

**ADOPTION OF CODE OF ETHICS**  
**FOR NEW KENT COUNTY**

The Code of Ethics is hereby adopted for execution by each elected or appointed member of any public body representing New Kent County, including, but not limited to, the Board of Supervisors, the School Board, the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals, the Economic Development Authority, and all other County boards, commissions, authorities, and committees.

Mission: In cooperation with and for our citizens, the elected and appointed officials of the County are dedicated to providing public safety, open space preservation, economic opportunity, and quality public services in an attractive, well-planned community for the benefit, enjoyment and accessibility of all.

Values: To achieve our mission, the elected and appointed officials strive to provide high level services in a cost-effective manner; display honesty, respectfulness, and fairness in all relationships; support the health and economic well-being of our citizens and businesses; be fully transparent about all issues that affect the public; and address public concerns and opportunities promptly and effectively.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **Preamble**

The citizens and businesses of New Kent County are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government, which has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. In keeping with our Commitment to Excellence, the effective functioning of democratic government therefore requires that public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of New Kent County 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.

To this end, the Board of Supervisors has adopted this Code of Ethics for members of the Board of Supervisors and the County's boards, commissions, authorities, and committees to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

### **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 New Kent County and not for any private or personal interest; they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the Board of Supervisors, and the County's boards, commissions, authorities, and committees.

### **2. Comply with the Law**

Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the ordinances of New Kent County in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and Virginia constitutions; the County Code; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government.

### **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 unjustified accusations upon the character or motives of other members of the Board of Supervisors or the County's boards, commissions, authorities, and committees, the staff or public.

#### 4. Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the Board of Supervisors and the County's boards, commissions, authorities, and committees governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the Board by County staff.

#### 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 interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.

#### 6. Decisions Based on Merit

Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand, rather than on unrelated considerations.

#### 7. Communication

Members shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Board of Supervisors or the County's boards, commissions, authorities, and committees which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process. Any substantive information which is available to a member about a legislative issue shall be made available to all members, as well as the general public.

#### 8. Conflicts of Interest

In order to assure their independence and impartiality, members of the Board of Supervisors and the County's boards, commissions, authorities, and committees shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have (or may potentially have) a personal interest, or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship that gives rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In accordance with this principle, members shall disclose all investments, interests in real property (including options), and sources of income which accrue to either themselves, a household member or an affiliated entity, when those economic and personal interests are relevant to a legislative issue. Members shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where such conflicts exist.

## 9. Gifts and Favors

Members shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office, which are not available to the public in general. Members shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

## 10. Transparency

Members recognize that transparency and openness are the hallmarks of democratic government. In light of that fact, the County shall adopt a policy which specifically discourages the use of legal instruments, like Non-Disclosure Agreements, which prevent citizens from learning about the impacts and effects of potential economic projects.

## 11. Use of Public Resources

Members shall not use public resources or information that is not available to the public, such as County staff time, equipment, supplies or confidential information, for private gain or for personal purposes unrelated to County business.

## 12. Representation of Private Interests

In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of the Board shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before their Board or any board, commission, authority, committee or proceeding of the County, nor shall members of boards, commissions, authorities, or committees appear before their own bodies on behalf of the private interests of third parties.

## 13. Advocacy

Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the Board of Supervisors and the County's boards, commissions, authorities, or committees 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 their body or New Kent County, nor will they allow the inference that they do.

## 14. Policy Role of Members

The Board of Supervisors determines the policies of the County with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards, commissions, authorities, and committees, and County staff. The Board delegates its administrative authority to the County Administrator.

Members shall not interfere with the administrative functions or the professional duties of County staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement policy decisions.

## 15. Independence of Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Committees

Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, commissions, authorities, and committees to the public decision-making process, members of the Board of Supervisors shall refrain from using their positions to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board, commission, authority, or committee proceedings.

## 16. Workplace Environment

Members shall support the maintenance of a safe and positive workplace environment for County employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the County. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with County employees and in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

## 17. Implementation

As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the citizens of the County, this Code of Ethics is intended to be self-enforcing.

Along with applicable state law, this Code of Ethics shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for the Board of Supervisors, applicants to boards, commissions, authorities, and committees and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they have read and understood the Code of Ethics. In addition, members of boards, commissions, authorities, and committees shall annually review the Code of Ethics. The Board of Supervisors may consider updates as necessary.

## 18. Compliance and Enforcement

The Code of Ethics expresses standards of ethical conduct expected of members of the Board of Supervisors, as well as related boards, commissions, authorities, and committees. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government.

The chairs of boards, commissions, authorities, and committees and the Chair of the Board of Supervisors may have the additional responsibility to intervene when actions of members that appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethics are brought to their attention.

The Board of Supervisors may impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with the County's ethical standards, such as reprimand, formal censure, loss of seniority or committee assignment, or budget restriction. Where allowed by law, the Board of Supervisors also may remove members of appointed boards, commissions, authorities, and committees from office.

A violation of this Code of Ethics shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Board of Supervisors, board, commission, authority, or committee decision.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT UPDATED MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND FOR THE MEMBERS OF ALL APPOINTED BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND COMMITTEES**

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has determined that the adoption of a Mission and Values Statements and Code of Ethics for its members and the members of all County-appointed boards, commissions, authorities, and committees will assist in achieving these ends; and

WHEREAS, the citizens and businesses of New Kent County are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government which has earned the public's full confidence; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with the County's commitment to excellence, all public officials, both elected and appointed, must comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operation of New Kent County government; and

WHEREAS, all public officials, both elected and appointed, are required to be impartial and fair in their judgment and actions and ensure that public office is used for the public good; and; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the New Kent County Board of Supervisors this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, that the following Mission and Value Statements and Code of Ethics are hereby adopted: