

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

*Adopted January 10, 2017*

**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 Cumberland County Board of Supervisors will adhere to the following Code of Ethics.

- 1.) Uphold the Constitution, laws and regulations of the United States and all governments therein and never knowingly be a part of 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.
- 6.) 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
- 7.) Ensure the integrity of the actions of the Board of Supervisors by avoiding discrimination through the dispensing of special favors or unfair privileges, to any one whether for remuneration or not. A member should never accept for himself or family members, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by

reasonable persons as influencing the performance of governmental duties.

- 8.) 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 a public duty.
- 9.) 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.
- 10.) Never use any information gained in confidentiality in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit.
- 11.) Expose through appropriate means and channels, corruption, misconduct, or neglect of duty whenever discovered.
- 12.) 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 sessions only to deal with the sensitive personnel, legal matters, contractual matters by the Code of Virginia.
- 13.) 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.
- 14.) 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.
- 15.) Review these principles orally and in public session at the annual organizational meeting each year.
- 16.) 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 current and future member of the Board of Supervisors will 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.) Avoid a private lifestyle that causes public doubt upon the integrity and competence of the County Government.
- 4.) Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
- 5.) Recognizing the dignity of each individual, the Board shall attempt to avoid offering public criticism of colleagues or County employees.
- 6.) Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
- 7.) Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all colleagues and staff during all discussions and deliberations.
- 8.) Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees or colleague's sufficient opportunity to present their views.
- 9.) 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.
- 10.) 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.

- 11.) 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.
- 12.) Board members will follow the procedure of communicating directly with the County Administrator and/or the Chairman of the Board on all County matters.

### **CITIZENS AND MEDIA CONTACTS**

- 1.) In responding to questions, from the media or citizens, Board members should:
  - a.) Remind the listener that they are not speaking for the entire Board;
  - b.) Clarify their position on a particular item;
  - c.) Make “no public comment” on closed session matters in reference to individuals, real estate, and other areas addressed pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia.
- 2.) Each Board member must 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.) The Board will focus on issues and avoid making public comments about individuals, staff members, fellow Board members, community residents or media representatives. The Board Chairman should be the main contact for County matters. When requested to do any interview, the Board member asked, should contact the Chairman and the County Administrator to tell them of the nature of the interview. In turn, they will tell the other Board members of the circumstances of the interview. This procedure does not preclude any member from responding to individual questions from the media.