

HIGHLAND COUNTY CODE OF ETHICS

The citizens and businesses of Highland County, Virginia are entitled to have fair, ethical, moral, and accountable local government. The effective functioning of democratic government requires that public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government; that public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions; that public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and that public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

The Highland County Board of Supervisors has adopted this Code of Ethics for its members:

1. Act in the Public Interest – Everyone will work for the common good of the people of Highland County and will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the Board of Supervisors.
2. Comply with the Law – Endeavor to comply with all federal, state and local laws.
3. Conduct of Members – The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks on the character or motives of other members, other boards, commissions, committees, the staff, and the public.
4. Respect for Process – Members shall show respect for the processes of governing and the meaningful involvement of the public.
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. They shall refrain from interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.
6. Decisions Based on Merit – All decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand shall be based on applicable laws and ordinances.
7. Comply with the Virginia Conflict of Interest Laws.
8. Gifts or favors – Grant no special favors or privileges to any individual or entity based on any outside influence, personal relationship, or a member's membership in a volunteer agency.
9. Confidentiality – Members should never use any information gained confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means of making private profit for oneself, one's family, staff, close family relation, any business in which a Board member has a personal financial interest, or furthering any other private interests.

10. Use of County Resources – Members should use county resources and county staff only to conduct county business.
11. Representation of Private Interests – Members of the Board shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Board of Supervisors.
12. Advocacy – Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the Board of Supervisors to be 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 their body or Highland County, nor will they allow the inference that they do.
13. Positive Work Place Environment – Treat the public, staff and each other with professionalism, courtesy and respect. Respect all opinions and maintain a professional atmosphere in both public and private meetings.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2025.

THE HIGHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Henry A. Budzinski, Jr.

Harry B. Sponaugle

Paul S. Tribble