

CODE OF ETHICS AND
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT
FOR GOOCHLAND COUNTY APPOINTEES

CODE OF ETHICS

Persons who are appointed by the Goochland County Board of Supervisors or the County Administrator to serve on boards, committees, commissions, authorities, or similar groups are being appointed to represent the county and its citizens and have been given a public trust that requires a high level of ethical and moral conduct. Accordingly, any appointee should adhere to the following Code of Ethics:

1. Uphold the Constitution, laws and regulations of the United States and of Virginia and never knowingly be a party to their evasion.
2. Act in the best interest of the county and its residents.
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 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 entity to which you are appointed by avoiding discrimination through the dispensing of special favors or unfair privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not. An appointee 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 appointee 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 your 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 Virginia Code.
12. Avoid using your 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 entity with which you serve.
14. If requested by any board of supervisors' member, 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 person appointed by the Goochland County Board of Supervisors or County Administrator to a board, committee, commission, or similar group should adhere to the following Standards of Conduct:

1. In responding to questions, from the media or citizens, appointees should remind the listener that they are not speaking for their entity, 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 Section 2.2-3711.
2. Remember that personnel matters are to remain confidential and that it is the appointee's obligation to protect the privacy of the individual.
3. Focus on issues and avoid making public comments about individuals, staff members, fellow appointees, community residents or media representatives.
4. Ensure that e-mails on matters of public business which are sent to more than one member of an entity shall be sent to all other 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 entity to which you have been assigned, resigning whenever personal circumstances preclude regular attendance.
8. Avoid a private lifestyle that casts public doubt upon the integrity and competence of 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.
16. Complaints. If a Goochland County resident believes an appointee has violated the Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Conduct, he/she should report it to the board of supervisors and county administrator.

Adopted by the Goochland County Board of Supervisors: January 5, 2021

Adopted January 19, 2022

Adopted January 3, 2023