

CODE OF ETHICS
AND
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
FOR MEMBERS OF
THE GOOCHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

CODE OF ETHICS

Recognizing that persons who hold public office have been given a public trust and that the stewardship of such office demands the highest levels of ethical and moral conduct, any person serving on the Goochland County Board of Supervisors should adhere to the following Code of Ethics.

1. Uphold the Constitution, laws and regulations of the United States and of all governments therein and never knowingly be a party to their evasion.
2. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to the county as a whole above loyalty to individuals, district, or particular groups.
3. Give a full measure of effort and service to the position of trust for which stewardship has been granted; giving earnest effort and best thought to the performance of duties.
4. Seek to find and use the most equitable, efficient, effective, and economical means for getting tasks accomplished.
5. Adopt policies and programs that support the rights and recognize the needs of all citizens regardless of race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin or disability. Avoid adopting policies, supporting programs or engaging in activities that discriminate against or offend individuals because of race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin or disability.
6. Ensure the integrity of the actions of the Board of Supervisors by avoiding discrimination through the dispensing of special favors or unfair privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not. A member should never accept for himself or herself or for family members, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of governmental duties.
7. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties or any office, since a public servant has no private word which can be binding on public duty.
8. Engage in no business with the county government, or the school system, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of government duties except as may be consistent with the conflict of interest statutes in the Code of Virginia.
9. Never use any information gained confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit.
10. Expose through appropriate means and channels, corruption, misconduct, or neglect of duty whenever discovered.

11. Adhere to the principle that the public's business should be conducted in the public view by observing and following the letter and spirit of the Freedom of Information Act using closed meetings only to deal with sensitive personnel, legal matters, contractual matters or as otherwise provided by the Code of Virginia.
12. Avoid using the position of public trust to gain access to the media for the purposes of criticizing colleagues, citizens or personnel, impugning their integrity or vilifying their personal beliefs.
13. Make sure, when responding to the media, that a clear distinction is made between personal opinion or belief and a decision made by the Board.
14. If requested by any member of the Board of Supervisors, review orally and in public session at the annual organizational meeting each of these principles.
15. Pledge to honor and uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Recognizing that persons holding a position of public trust are under constant observation by the media and interested county residents, and recognizing that maintaining the integrity and dignity of the public office is essential for maintaining high levels of public confidence in our institutions of government, every member of the Goochland County Board of Supervisors should adhere to the following Standards of Conduct:

1. Avoid during public meetings and during the performance of public duties the use of abusive, threatening or intimidating language or gestures directed at colleagues, citizens, or personnel.
2. Pay all taxes due to the county, state, or national government.
3. Attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Board or committees to which he or she has been assigned, resigning whenever personal circumstances preclude regular attendance.
4. Avoid a private lifestyle that casts public doubt upon the integrity and competence of the county government.
5. Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
6. Offer criticism of colleagues or county employees only in private meetings with appropriate individuals or in closed meeting.
7. Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
8. Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all colleagues and staff during all discussions and deliberations.

9. Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views.
10. Be respectful and attentive. Avoid comments, body language or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect for the presentations from citizens, personnel or colleagues.
11. Be concise. Avoid the practice of taking more time to address an issue before the body than is necessary and essential for an adequate consideration of those matters being discussed.
12. Provide appropriate mechanisms for disciplining members who violate the code of ethics and standards of conduct by using, as a final measure of discipline, censure or removal from the position.
13. Policy Role of Members; Requests for Staff Assistance: The Board of Supervisors, acting as a public body, determines the policies of the County with the advice, information, and analysis provided by the public, boards, commissions, and committees, and County staff. The Board of Supervisors delegates authority for the administration of the County to the County Administrator.

Members, therefore, shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the County or the professional duties of County staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Board policy decisions. Inquiries of staff for information, and referral of citizen complaints and concerns shall be made through the County Administrator or the appropriate department manager or director, who shall inform the County Administrator. Any instructions or directions to staff including department heads shall come from the County Administrator.

Requests by Board members for assistance by administrative staff members, including department heads, in projects requiring more than an insignificant amount of time shall be directed to the County Administrator. Such requests may include, but are not limited to, requests for research, the compilation of information, the preparation of ordinances, resolutions or policies to be presented to the Board of Supervisors, attendance or presentation at meetings other than Board meetings, preparation of documents, etc. It shall be the responsibility of the County Administrator to assure that the project is consistent with Board policy, referred to the appropriate department or departments, consistent with the administrative staff's work priorities and schedules, and performed in an adequate and timely manner.

All requests for legal assistance in legal matters shall be directed to the County Attorney.

If the County Administrator or County Attorney feel that a request for assistance cannot reasonably be accommodated within existing policy and consistent with the existing work load and priorities, the individual Board member shall be so advised and, if necessary, the matter shall be placed on the next available Board agenda for further guidance.

14. Positive Work Place Environment: Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive workplace environment for County employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the County. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with County employees and in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

Code of Ethics/Standards of Conduct
Adopted March 7, 2000 by the BOS
Amended January 6, 2009 by the BOS