

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
FINANCE/GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
ACTION ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** **Proposed Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct**

**CRITICAL ACTION DATE:** **January 12, 2016**

**STAFF CONTACTS:** Leo Rogers, County Attorney

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**Recommendation: Board:** At their January 6, 2016 Business Meeting, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously (9-0) to forward the proposed Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct policy as part of their inaugural Organizational Matters item to their January 12, 2016 Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee (FGOEDC) Meeting for further deliberations and potential recommendation to the Board.

**BACKGROUND:** As part of their January 6, 2016 Business Meeting, the first item under consideration as part of the Board's Organizational Matters was a Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

Attachment 1 to this item is the "Code of Ethics" and "Standards of Conduct," as presented at the January 6<sup>th</sup> Board Business meeting. This proposal was designed to guide the actions and decision making of the Board members. These documents would apply to the members of the Board of Supervisors, if approved.

Attachment 2 to this item is a "Statement of Ethics: 2016-2020 Board of Supervisors," as proposed by Supervisor Letourneau. This proposal serves as an alternative to what is under consideration as seen in Attachment 1. This proposal was also designed to serve as guide to the actions and decision making of the Board members. This document would apply to members of the Board of Supervisors, if approved.

**ALTERNATIVES**

The FGOEDC may recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the version of the Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Conduct that is found in Attachment 1 to this item, or the alternative that is offered in Attachment 2. The FGOEDC may also recommend that the Board include either the version that is Attachment 1, or the alternative found in Attachment 2 as freestanding policies, or as part of the Board's Adopted Rules of Order. Furthermore, the FGOEDC may also recommend amendments to the Board of Supervisors to either most acceptable version for approval, or offer a complete substitute version

altogether. Finally, the FGOEDC may decide to make no recommendation, or not recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve a Code of Ethics and/or Standards of Conduct at this time.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact with Board of Supervisors approval of either competing versions of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct.

### **DRAFT MOTIONS:**

1. I move that the Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as provided in Attachment 1.

OR

2. I move that the Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the Statement of Ethics: 2016-2020 Board of Supervisors as provided in Attachment 2.

OR

3. I move an alternate motion.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct (January 6, 2016 Version)
2. Proposed Statement of Ethics for the Board of Supervisors: 2016-2020 (Letourneau Version)

January 6, 2016



**Code of Ethics**  
**Board of Supervisors**  
**Loudoun County, Virginia**

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 Loudoun 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 citizens of Loudoun County, as a whole, above loyalty to individuals, or particular groups.
3. Give a full measure of effort and service to the positions 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 are in accordance with the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, and that support the rights and recognize the needs of all citizens regardless of race, sex, age, religion, creed, country of origin or handicapping conditions.
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 of any office, since a public servant has no private word which can be binding on public duty.
8. Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. A member should disclose any interest in a transaction which might be reasonably interpreted as questionable or borderline conflicts of interest, and which might be perceived as rendering direct personal gain for himself/herself or for family members. If a Board member desires to vote on a questionable issue, he/she should seek the opinion of the County Attorney.

January 6, 2016

9. Engage in no business with Loudoun County government or school system, which is inconsistent with the State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act or the Public Procurement Act.
  10. Never use any information gained confidentially 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 when 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.
  13. Recognize that interaction with the media is a vital link in maintaining good communication with the public. Board member comments to the media should be in a courteous, statesmanlike manner and should maintain the propriety of the Board when speaking to public issues, or to opinions of colleagues and citizens.
  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 of Supervisors.
  15. Review orally and in public session at the annual organizational meeting each of these principles.
  16. Pledge to honor and uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.
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Phyllis J. Randall, Chairman

Tony R. Buffington, Jr. Blue Ridge District

Ralph M. Buona, Ashburn District

Koran T. Saines, Sterling District

Suzanne M. Volpe, Algonkian District

Kristen C. Umstattd, Leesburg District

Matt F. Letourneau, Dulles District

Ron A. Meyer, Jr. Broad Run District

Geary M. Higgins, Catoclin District

January 6, 2016



## Standards of Conduct

### Board of Supervisors

### Loudoun County, Virginia

Recognizing that persons holding a position of public trust are under constant observation by the media and interested Loudoun 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 Loudoun County Board of Supervisors should adhere to the following Standards of Conduct.

1. Be open minded and patient. Avoid, during either public or private 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 of Supervisors and Committees to which he or she has been assigned, resigning whenever personal circumstances preclude regular attendance.
4. Conduct your personal and professional life in a manner which reflects positively on the Board of Supervisors and Loudoun County. ~~Avoid a private lifestyle that casts doubt upon the integrity and competence of the Loudoun County government.~~
5. Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
6. Offer constructive criticism of Loudoun County employees only in private meetings with appropriate individuals or in executive session.
7. Respect the rights of colleagues to have different opinions. Enter into constructive and factual discussions when attempting to resolve issues or reach a consensus, refraining from disparaging remarks.
8. Work to create a positive environment in public and private meetings, so that the environment is conducive to a productive dialogue between all parties and citizens will feel comfortable as observers or participants.
9. Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all citizens, colleagues and staff during all discussions and deliberations.
10. ~~Be open minded and patient. Allow all citizens, employees, or colleagues, sufficient opportunity to present their views.~~
11. 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.

121. ~~Be concise.~~ Recognizing that lengthy statements are occasionally needed to convey the passion and gravity of a Board member's opinion, Board members should refrain from the consistent 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.

13. ~~No money for speaking engagements. No exceptions.~~

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Phyllis J. Randall, Chairman

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Tony R. Buffington, Jr. Blue Ridge District

Ralph M. Buona, Ashburn District

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Koran T. Saines, Sterling District

Suzanne M. Volpe, Algonkian District

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Kristen C. Umstatter, Leesburg District

Matt F. Letourneau, Dulles District

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Ron A. Meyer, Jr. Broad Run District

Geary M. Higgins, Catocin District

## ATTACHMENT 2

### **Statement of Ethics** 2016-2020 Board of Supervisors

#### **As a Body, we pledge to:**

- Place the best interests of Loudoun County and its residents above all others;
- Treat all of our citizens with professionalism and respect;
- Be good stewards of tax dollars, and ensure that funds are spent appropriately and for the public good;
- Be transparent to the greatest extent possible with our deliberations and decisions;
- Follow all applicable local, state and federal laws;

#### **As Individuals, we pledge to:**

- Treat each other and our constituents with respect and courtesy;
- Ensure compliance with the Board's guidelines for our own aides, and use our individual office budgets and personnel for appropriate County business;
- Grant no special favors or privileges to any individual or entity based on outside influences such as political donations or personal relationships.