

# **Ethics for New Municipal Attorneys**

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## **Discussion Question 1:**

A city council member visits your office to discuss the legal issues involved with a proposed new ordinance that will come before the council next week. The council member shares with you the reasons she opposes the proposal. Fifteen minutes after she leaves your office the mayor calls you and asks what you told the other council member and what she told you. How do you respond?

## **Discussion Question 2:**

A newly elected council member calls you to discuss the city manager. She knows that there was some conflict between the manager and the previous city council. She asks you to update her on conversations concerning the manager that you and the council had in closed session last year and demands to see the manager's most recent employment reviews provided by the council. How do you respond to the council person's request?

## **Discussion Question 3:**

A newly elected council member visits your office and asks if he can talk "privately" with you about a potential voting conflict involving the construction company he owns and the city. How do you respond? Assume that as you learn more about the issue, you become convinced that council member should not vote on several contracts about to come before the council. The council member disagrees and storms out of your office. What do you do next?

## **Discussion Question 4:**

City council asks your advice as to whether it can legally waive the interest that accrued on a large delinquent tax bill owed by Big Builder, Inc., the city's largest private employer. You advise the city that such a waiver would almost certainly violate state law. The city council ignores your advice and orders the tax collector not to collect the interest. Two weeks later a group of residential taxpayers who were denied similar waivers of interest on their bills sues the city over the Big Builder interest waiver. The city council instructs you to vigorously defend the lawsuit. What must or should you do?