



City of La Grange

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ETHICS COMMISSION

ANNUAL REVIEW REPORT

Reporting Period: 2025–2026

Overview

During the 2025–2026 reporting period, the City of La Grange Ethics Commission undertook a comprehensive review of the City’s ethics policies and financial disclosure requirements. The Commission’s work focused primarily on modernizing the City’s Code of Ethics, updating financial disclosure requirements for elected officials, reviewing submitted disclosure forms, and responding to a request for an ethical opinion.

The Commission’s efforts ultimately contributed to the adoption of a new Code of Ethics by the La Grange City Council in July 2026. The records provided document the Commission’s work beginning in February 2025 and continuing through the City Council’s final consideration of the updated ordinance.

Financial Disclosure Statements

One of the Commission’s primary areas of focus was the City’s financial disclosure process. At the February 18, 2025 meeting, the Commission reviewed previously submitted financial disclosure statements and found that some forms were missing employment information, business interests, or other required information. The Commission determined that the existing Statement of Financial Interest should be updated and that elected officials should be asked to complete new forms.

The Commission continued reviewing and revising the financial disclosure statement during its April 22 meeting. By May 20, 2025, the Commission had completed its review and approved the final draft of the new Financial Disclosure Form. The Commission also approved a memorandum to elected City officials requesting that completed forms be returned by June 15, 2025.

The memorandum explained that the previous financial statement, which had been in use for approximately 30 years, was updated using the Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission’s Statement of Financial Disclosure as a reference. Officials were instructed to answer every question or explain why a question did not apply, and incomplete forms would not be accepted.

At subsequent meetings, the Commission reviewed the completed forms and identified outstanding submissions and corrections. In June 2025, notices were prepared for officials who had not submitted completed forms. At the August 12 meeting, the Commission noted that one Council member had not submitted a form, updates were required from other Council members, and several members needed to identify the City of La Grange as a source of income.

Review and Update of the Code of Ethics

A significant undertaking during the reporting period was the comprehensive review of the City's Code of Ethics.

At the February 18, 2025 meeting, the Commission reviewed its duties and powers under the existing ordinance. The City Attorney advised that the Code of Ethics was approximately 30 years old and recommended that it be updated using the Kentucky League of Cities Model Code of Ethics as a reference.

During the March 18 meeting, the Commission reviewed and discussed the existing ordinance and the KLC model code and recommended moving forward with an updated Code of Ethics. The Commission continued reviewing and modifying the proposed ordinance during April and May 2025. On May 20, the Commission reviewed changes to the draft ordinance and approved the draft.

As of August 12, 2025, the proposed Code of Ethics had not yet been adopted by the City Council, and the Commission continued discussing its status.

The Commission's work ultimately resulted in an updated ordinance being presented to the City Council. The records provided show that on **July 6, 2026**, the City Council conducted the second reading and public hearing of **Ordinance No. 13, Series 2026**, repealing and replacing the Code of Ethics applicable to officials, officers, and employees of the City and City agencies. Following discussion and corrections to grammar and punctuation, the City Council approved the ordinance by a unanimous **8-0 vote**.

Request for Ethical Opinion

During the reporting period, the Commission also considered a citizen's request for an ethical opinion concerning whether a married couple could simultaneously serve on the City Council without violating conflict-of-interest or open-meetings requirements.

After reviewing the matter and requesting additional legal research from the City Attorney, the Commission concluded that the City's existing Code of Ethics did not contain an explicit prohibition against such service. Legal research provided to the Commission likewise concluded that service by a married couple on the City Council was not prohibited by a La Grange ordinance.

The Commission did, however, recognize potential concerns involving immediate family members serving together, including the possibility of an appearance of impropriety, conflicts of interest, or open-meeting concerns. The Commission recommended that the City Council consider legislation addressing family and business relationships within City government to maintain public confidence and reduce potential conflicts of interest.

Key Accomplishments

During the 2025–2026 reporting period, the Ethics Commission:

- Reviewed and modernized the City's financial disclosure requirements.
- Developed and approved an updated Financial Disclosure Form for elected officials.
- Established procedures and deadlines for completing and returning financial disclosure forms.
- Reviewed submitted disclosure forms and identified missing or incomplete information requiring follow-up.
- Conducted a comprehensive review of the City's approximately 30-year-old Code of Ethics.
- Used the Kentucky League of Cities Model Code of Ethics as a reference in developing proposed revisions.
- Reviewed and approved a proposed updated Code of Ethics for consideration by the City Council.
- Reviewed a citizen request for an ethical opinion and obtained legal research regarding the issue.
- Recommended that the City Council consider provisions addressing family and business relationships in City government.
- Saw the culmination of its Code of Ethics review with the City Council's unanimous adoption of Ordinance No. 13, Series 2026, on July 6, 2026.

Conclusion

The 2025–2026 reporting period represented a significant period of review and modernization for the City of La Grange's ethics program. Through its review of financial disclosure requirements, consideration of ethical questions, and extensive work on the City's Code of Ethics, the Commission sought to strengthen transparency, clarify ethical standards, and promote public confidence in City government.

The adoption of **Ordinance No. 13, Series 2026** marked an important conclusion to the Commission's review of the City's longstanding ethics ordinance and established an updated framework for officials, officers, employees, and City agencies moving forward.