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# ICMA Executive Board Approves Public Censures - June 2022

ICMA Executive Board issued three public censures during its June 11 meeting.

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During its meeting on June 11, 2022, the ICMA Executive Board voted to approve the following recommendations from the ICMA Committee on Professional Conduct for member conduct determined to have violated the Code of Ethics:

- **Patrick Davidson**, former city administrator, Gillette, Wyoming, was publicly censured for conduct that violated Tenets 2 and 3 of the Code. After Davidson had professionally moved on from Gillette, he emailed the Gillette governing body disclosing over three years of text messages between him and the then-mayor. Davidson's email specifically stated:



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“Recently I updated my phone and found the following files which may be of interest to you. It is a transcript of the various text messages between [the then-mayor] and me, for a period of time. I think you will find them insightful as they contain her unfiltered thoughts regarding members of the council and the public. You will find a variety of topics such as mocking Tim and his religious beliefs, implying that Shay lacks intelligence, that Billy is a follower that can be manipulated to meet her will, and other interesting beliefs and comments. While I have not reviewed the document, based on the time periods involved, it should be a good read... Of specific humor, there is likewise a photograph of the mayor during one of the Zoom Meetings. If you did not notice her ‘name’ in the caption is ‘mfm.’ I will leave you a little creativity to determine what that is, but the last word is mayor and demonstrates what she perceives as her role versus yours with the council.”

The board determined Davidson's tone and language in his email was highly unprofessional and targeted one governing body member, the mayor; and secondly, Davidson was selective in preserving and disclosing his text messages with the mayor as public records, which was inconsistent with how he managed text messages with other members of the governing body.

- **James Freed**, city manager, Port Huron, Michigan, was publicly censured and his credentialed manager designation was revoked for conduct that violated Tenet 3 of the Code.

Following the city's successful appeal of a state workplace safety violation, Freed directed a personal social media post to Michigan's Governor “@gewhitmer you shouldn't mess with a father who cares about the world his little girl grows up in.” When difficult and complex situations between local governments and state governments occur, a manager has an ethical responsibility outlined in Tenet 3 to ensure their conduct builds trust and respect with elected officials as well as the public. The board determined that Freed's post did not reflect the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity and was especially inappropriate for a credentialed manager.

Freed sent an email to city employees in November 2021 that included the statement, “Hear me now, I will never enforce a vac mandate upon my employees.” The board concluded (1) a member has an affirmative duty to follow the law as outlined in Tenet commitment to honesty and integrity; (2) a member may choose to resign from their position if they find they cannot implement a law

or policy because it conflicts with their personal or professional beliefs; and (3) a manager has a responsibility to ensure their conduct enhances public trust in their position, their organization, and the local government management profession. The board determined his preemptive declaration to city employees that he would never implement a specific law or policy was contrary to the principles in Tenet 3.

Finally, the board found Freed's commentary to a colleague on the state association listserv failed to adhere to his ethical obligation to treat colleagues with professional respect.

- **Dean Rodgers**, county administrator, Amherst County, Virginia, was publicly censured for conduct that violated Tenet 7. Rodgers voluntarily attended the 2020 national and Virginia Libertarian conventions and sought appointment to the Virginia Redistricting Commission, whose responsibility is to develop maps for Virginia's state legislative districts and districts for the U.S. House of Representatives. The board concluded Rodgers' conduct constituted political activity that undermines public confidence in the profession and the long-held standard of political neutrality.

Members are encouraged to read the [ICMA Code of Ethics and Guidelines](#). As a member benefit, ICMA provides confidential advice to any member who may be uncertain of his or her ethical obligation or who may need guidance to resolve an ethical dilemma. Contact Martha Perego, director of ICMA Member Services and Ethics, at [mperego@icma.org](mailto:mperego@icma.org) or 202-962-3668; or Jessica Cowles, ethics advisor, at [jcowles@icma.org](mailto:jcowles@icma.org) or 202-962-3513. Ethics advice, information, and the ICMA Code of Ethics are available [online](#).

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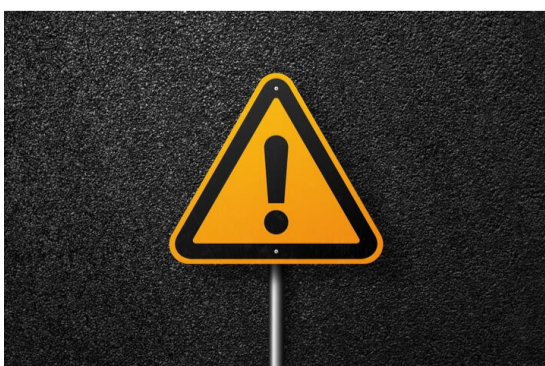
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