

- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- Texas Local Government Code
- Texas Election Code
- Texas Government Code (Open Meetings & Public Information Acts)
- Texas Tax Code
- Other applicable state and federal regulations

It also identifies required compliance forms, which are maintained on the City of China Grove website:

- Annual Environmental Compliance Training Acknowledgment Form
- General Training Acknowledgment Form
- Annual Employee Training Checklist – Personnel File Cover Sheet
- Purchase Order Form
- Invoice Approval Form

The posted versions of these forms are the official and current versions.

Appendix K: Reporting & Compliance Generic Calendar

- The City maintains a master compliance calendar of deadlines, hearings, and reporting requirements.
- Responsibility for Updates: The Mayor is responsible for keeping the calendar current.
- Posting: The City Secretary is responsible for posting the updated calendar to the City website.
- Council Approval: Council approval is not required for this calendar.
- Use of the Calendar: For accuracy, employees, aldermen, and citizens should always rely on the version published on the website rather than printed copies, to ensure they are referencing the most up-to-date information.

Appendix Z: Website Reference Appendix

The following categories of documents are maintained on the City of China Grove website and represent the official, current versions:

- Job Descriptions (Appendix B)
- Employee Forms (Appendix C)
- Organizational Chart (Appendix F)
- Training and Compliance Logs (Appendix I)
- Compliance Forms and Acknowledgments (Appendix J)
- Reporting & Compliance Generic Calendar (Appendix K)

Employees and citizens should always refer to the City's website for the most up-to-date version of these documents. The handbook provides context and references but does not supersede the posted version.

