

City of Tolleson Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials

The Three Rs of Tolleson Government Leadership: Roles, Responsibilities and Respect

The City Code provides information on the roles and responsibilities of Council Members, the Vice Mayor and the Mayor. This is a Code of Conduct for the City of Tolleson's elected and appointed officials.

This Code of Conduct is designed to describe the manner in which Council Members and appointed officials of the City (collectively, "Public Officials") should treat one another, City staff, constituents, and others they come into contact with in representing the City of Tolleson. It reflects the work of defining more clearly the behavior, manners and courtesies that are suitable for various occasions. This is designed to make the public meetings and the process of governance run more smoothly.

The content of this Code of Conduct includes:

- Overview of Roles and Responsibilities
- Policies and Protocol Related to Conduct
- Council Conduct with One Another
- Council Conduct with City Staff
- Council Conduct with the Public
- Council Conduct with Other Public Agencies
- Council Conduct with Boards and Commissions
- Council Conduct with the Media
- Sanctions
- Principles of Proper Conduct
- Checklist for Monitoring Conduct
- Glossary of Terms

The constant and consistent theme through all of the conduct guidelines is "respect." Public Officials experience significant workloads and tremendous stress in making decisions that could impact thousands of lives. Despite these pressures, Public Officials are called upon to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Demonstrating respect for each individual through words and actions is the touchstone that can help guide Public Officials to do the right thing in even the most difficult situations.

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

Other resources that are helpful in defining the roles and responsibilities of Public Officials can be found in the City of Tolleson Code and in the Elected Officials Guide published by the League of Arizona Cities & Towns.

MAYOR

- Is directly elected by the people pursuant to ARS §9-232.03. (City Code, Section 2-1-20)
- Acts as the official head of the City for all ceremonial purposes
- Chairs Council meetings (City Code, Section 2-1-23)
- Calls for special meetings (City Code, Section 2-1-60)
- Recognized as spokesperson for the City of Tolleson
- Makes judgment calls on proclamations, agendas, etc.
- Recommends subcommittees as appropriate for Council approval
- Leads the Council into an effective, cohesive working team
- Signs documents on behalf of the City of Tolleson

VICE MAYOR

- Serves at the pleasure of the Council (City Code, Section 2-1-21)
- Performs the duties of the Mayor if the Mayor is absent (City Code, Section 2-1-22)
- Chairs Council meetings in the absence of the Mayor
- Represents the City at ceremonial functions at the request of the Mayor

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

All members of the City Council, including those serving as Mayor and Vice Mayor, have equal votes. No Council Member has more authority than any other Council Member, and all should be treated with equal respect.

All Council Members should:

- Fully participate in City Council meetings and other public forums while demonstrating kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others.
- Prepare in advance of Council meetings and be familiar with issues on the agenda.
- Represent the City at ceremonial functions at the request of the Mayor or at the request of the Council.
- Be respectful of other people's time. Stay focused and act efficiently during public meetings.

- Serve as a model of leadership and civility to the community
- Inspire public confidence in Tolleson government
- Provide contact information with the City Clerk in case of an emergency or urgent situation arises while the Council Member is out of City
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement
- Participate in scheduled activities to increase team effectiveness and review Council procedures, such as this Code of Conduct

MEETING CHAIR

The Mayor will chair official meetings of the City Council, unless the Vice Mayor or another Council Member is designated as Chair of a specific meeting.

- Maintains order, decorum, and the fair and equitable treatment of all speakers
- Keeps discussion and questions focused on specific agenda items under consideration
- Makes parliamentary rulings. Chair rulings may be overturned if a Council Member makes a motion as an individual and the majority of the Council votes to overrule the Chair.

FORMER COUNCIL MEMBERS

Former members of the City Council who speak to the current City Council about a pending issue should disclose for whom they are speaking.

Policies & Protocol Related to Conduct

Ceremonial Events

Requests for a City representative at ceremonial events will be handled by City staff. The Mayor will serve as the designated City representative. If the Mayor is unavailable, then City staff will determine if event organizers would like another representative from the Council. If yes, then the Mayor will recommend which Council Member should be asked to serve as a substitute. Invitations received at City Hall are presumed to be for official City representation. Invitations addressed to Council Members at their homes are presumed to be for unofficial, personal consideration.

Correspondence Signatures

Council Members do not need to acknowledge the receipt of correspondence, or copies of correspondence, during Council meetings. The City Clerk will prepare official letters in response to public inquiries and concerns. These

letters will carry the signature of the Mayor unless the Mayor requests that they be signed by another Council Member or the City Clerk.

If correspondence is addressed only to one Council Member, that Council Member may check with staff on the best way to respond to the sender.

Endorsement of Candidates

Council Members have the right to endorse candidates for all Council seats or other elected offices. It is inappropriate to mention endorsements during Council meetings or other official City meetings.

Public Announcements in Council Meetings

Council Members who want to speak during the Call to the Public or Council Members Report portion of the Council meeting should notify the Chair in advance. Council Members, like members of the public who use this portion of the agenda to recognize achievements or promote an event, will be limited to three minutes each, and should keep the focus on matters of community-wide interest. Matters that may require Council action or direction should not be discussed and those items on the agenda should not be used for any form of campaigning.

Public Hearing Protocol

The applicant shall have the right to speak first. The Chair will determine the length of time allowed for this presentation. Speakers representing either pro or con points of view will be allowed to follow. All speakers should be heard. All statements should be made to and through the Chair. The applicant will be allowed to make closing comments. The Chair has the responsibility to run an efficient public meeting and has the discretion to modify the public hearing process in order to make the meeting run smoothly.

Council Members should not express opinions during the public hearing portion of the meeting, except to ask pertinent questions of the speaker or staff. All Council Member comments or questions should be directed to the Chair. "I think" and "I feel" comments by Council Members are not appropriate until after the close of the public hearing. Council Members should refrain from arguing or debating with the public during a public hearing and shall always show respect for different points of view.

Main motions may be followed by amendments, followed by substitute motions. Any Council Member can call for the question or a point of order. Only Council Members, who voted on the prevailing side, may make motions to reconsider. Motions to reconsider must be made prior to adjourning the meeting.

Travel Expenses

The policies and procedures related to the reimbursement of travel expenses for official City business by Council Members shall be in accordance with the City of Tolleson Financial Accounting Manual, as may be amended.

Council Conduct with One Another

Councils are composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions, and goals. Despite this diversity, all have chosen to serve in public office in order to preserve and protect the present and the future of the community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even as Council may “agree to disagree” on contentious issues.

IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

- **Practice civility and decorum in discussions and debate**

Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. This does not allow, however, Council Members to make belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments. No shouting, or any other physical actions that could be construed as threatening will be tolerated.

- **Honor the role of the Chair in maintaining order**

It is the responsibility of the Chair to keep the comments of Council Members on track during public meetings. Council Members should honor efforts by the Chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Chair's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.

- **Avoid personal comments that could offend other Council Members**

If a Council Member is personally offended by the remarks of another Council Member, the offended Council Member should make notes of the actual words used and call for a “point of personal privilege” that challenges the other Council Member to justify or apologize for the language used. The Chair will maintain control of this discussion. To that end, all discussion in public meetings must go through the Chair.

- **Demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches**

Council Members have a public stage to show how individuals with disparate points of view can find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole.

IN PRIVATE ENCOUNTERS

- **Continue respectful behavior in private**

The same level of respect and consideration of differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for public discussions should be maintained in private conversations.

- **Be aware of the lack of security of written notes, voicemail messages, and e-mail**

Technology allows words written or said without much forethought to be distributed wide and far. Would you feel comfortable to have this note faxed to others? How would you feel if this voicemail message were played on a speakerphone in a full office? What would happen if this e-mail message were forwarded to others? Written notes, voicemail messages and e-mail should be treated as potentially “public” communication.

- **Even private conversations can have a public presence**

Elected officials are always on display – their actions, mannerisms, and language are monitored by people around them that they may not know. Lunch table conversations will be eavesdropped upon, parking lot debates will be watched, and casual comments between individuals before and after public meetings noted. Remember the open meeting law prohibits conversations of four or more council members or the “linking” together through a common source of four or more individual conversations.

- **Other City Public Officials**

The foregoing guidelines concerning “Conduct with One Another” shall be followed not only by Council Members but also by other City Public Officials.

Council Conduct with City Staff

Governance of a City relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy, and City staff, who implement and administer the Council’s policies. Therefore, every effort should be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

- **Treat all staff as professionals**

Clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual is expected. Inappropriate behavior towards staff is not acceptable.

- **Limit contact to specific City staff**

Consequently, remember City staff is accountable to their supervisors. Tasks performed by staff that come from outside the normal chain of supervision could cause staff confusion, inadequate work product and inefficient performance. Questions of City staff and/or requests for additional background information

should be directed only to the City Manager, City Clerk or Department Heads, or the Department Head's designee. The Office of the City Manager should be copied on any request. Consistent with City Code Section 2-3-24(E), no Council Member shall give orders or instructions to any subordinate of the City Manager other than instructions for the purpose of inquiry without the consent of the City Manager.

Requests for follow-up questions to staff should be made only through or with the consent of the City Manager. When in doubt about what staff contact is appropriate, Council Members should ask the City Manager for direction. Materials supplied to a Council Member in response to a request will be made available to all members of the Council so that all have equal access to information.

- **Do not disrupt City staff from their jobs**

Council Members should not disrupt City staff while they are in meetings, on the phone, or engrossed in performing their job functions in order to have their individual needs met.

- **Never publicly criticize an individual employee**

Council should never express concerns about the performance of a City employee in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee's manager. Misdirected comments could violate the City's personnel rules and limit the City's ability to deal fairly and efficiently with personnel matters. Comments about staff performance should only be made to the City Manager through private correspondence or conversation.

- **Do not get involved in administrative functions**

Council Members must not attempt to influence City staff on the making of appointments, awarding of contracts, selecting of consultants, processing of development applications, or granting of City licenses and permits.

- **Check with City staff on correspondence before taking action**

Before sending correspondence, Council Members should check with the City Manager to see if an official City response has already been sent or is in progress.

- **Do not attend meetings with City staff unless requested by staff.**

Even if the Council Member does not say anything, the Council Member's presence implies support, shows partiality, intimidates staff, and hampers staff's ability to do their job objectively.

- **Limit request for staff support**

Routine secretarial support will be provided to all Council Members. All mail for Council Members is opened by the City Clerk.

Requests for additional staff support – even in high priority or emergency situations – should be made to the City Manager who is responsible for allocating City resources in order to maintain a professional, well-run City government.

- **Do not solicit political support from staff**

Council Members should not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from City staff; to do so could violate the law. City staff may, as private citizens with constitutional rights, support political candidates for other government entities but all such activities must be done away from the workplace.

- **Other City Public Officials**

The foregoing guidelines concerning “Conduct with City Staff” shall be followed not only by Council Members but also by other City Public Officials.

Council Conduct with the Public

IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect should be evident on the part of individual council Members toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.

- **Be welcoming to speakers and treat them with respect**
- **Be fair and equitable in allocating public hearing time to individual speakers**

Generally, each speaker will be allocated three minutes. If many speakers are anticipated, the Mayor may shorten the time limit and/or ask speakers to limit themselves to new information and points of view not already covered by previous speakers.

No speaker will be turned away unless he/she exhibits inappropriate behavior. After the close of the public hearing, no more public testimony will be accepted.

- **Give the appearance of active listening**

It is disconcerting to speakers to have Council Members not look at them when they are speaking. It is fine to look down at documents or to make notes, but reading for a long period of time or gazing around the room gives the appearance of disinterest. Be aware of facial expressions, especially those that could be interpreted as “smirking,” disbelief, anger or boredom.

- **Ask for clarification, but avoid debate and argument with the public**

Only the Mayor, no individual Council Members, can interrupt a speaker during a presentation. However, a Council Member can ask the Mayor for a point of order if the speaker is off the topic or exhibiting behavior or language the Council Member finds disturbing.

If speakers become flustered or defensive by Council questions, it is the responsibility of the Mayor to calm and focus the speaker and to maintain the order and decorum of the meeting. Questions by Council Members to members of the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker. Council members' personal opinions or inclinations about upcoming votes should not be revealed until after the public hearing is closed.

- **No personal attacks of any kind, under any circumstances**

Council Members should be aware that their body language and tone of voice, as well as the words they use, can appear to be intimidating or aggressive.

IN UNOFFICIAL SETTINGS

- **Make no promises on behalf of the Council**

Council Members will frequently be asked to explain a Council action or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of City policy and to refer to City staff for further information. It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Council action, or to promise City staff will do something specific (fix a pothole, remove a library book, plant new trees, etc.), or otherwise request that staff perform any act that is illegal, or that has the appearance of illegality.

- **Make no personal comments about other Council Members**

It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other Council Members, their opinions and actions.

- **Remember Tolleson is a Small City**

Council Members are constantly being observed by the community every day that they serve in office. Their behaviors and comments serve as models for proper deportment in the City of Tolleson. Honesty and respect for the dignity of each individual should be reflected in every word and action taken by Council Members, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a serious and continuous responsibility.

- **Other City Public Officials**

The foregoing guidelines concerning "Conduct with the Public" shall be followed not only by Council Members but also by other City Public Officials.

Council Conduct with Other Public Agencies

- **Be clear about representing the City or personal interests**

If a Council Member appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the Council Member must clearly state: 1) if his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the City; 2) whether this is the majority or minority opinion of the Council.

Council Members should be clear about which organizations they represent and inform the Mayor and Council of their involvement in order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good. Public Officials should not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a substantial financial interest or a relationship that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. Public Officials should abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts of interest may exist as defined under Arizona law. Public Officials should discuss issues of conflict of interest with the City Attorney.

- **Correspondence also should be equally clear about representation**

City letterhead may be used when the Council Member is representing the City and the City's official position. A copy of official correspondence should be given to the City Clerk to be filed as part of the permanent public record.

City letterhead should not be used for correspondence of Council Members representing a personal point of view, and is best not used to express a dissenting point of view from an official Council position. However, should Council Members use City letterhead to express a dissenting point of view, the official City position must be stated clearly so the reader understands the difference between the official City position and the viewpoint of the Council Member.

- **Other City Public Officials**

The foregoing guidelines concerning "Conduct with Other Public Agencies" shall be followed not only by Council Members but also by other City Public Officials.

Council Conduct With Boards and Commissions

The City has established several Boards and Commissions as a means of gathering more community input. Citizens who serve on Boards and Commissions become more involved in government and serve as advisors to the

Council. They are a valuable resource to the City's leadership and should be treated with appreciation and respect.

- **If attending a Board or Commission meeting, be careful to only express personal opinions**

Council Members may attend any Board or Commission meeting, which are always open to any member of the public. However, they should be sensitive to the way their participation - especially if it is on behalf of an individual, business or developer – could be viewed as unfairly affecting the process. Any public comments by a Council Member at a Board or Commission meeting should be clearly made as individual opinion and not a representation of the feelings of the entire City Council.

- **Limit contact with Board and Commission members to questions of clarification**

It is inappropriate for a Council member to contact a Board or Commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or developer. It is acceptable for Council Members to contact Board or Commission members in order to clarify a position taken by the Board or Commission.

- **Remember that Boards and Commissions serve the community, not individual Council Members**

The City Council appoints individuals to serve on Boards and Commissions, and it is the responsibility of Boards and Commissions to follow policy established by the Council. But Board and Commission members do not report to individual Council Members, nor should Council Members feel they have the power or right to threaten Board and Commission members with removal if they disagree about an issue. Appointment and re-appointment to a Board or Commission should be based on such criteria as expertise, ability to work with staff and the public, and commitment to fulfilling official duties. A Board or Commission appointment should not be used as a political "reward."

- **Be respectful of diverse opinions**

A primary role of Boards and Commissions is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Council with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Council Members may have a closer working relationship with some individuals serving on Boards and Commissions, but must be fair and respectful of all citizens serving on Boards and Commissions.

- **Keep political support away from public forums**

Board and Commission members may offer political support to a Council member, but not in a public forum while conducting official duties. Conversely, Council Members may support Board and Commission members who are running for office, but not in an official forum in their capacity as a City Council Member.

- **Inappropriate behavior can lead to removal**

Inappropriate behavior by a Board or Commission member should be noted to the Mayor, and the Mayor should counsel the offending member. If inappropriate behavior continues, the Mayor should bring the situation to the attention of the Council.

Council Conduct with the Media

Council Members are frequently contacted by the media for background and quotes.

- **The best advice for dealing with the media is to never go “off the record”**

Most members of the media represent the highest levels of journalistic integrity and ethics, and can be trusted to keep their word. But one bad experience can be catastrophic. Words that are not said cannot be quoted.

- **The Mayor is the official spokesperson for the City.**

The Mayor is the designated representative of the Council to present and speak on the official City position. If an individual Council Member is contacted by the media, the Council Member should be clear about whether their comments represent the official City position or a personal viewpoint.

- **Choose words carefully and cautiously**

Comments taken out of context can cause problems. Be especially cautious about humor, sardonic asides, sarcasm, or word play. It is never appropriate to use personal slurs or swear words when talking with the media.

- **Other City Public Officials**

The foregoing guidelines concerning “Conduct with the Media” shall be followed not only by Council Members but also by other City Public Officials.

Enforcement of the Ethics Policy

A. COMPLAINTS

1. Public Officials themselves have the primary responsibility to assure compliance with this Code of Conduct.
2. The Chairs of commissions, boards, and committees and the Mayor have the additional responsibility to intervene when actions of the Public Officials appear to be in violation of this Code of Conduct.

3. If the Mayor or the chair of the applicable board, commission or committee fails to intervene, two members of the Council, board, commission may request the Mayor or the chair of the applicable public body to intervene. If the complaint arises out of actions or inactions of the Mayor or the chair, the matter shall be directed to the vice-mayor or vice-chair. If the Mayor, chair, vice-mayor or vice-chair fails to intervene, then the matter shall be referred to the City Attorney.
4. The City Attorney shall review the complaint and shall simultaneously notify in writing the City official subject to the complaint of such review.
5. Within 30 days, the City Attorney shall submit the results of his or her review to the complainant, to the official who is the subject of the complaint, and to the Mayor or chair of the public body on which the official who is the subject of the complaint sits. If the matter cannot be resolved within ten days, the matter shall be referred to the City Council. The City Council shall consider the City Attorney's report at a public meeting. If the City Council finds an ethical violation by a person serving on a commission, board or committee, then the City Council may remove the member from the City board, commission, or committee. In resolving a complaint, the totality of the circumstances shall be taken into consideration, including the intent of the person accused of the wrongdoing.
6. In addition, the City Council may impose sanctions on Public Officials whose conduct does not comply with this Code of Conduct, such as reprimand, censure, loss of seniority or committee assignment, or official travel restrictions.

B. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE MAYOR AND/OR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

1. When complaints are levied against the Mayor or members of the City Council, the City Attorney shall have the authority to decide either to (a) act directly on any complaint filed against the Mayor and/or other members of the City Council pursuant to subparagraph A above, or (b) refer a complaint to an independent reviewing authority such as a city attorney from another jurisdiction or an attorney from the office of the county attorney.
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Sanctions

- **Public Disruption**

Members of the public who do not follow proper conduct after a warning in a public hearing may be barred from further testimony at that meeting or removed from the Council Chambers.

- **Inappropriate Staff Behavior**

Council Members should refer to the City Manager any City staff that does not follow proper conduct in their dealings with Council Members, other City staff, or the public. These employees may be disciplined in accordance with standard City procedures for such actions.

- **Council Members Behavior and Conduct**

In addition to sanctions imposed pursuant to paragraph A.6 above, City Council Members who intentionally and repeatedly do not follow proper conduct may be reprimanded or formally censured by the Council, lose seniority or committee assignments (both within the City of Tolleson or with inter-government agencies) or have official travel restricted.

Principles of Proper Conduct

Proper conduct IS . . .

- Keeping promises
- Being dependable
- Building a solid reputation
- Participating and being available
- Demonstrating patience
- Showing empathy
- Holding onto ethical principles under stress
- Listening attentively
- Studying thoroughly
- Keeping integrity intact
- Overcoming discouragement
- Going above and beyond, time and time again
- Modeling a professional manner

Proper conduct IS NOT . . .

- Showing antagonism or hostility
- Deliberately lying or misleading
- Speaking recklessly
- Spreading rumors

- Stirring up bad feelings, divisiveness
- Acting in a self-righteous manner

It all comes down to respect

Respect for one another as individuals . . . respect for the validity of different opinions . . . respect for the democratic process . . . respect for the community that we serve.

Checklist for Monitoring Conduct

- Will my decision/statement/action violate the trust, rights or good will of others?
 - What are my interior motives and the spirit behind my actions?
 - If I have to justify my conduct in public tomorrow, will I do so with pride or shame?
 - How would my conduct be evaluated by people whose integrity and character I respect?
 - Even if my conduct is not illegal or unethical, is it done at someone else's painful expense? Will it destroy their trust in me? Will it harm their reputation?
 - Is my conduct fair? Just? Morally right?
 - If I were on the receiving end of my conduct, would I approve and agree, or would I take offense?
 - Does my conduct give others reason to trust or distrust me?
 - Am I willing to take an ethical stand when it is called for? Am I willing to make my ethical beliefs public in a way that makes it clear what I stand for?
 - Do I exhibit the same conduct in my private life as I do in my public life?
 - Can I take legitimate pride in the way I conduct myself and the example I set?
 - Do I listen and understand the views of others?
 - Do I question and confront different points of view in a constructive manner?
 - Do I work to resolve differences and come to mutual agreement?
 - Do I support others and show respect for their ideas?
 - Will my conduct cause public embarrassment to someone else?
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Glossary of Terms

Appropriate behavior

It is the City's policy to provide its employees and members of the public with an environment that encourages safe, efficient, and productive work, and which is free of discrimination, including all forms of harassment. The City will not tolerate discrimination or verbal or physical conduct by any person which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another person's work performance or which creates and intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

attitude	The manner in which one shows one's dispositions, opinions and feelings
behavior	External appearance or action; manner of behaving; carriage of oneself
civility	Politeness, consideration, courtesy
conduct	The way one acts; personal behavior
courtesy	Politeness connected with kindness
decorum manners	Suitable; proper; good taste in behavior A way of acting; a style, method, or form; the way in which things are done
point of order	An interruption of a meeting to question whether rules or bylaws are being broken, such as the speaker has strayed from the motion currently under consideration
point of personal privilege	A challenge to a speaker to defend or apologize for comments that a fellow Council Member considers offensive
propriety	Conforming to acceptable standards of behavior
protocol	The courtesies that are established as proper and correct
respect	The act of noticing with attention; holding in esteem; courteous regard