

Council Policy 2021-003

Subject: Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials and Members of Appointed Boards, Commissions, and Committees

BACKGROUND: The citizens and businesses of the Village of Ontonagon are entitled to fair, ethical, and accountable local government which has earned the public's confidence for integrity. Public officials are expected to be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions. Public office is to be used for the public good and public deliberations and processes must be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

PURPOSE: To establish procedures by which public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws, codes, and policies affecting the operations of the Village of Ontonagon.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Village of Ontonagon that elected officials and members of appointed boards, commissions, and committees comply with this Code of Ethics and Conduct to ensure the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

Therefore, elected officials and members of appointed boards, commissions, and committees shall:

- 1. Act in the Public Interest** Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people of the Village of Ontonagon and not for any private or personal interest.
- 2. Comply with the Law** Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the State of Michigan, and the ordinances of the Village of Ontonagon in the performance of their public duties.
- 3. Conduct of Members** Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, boards, commissions, and committees, or the staff.
- 4. Respect for Process** Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the Village Council .
- 5. Conduct of Public Meetings** Members shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand.

6. Decisions Based on Merit Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand.

7. Conflict of Interest In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decision in which they have a material financial interest or personal relationship which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. The General Law Village Act will govern on questions of abstaining.

8. Gifts and Favors In relation to the acceptance and reporting of gifts, members shall comply with the requirements of PA 196 (1973) Section 15.342, Item 4; in which "a public official or employee shall not solicit or accept a gift or loan of money, goods, services, or other thing of value for the benefit of a person or organization which tends to influence the manner in which the public official or employee or another public official or employee performs official duties."

9. Confidential Information Members shall respect the confidentiality of information which is deemed confidential by the Open Meeting Act or the Freedom of Information Act, not use such confidential information to advance their personal interests.

10. Use of Public Resources Members shall not use public resources unavailable to the public in general, such as City staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.

11. Representation of Private Interests In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Council or any board, commission, committee, or proceeding of the Village, nor shall members of boards, commissions, and committees appear before their own bodies or before the Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies.

12. Advocacy Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the Village Council, board, commission, or committee to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent the Village of Ontonagon.

13. Policy Role of Members Members shall respect and adhere to the council-manager structure of Ontonagon village government as outlined in the General Law Village Act and defined by the Michigan Municipal League with respect to the Village Manager's relationship with the Village Council. In this structure, the Village Council determines the policies of the Village with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards, commissions, and committees as well as Village staff.

14. Independence of Boards, Commissions, and Committees Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, commissions, and committees to the public

decision-making process, members of Council shall refrain from using their position to influence unduly the deliberations or outcomes of board, commission, and committee proceedings.

15. Positive Work Place Environment Council members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for Village employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the Village. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with Village employees and refrain from creating the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

16. Implementation As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the Village, the Code of Ethics and Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing. Therefore, it becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientations for new members to boards, commissions, and committees and newly elected and appointed officials. The Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be reviewed annually, or sooner, by the Village Council, boards, commissions, and committees.

17. Compliance and Enforcement The Village of Ontonagon Code of Ethics and Conduct expresses standards of ethical conduct expected for members of the Ontonagon Village Council, boards, commissions, and committees. Members have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met. Violations of this Code of Ethics and Conduct will be referred, in writing, to the Personnel Committee of the Village Council.