

# CFD 9101: Mayor Policy – Boards and Commissions Appointment Process

*Amended August 18, 2023 by Rob Green, Mayor of Cedar Falls*

## PURPOSE:

To provide a standardized appointment mechanism for all boards and commissions which applies merit-based principles of the Civil Service process.

## POLICY:

It is the policy of the Mayor to ensure that candidates brought forward for approval by the City Council are the citizens best qualified for appointment, without undue political influence in the selection process.

## PROCEDURE:

### 1. Responsibilities.

- A. Selection Panel. Each nomination cycle shall be carried out by a Selection Panel consisting of a Cedar Falls elected official, an appointed official, and a senior member of the city staff (see a 4 below for CFU exception).
  - 1). The Standing Committee Chair identified in Table 1 below (or their delegate) shall serve as the chair of the Selection Panel.
  - 2). The chair or president of the applicable board or commission shall also serve on the Selection Panel. If unable to serve, this person shall designate a delegate from that board to participate.
  - 3). The City Administrator shall either participate or delegate to a city staff member at the manager level or above.

Community Development Committee Chair	Finance and Business Operations Committee Chair	Public Works Committee Chair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Art &amp; Culture Board</li> <li>• Board of Rental Housing Appeals</li> <li>• Historic Preservation Commission</li> <li>• Housing Commission</li> <li>• Parks and Rec Commission</li> <li>• Visitors &amp; Tourism Board</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Adjustment</li> <li>• Civil Service Commission</li> <li>• Comm. &amp; Senior Svcs Board</li> <li>• Health Trust Fund Board</li> <li>• Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• Library Board of Trustees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Appeals</li> <li>• CFU Board of Trustees</li> <li>• Board of Electrical Appeals</li> <li>• Board of Mechanical Appeals</li> <li>• Board of Plumbing Appeals</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1: Councilor Assignments for Selection Panels**

- 4). Special Consideration for the Utilities Board of Trustees. The Selection Panel for the CFU Board will also include the CFU General Manager (or the GM’s delegate) as a voting member, for a total of four members.
- B. Staff Liaison. The Staff Liaison for each Board or Commission is designated in *CFD 1202: Directory of Boards and Commissions*. This staff member will assist the Selection Panel in carrying out the nominating process described in Section 3 below. This liaison shall provide subject matter expertise and recommendations to the Selection Panel as desired by the panel members, but shall not be a voting member unless meeting the

requirements in 1.A.3. above.

## 2. The nominating process.

- A. Submission of a General Application. Citizens interested in board or commission service shall e-mail a General Application (CFD 1203) to [boards@cedarfalls.com](mailto:boards@cedarfalls.com), or mail to City Hall (220 Clay Street, Cedar Falls, IA 50613), or hand-deliver to the City Hall main service window. Applications are welcome at any time, and will remain on file for five years.
- B. Completion of a Candidate Questionnaire. Upon the Mayor's notification that a vacancy will occur on a city Board or Commission, the Staff Liaison will send a board/commission Candidate Questionnaire to all persons with a valid General Application on file for that board or commission.
- C. Selection Panel Review of Candidates. The Selection Panel will review all returned Candidate Questionnaires (along with their corresponding General Applications) and interview at least three candidates. The Selection Panel Chair will then submit a rank-ordered list of three finalists to the Mayor via memo.
- D. Mayor's Appointment.
  - 1). The Mayor will review the Proposed Nominee, as a final suitability check.
  - 2). The Mayor will personally contact the first and second alternate, to advise them of their non-selection, but also to advise each that they will be appointed (in turn) to the next open vacancies if they occur within two years.
  - 3). Should the Mayor deem the Proposed Nominee unsuitable, then the Mayor will normally interview and nominate the First Alternate, or Second Alternate as necessary.
  - 4). The Mayor will provide the City Council with the appropriate appointment letter for Council consent at the next regular City Council Meeting.

## 3. General selection criteria. In addition to the specific requirements of each board or commission, Selection Panels shall endeavor to use the following criteria to evaluate the suitability of candidates:

- A. *Gender*. The candidate must contribute to gender balancing in that board or commission, where a nearly equal number of men and women are desired in accordance with state law. Exceptions are granted in cases where gender balance requirements cannot be met (See Iowa Code 69.16A).
- B. *Topical Knowledge*. The candidate should have a general appreciation of the topics under consideration by that board or commission, or the ability to gain and use such knowledge. Candidates should ideally have attended past meetings of the applicable board or commission, for demonstrated familiarity with the subject matter.

- C. *Absence of Pervasive Conflicts of Interest.* While a certain level of topical knowledge is important for board service, 'expert level' familiarity is not necessary. In some cases, such a keen knowledge may come at a high cost; expertise and connections may pervasively cause potential conflicts of interest and lead to the public appearance of 'the fox guarding the henhouse'. Such applicants should therefore be avoided to ensure public confidence in the city's decision-making processes.
  - D. *Demographic Diversity.* The candidate should help the board or commission to represent the demographics of the community, particularly historically marginalized voices.
  - E. *Diversity of Perspective.* The candidate should contribute to the board or commission's diversity of thought and personality, where a wide range of worldviews and philosophies are necessary for effective decision-making. Political activities and affiliations / memberships (particularly party memberships) will not disqualify a candidate from selection, and may in fact be valuable for promoting group diversity and discussion.
  - F. *Communication Skills.* The candidate should be able to appropriately express opinions, disagreement, and thoughtful questioning in a public setting. Dialogue surrounding a decision is as important as the decision itself; all board and commission members are expected to contribute to the deliberative process through open discussion.
  - G. *Understanding of Board Authority.* The candidate should appreciate that members act solely as a deliberative body, and that members have no power or authority outside the confines of that board meeting. A candidate should not approach board service with an 'axe to grind' or preconceived agenda, but should be an open-minded critical thinker, with strong teamwork skills for overall group success. The candidate should also appreciate that city boards and commissions use basic parliamentary procedure (Robert's Rules of Order) for effective decision-making.
  - H. *Demonstrated Character.* Given a member's status as a city official, the candidate should show strong character through high regard in the community and a demonstrated commitment to integrity, good judgment, professional excellence, and treatment of others with dignity and respect.
4. **Application to multiple boards and commissions.**
- A. Citizens are encouraged to apply for several boards and commissions; citizens may possess qualities and experiences which are relevant to a variety of boards.
  - B. Application to multiple boards shall not be construed as a lack of interest or commitment to a particular board, and therefore shall not be considered as a factor for appointment.
5. **Reappointment.**
- A. If a current member desires reappointment, the Staff Liaison will normally prepare a draft Reappointment Memo for the Mayor's signature (Enclosure 3), noting the member's attendance record and observed engagement level during board meetings.

- B. The Mayor shall normally reappoint existing board and commission members as a means to retain corporate knowledge and stability within the City government. Such reappointment is contingent on the member's satisfactory conduct as an appointed officer of the city.
- C. Interviews shall not be conducted for re-appointment of members to the same board.

**6. Twenty-Year Service Consideration.**

- A. Once a board member/commissioner has served on a single board for twenty continuous years, that member shall not normally be reappointed by the Mayor for an additional term, except in very unusual circumstances (particularly the lack of qualified applicants).
- B. A board member/commissioner finishing a term with more than twenty years of service shall normally be recognized with the city's Distinguished Service Award in an appropriate public ceremony.

**7. Close-interval appointment.**

- A. If an appointment is required within two years of the most recent appointment, the Mayor will normally interview and nominate the First Alternate and Second Alternate (in order) from the previous selection process (in compliance with gender balance requirements).
- B. The close-interval policy is intended to avoid duplicative work on the part of Selection Panels. Any candidates brought forward as First Alternate or Second Alternate by the Selection Panel must therefore be deemed fully qualified for service, in case a vacancy occurs within two years.

**8. Continuous process improvement.**

- A. The above process is intended to continually develop a diverse and experienced pool of citizen leaders for the long term decision-making needs of the City. Adjustments will continue to be made, as necessary, to ensure public confidence in the fairness and impartiality of this appointment process.
- B. Suggestions to the Mayor for continuous process improvement are highly encouraged.

**ADOPTED/AMENDED:** 8/9/21, 9/16/22, 08/22/23