

January 2021

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 Virginia 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, districts, or particular groups.
3. Give a full measure of effort and service to the position of trust for which stewardship has been granted; give 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 Goochland County citizens and avoid adopting policies or engaging in activities that discriminate against Goochland County citizens because of race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We do not tolerate discrimination based on race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
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, any gifts, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of governmental duties. In addition, each member shall comply with all applicable provisions of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, including those provisions that regulate the solicitation and acceptance of gifts, money or other things of value for services performed within the scope of the member's official duties.
7. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of 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 interests statutes in the Virginia Code.

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. In responding to questions, from the media or citizens, Board members should remind the listener that they are not speaking for the entire Board, clarify their position on a particular item, and make "no public comment" on closed meeting matters in reference to individuals, real estate, and other areas addressed pursuant to Virginia Code Sec. 2.2-3711.
2. Remember that personnel matters are to remain confidential and that it is the obligation of the Board and its membership to protect the privacy of the individual.
3. Focus on issues and avoid making public comments about individuals, staff members, fellow Board members, community residents or media representatives.
4. Ensure that e-mails on matters of public business before the Board which are sent to more than one member shall be sent to all other Board members.
5. 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.

6. Pay all taxes due to the county, state, or national government.
7. 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.
8. Avoid a private lifestyle that casts public doubt upon the integrity and competence of the county government.
9. Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
10. Offer criticism of colleagues or county employees only in private meetings with appropriate individuals or in closed meeting.
11. Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
12. Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all colleagues and staff during all discussions and deliberations.
13. Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views.
14. 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.
15. 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.

If a Goochland County resident makes a complaint that a Board member has violated the Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Conduct, then the following procedure shall be followed:

- A. The Clerk shall forward the complaint to all Board members and the County Attorney.
- B. The County Attorney shall review the complaint and determine if it is a valid complaint; a valid complaint is one from a resident which alleges conduct that may constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct.
- C. The County Attorney will report his/her determination and the grounds therefor to the Board. If the County Attorney determines that it is not a valid complaint, then the County Attorney will notify the complainant and no further action will be taken.
- D. The accused member shall then be given a reasonable period of time to respond in writing to the allegations, and his/her response shall be forwarded to all Board members.
- E. The Board and the County Administrator and/or County Attorney, if needed, may meet to discuss the allegations and the member's response.
- F. At a public meeting, the Chair shall poll each member, except the alleged violator, regarding whether a violation occurred. If a majority of the Board members find that a violation has occurred, then the Board, by motion, shall take appropriate action with respect to that violation.
- G. The Chair shall direct the County Administrator to draft a response to inform the

complainant of the Board's disposition.

If the Chair is the alleged violator, the Vice-Chair shall carry out the Chair's duties, as outlined above.

Adopted	March 7, 2000
Amended	January 6, 2009
Amended	January 13, 2009
Amended	January 5, 2010
Amended	January 4, 2011
Amended	January 3, 2012
Adopted	January 2, 2013
Adopted	January 7, 2014
Adopted	January 6, 2015
Adopted	January 5, 2016
Adopted	January 3, 2017
Amended	January 3, 2018
Amended	January 2, 2019
Adopted	January 7, 2020
Adopted	January 5, 2021