

I. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Approval

The policies included in this manual were approved as the official Policy & Procedures Manual of Crystal Lake Township on , 20~~1~~~~9~~. All township officials and personnel are bound by these policies, and any deviation from established policy is prohibited.

This manual shall provide for the efficient and uniform application of policies and procedures in Crystal Lake Township, especially where they have not been provided for by law. Adoption of these policies and procedures supersede any previously township adopted policies and shall not contradict State or Federal statutes.

1.2 Definitions

“At-Will Employee” means, in Michigan, absent a contract, both the employer and the employee are free to terminate the employment at any given time and for any legitimate purpose. when an express oral or written contract is absent.

“Board Member” is used to refer to the supervisor, the clerk, the treasurer, or a trustee.

“Elected Official” is used for anyone the township electorate voted into office, or a duly appointed placeholder for that official until which time that appointee is elected.

~~“Officer” is used to refer to a board member who is a supervisor, a clerk or a treasurer.~~

“Staff” is used only when it is inclusive of all who contribute work for or at the township: elected officials, appointees, **statutory and** non-statutory committee members, employees, contractual workers, and volunteers.

1.3 Compliance and Enforcement

When a township board member or other elective or appointive official questions the applicability of a provision of any policy **or** procedure to a particular situation, they may apply to the board for a decision. The board member or other elective or appointive official will have the opportunity to present his or her interpretation of the facts at issue and the applicable provisions of the policy **or** procedure before such advisory decision is made. The board may consult with MTA, legal counsel and other sources of guidance, and then modify policy/procedure in light of fact presented.

Violations of township policy/procedure, including its ethical code of conduct, by a board member or other elective or appointive official, may be subject to actions including but not limited to internal reprimand, formal board censure, loss of a non-statutory committee assignment and/or remuneration thereof, or budget restriction where such restriction is not prohibited by statute.

Violations of township policy **or** procedure by appointive positions, statutory or non-statutory committee members, employees and volunteers, may be considered by the township board for just cause for removal from that position, where removal is authorized by law.

Other actions taken by the board, for any staff member who violates township policy/procedure and where provided by law, may include the following depending on the severity of the violation,

the number and frequency of violations, and the degree of adverse impact to the township or to the public:

- Coaching
- Verbal warning, accompanied by a written memo for the file
- Written reprimand
- Suspension without pay
- Termination of employment or termination of the position

1.4 General Law Township Structure

Crystal Lake Township government legally exists primarily to perform three overarching mandated functions and each is respectively assigned to a separate **board member officer**: the Supervisor, assessment administration; the Treasurer, tax collection; and the Clerk, elections administration.

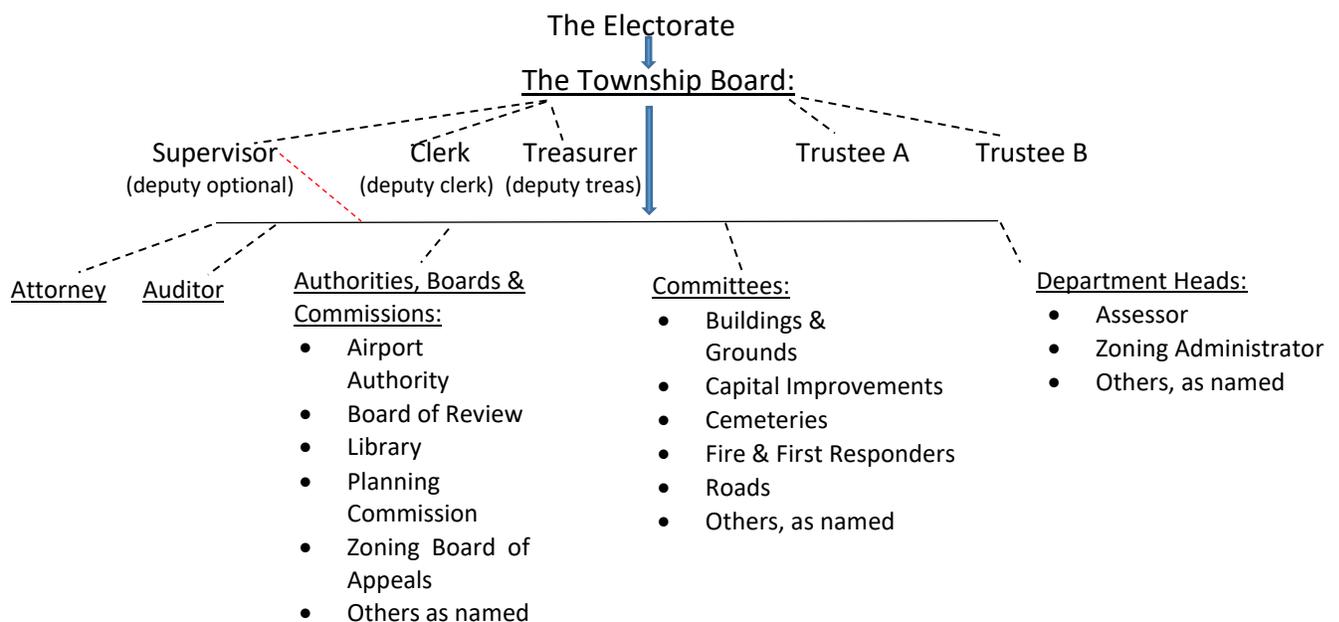
There are other, more narrow mandates which are also regulated by the state: financial administration including budgets, accounting, investment, and deposits; also, the proper storage/conveyance of township records, and the proper conduct of township government business.

Townships are legally allowed to offer additional services and programs not mandated by the state but instead permitted by enabling legislation, referred to as “permissive activities.” Crystal Lake Township offers the following but is not limited to fire protection & first responders, cemeteries, an airport authority, planning & zoning, road maintenance and library services.

Historically, if a specific statute cannot be found that explicitly states or fairly implies that a particular task is a particular office’s responsibility, it is assumed that the duty falls on the Board collectively or can be assigned to a specific Board member, **or outsourced to an appropriate party with board approval.**

1.5 Organizational Chart for Our General Law Township

Township Law (recodified), R.S. of 1846 MCL 41.1, et seq.:



1.6 Mission Statement

Crystal Lake Township is the servant to the people it represents, and answers to its constituents, to the laws of the State of Michigan and the United States of America. Crystal Lake Township will strive in an exemplary manner to provide good governance for the people, and stewardship of the land.

1.7 Principles of Excellence

To maintain the high standards and traditions of Michigan townships, the Crystal Lake Township Board adopts the following dynamic principles of governance excellence to guide stewardship, deliberations, constituent services and commitment to safeguard our community's health, safety and general welfare. The board pledges to

- insist on the highest standards of ethical conduct by all who act on behalf of this township;
- bring credit, honor and dignity to our public offices through collegial board deliberations and through diligent, appropriate responses to constituent concerns;
- practice openness and transparency in our decisions and actions;
- actively pursue education and knowledge, and to embrace best practices;
- treat all persons with dignity, respect and impartiality; without prejudice of discrimination;
- cooperate in all reasonable ways with other government entities and to consider the impact our decisions may have outside our township's borders;
- communicate to the public township issues, challenges and successes, and welcome the active involvement of stakeholders to further the township's wellbeing;
- comply with state and federal statutory requirements;
- refuse to participate in any decisions and activities for personal gain, or at the expense of the best interests of the township;
- further the understanding of the obligations and responsibilities of American citizenship with a democratic government.

2. Township Board & Business

2.1 Board Authority

The township board is empowered by the Michigan Constitution and state laws to govern Crystal Lake Township. The township board has the exclusive authority, subject to applicable laws, to determine the scope, quality and quantity of township ordinances, programs and services; to establish parameters and expectations of employee performance and conduct; to establish its own style of governance; and to require information from township personnel necessary and convenient to monitor township operations and compliance with board policies and directives.

The township board may authorize appointed officials and employees to take such actions and make decisions that are consistent with applicable federal and state laws, local ordinances, and township board ordinances and policies.

2.2 Authority Exercised by the Board

The township board shall act only at a meeting held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act (MCL Act 267 of 1976).

Township board authority shall be exercised only through official board decisions recorded as votes taken, directives given, or consensus established by the township board at a township board meeting. No individual, committee or organization shall represent its authority or action in a matter as that of the township board unless the township board has directed the individual, committee or organization to act on the township board's behalf in that matter.

2.3 Allocation of Resources

The township board shall allocate township resources through the annual adoption of the township budget and periodic budget amendments per the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act of 1968. The board shall authorize the resources necessary to fulfill the township's mission as required by law and defined in the goals identified **by the Board** in the township strategic plan, **if applicable**.

2.4 Responsibilities of Board Members

Township board members shall

- keep current on issues affecting the township;
- attend all board meetings unless there is a conflict or unforeseen emergency;
- vote upon all questions unless there is a conflict of interest;
- encourage the free expression of opinion;
- assist new members in understanding their role and responsibilities; and
- take no individual action that will compromise the township and respect confidentiality of privileged information.

2.5 Statutory Job Duties and Authorities

Although each member of the board is charged with specific statutory duties and authorities, the board shall act as a unified body in considering their actions and the benefits thereof for the community.

Township elected officials shall adhere, at minimum, to the State of Michigan statutory duties as follows:

Supervisor (MCL Revised Statutes of 1846 Chap 41 Sect 60-64b)

- moderates board and other applicable meetings
- is secretary to the Board of Review
- acts as township's legal agent
- develops township budget
- maintains records of supervisor's office
- appoints some commission members
- sits on township election commission
- may call special meetings
- may appoint a deputy
- may administer the oath of office

[Note on Limitations: The supervisor is the township's legal agent but does not have unfettered authority to do as he/she desires. The supervisor must exercise this authority in a manner consistent with township board decisions regarding legal business. The extent of supervisor's authority as the township's legal agent is "a suit, act, or proceeding, by or against a township, in its corporate capacity, shall be in the name of the township. The supervisor of each township shall be the agent for his or her township for the transaction of legal business, by whom a suit may be brought and defended, and upon whom process against the township shall be served."]

Clerk (MCL Revised Statutes of 1846 Chap 41 Sect 65-69)

- keeps voter registration file and conducts elections
- chairs township elections commission
- maintains custody of all township records
- records, publishes and maintains township meeting minutes
- keeps the township book of oaths
- keeps township ordinance book
- maintains general ledger
- prepares warrants for township checks
- prepares financial statements
- delivers tax certificates to supervisor and county clerk by September 30
- responsible for special meeting notices
- appoints a deputy
- posts a surety bond

Treasurer (MCL Revised Statutes of 1846 Chap 41 Sect 76-79)

- collects real and personal property taxes
- collects delinquent personal property tax
- is responsible for jeopardy assessments in collecting delinquent personal property tax
- collects mobile home specific tax
- keeps an account of township receipts (revenues) and expenditures
- disburses township checks

- deposits township revenues in approved depositories
- invests township funds in approved investments vehicles
- sits on township elections commission
- appoints a deputy
- posts a surety bond

Trustee (MCL Revised Statutes of 1846 Chap 41 Sect 70-75b)

- acts as legislators, required to vote on all issues
- is responsible for township's fiduciary health
- other duties as assigned by board

2.6 Consultants

The township board reserves to itself the authority to appoint consultants, including but not limited to the following:

- attorney
- auditor
- engineer
- information technologist (IT)
- planner

2.7 Contracts and Agreements

All contracts and agreements entered into on behalf of the township must be authorized by the township board. ~~and signed by the supervisor.~~ **As the legal agent of the township, the supervisor has statutory authority to sign a board approved contract. The board may direct another board member, as appropriate, to sign an authorized contract in addition or instead of the supervisor.**

All contracts and/or agreements will be kept on file per IRS requirements.

Contracts and agreements executed by the board may identify the following:

- term/length of the agreement
- services to be provided
- payment method (*retainer, hourly or by project*)
- payment schedule
- documentation of services provided for payment (*details in statements*)
- township officials/employees authorized to direct work or assign tasks to consultant, and
- method of resolving disputes
- performance clause, if applicable
- professional license, if applicable
- **proof of workers' compensation and/or liability insurance, as applicable**
- **completed and signed IRS Form W-9**

2.8 Property

A township board resolution adopted by a majority of the board members serving is required for the township to acquire property for public purposes by purchase, gift, condemnation, lease, construction or otherwise, or to convey or lease township-owned property or any part of township-owned property not needed for public purposes.

2.9 Stewardship

The board delegates to itself and other staff members the responsibility to protect the township's assets, including land, buildings, property and image through such means as fiscal prudence, insurance, and positive public relations.

2.10 Litigation

The initiation of any lawsuit, litigation, claim for injunctive relief, writ of mandamus or other legal proceeding requires a majority vote of the township board, except when there are extenuating circumstances. The supervisor and clerk are authorized to remedy the circumstances as defined in this section.

"Extenuating circumstances" are defined as an emergency situation that cannot wait until a special or regular meeting of the board or a situation in which a violation of any state, federal or local ordinance constitutes a public nuisance or otherwise endangers the public and in which the continued existence of such a condition, emergency or violation is detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the township.

"Extenuating circumstances" also include any situation where the continued existence of any condition, emergency or violation may jeopardize the legal position of the township in securing the intended remedy in any lawsuit, litigation, claim for injunctive relief, writ of mandamus or other legal proceeding.

The township board reserves the authority to authorize and direct the course and conduct of any lawsuit, litigation, claim for injunctive relief, writ of mandamus or other legal proceeding, notwithstanding its initiation for extenuating circumstances.

2.11 Direction and Control of Administration

To promote efficient administration, the township board may authorize the supervisor by board resolution to provide direction over township activities and functions that are not assigned by state law to another official, and to provide a liaison between the board and the various township departments within the parameters established by the township board.

The board may choose to assign certain administrative tasks that are not statutory duty of any specific township board office; a board member who accepts this responsibility may (by annual resolution) or may not be compensated outside the salary of the office for this additional duty.

2.12 Meetings

All meetings shall be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and other applicable statutes.

Any meeting deemed to be in violation shall have its business rendered null and void.

For a public person or body who "intentionally violates" the OMA, board action and/or legal penalties may occur.

To correct a disputed violation, the board may reenact a non-conforming meeting, or a specific decision, in conformity with the OMA and may do so without being deemed to make any admission contrary to its interest.

Whenever gatherings are designed to receive input from officers or employees of the public body, the OMA requires that the gathering be held at a public meeting. The following types of meetings are officially recognized as those at which township staff gathers for township business:

- Regular (monthly) meetings
- Special meetings
- Rescheduled meetings
- Closed meetings
- ~~Work sessions~~
- Committee & Commission meetings
- Public hearings
- Budget hearings

While the OMA does not apply to a social or chance gathering or conference not designed to avoid this act, where a quorum of the board is present, a meeting of a public body must be open to the public. To promote openness and transparency in government, there shall be no discussion of township business where a board quorum is present, even if there is no intention that the deliberations will lead to a decision on that occasion.

In addition to a purely social or chance gathering that does not involve discussions of township business, a board quorum may accept an invitation to address a civic group, listen to the concerns of a neighborhood organization, or observe demonstrations, but only if the board doesn't deliberate toward or come to a decision. A board quorum may also meet for ~~a workshop~~, a seminar, informational gathering, or a professional conference, **but all without conducting board business.**

2.13 Meeting Notices

The clerk is responsible for all meeting notice requirements in conformance with the Open Meetings Act, ADA, and other applicable statutes.

The clerk shall present to the board, no later than December's board meeting for adoption, the proposed regular meeting schedule for the following year.

Schedules and notices shall be posted and published in compliance with all statutes and best practices. They shall be displayed both inside and outside the township hall, on the township website and, as applicable, in the designated newspaper(s) of circulation.

The township clerk shall be responsible for seeing that notice of the time, place and reason(s) for any special meeting of the township is given to each township board member either by email, phone, text and or in person at least 24 hours prior to the meeting time.

2.14 Preparation for a Regular Meeting

Business items intended for board action may be placed on the proposed agenda by any board member by notifying the clerk or supervisor and supplying the appropriate accompanying materials for distribution no later than eight (8) **calendar** days prior to the meeting.

If the deadline is missed, board members who wish to bring an issue to the board's attention and doesn't seek board action may bring up such issues under the appropriate ~~line~~ **agenda** item; if a member seeks board action, the item may be added to the agenda by majority vote.

The proposed meeting agenda shall be delivered or made available to every board member, along with all supporting documentation and correspondence addressed to the township board, no later than seven (7) **calendar** days **prior** to meeting.

The agenda may be individualized with each meeting or administration, but may conform to the following format:

- Call to order
- Greeting & Pledge
- Roll call
- Adoption agenda
- Declaration of any Conflicts of Interest
- Approval of minutes
- Good of the Community Announcements
- Public comment
- Special Guests
- Correspondence
- County Commissioner's Report
- Township Reports
- Old Business
- New business
- Public comment
- Board Comment
- Adjournment

Any materials a contributing board member deems helpful to understanding an upcoming agenda item, or generally relevant to the upcoming meeting, may be transmitted digitally at least 7 days prior to the meeting. The clerk shall **see that hard copies are reproduced** ~~reproduce hard copies~~ from the ~~digital files~~ **originals** for inclusion in the meeting packet.

A copy of any written correspondence that was addressed to the board shall also be shared digitally in advance and hard copies be shared in the meeting packet.

Actionable agenda items ~~may~~ **shall** be **preferably** accompanied by a copy of the motion or resolution that can digitally shared before the meeting and then placed in the packet for viewing at the meeting.

2.15 Special Meeting Procedures

Special Board meetings may be called by the written request of the supervisor, or by any two members of the board, with at least 24 hours written notice given to each township board member.

The purpose(s) for which a special meeting is called shall be stated in the special meeting notice.

The public notice for a special meeting must be posted at the township hall [and at such other meeting place, if any] a minimum of 18 hours in advance. Also, that same public notice must be given orally or in writing to each board member or left in writing at his/her residence.

The agenda shall be posted along with the notice, or can be presented at the meeting, and shall be set by the board member(s) calling the meeting.

If all township board members are present at a special meeting of the township board, then the board by majority vote may add any lawful business to the special meeting agenda. If any township board member is not present at a special meeting of the township board, then the business shall be limited to the purpose(s) in the special meeting notice and no other agenda items may be added.

2.16 Meeting Conduct

All meetings shall be conducted in consultation with Federal and State statutes, this manual and Michigan Township Association's guidance of established practices. After these sources any area of conduct or procedure is deemed insufficient, *Robert's Rules of Order* may be consulted.

Each board member shall fully participate in board meetings by doing the following:

- prepare for board meetings by reading their packets ahead of time in order to fully participate in discussions
- limit remarks to issue being considered
- ask questions for clarification
- recognize colleague's rights
- respect colleague's opinions
- refrain from interrupting other speakers
- actively listen
- listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the board
- explain reasons behind significant decisions during the discussion before voting
- raise concerns and objections at a meeting, rather than after
- express disagreement verbally, rather than non-verbally;
- criticize constructively and in private
- vote with a clear audible voice

2.17 Chairing Board Meetings

No meeting, with the exception of a workshop, shall be called to order without a quorum of board members present.

If the supervisor is absent from a regular meeting, the clerk shall call the meeting to order and then the board shall appoint one of its members as president pro-tem for the meeting.

All board members will be treated with equal dignity and respect by the moderator and ensure all board members shall have equal access to speak and to make motions.

The moderator is charged with ensuring that the will of the board majority prevails on decisions, while giving board members who hold to a minority view an adequate opportunity to present their positions to the other board members.

The moderator will keep discussions focused on the agenda items.

The moderator will relinquish the gavel when he/she has a personal conflict of interest or is sufficiently conflicted on an issue that impartiality cannot be assured.

The moderator will maintain proper decorum among board members and the public audience.

The moderator shall ensure the following:

- open the meeting at the specified time
- explain meeting procedures and decision-making processes so that board members and the audience may appropriately participate
- restate audience questions when applicable
- apply time limits consistently
- recognize and deal with procedural objections
- protect members and staff from verbal attack unrelated to official duties
- keep track of amendments to motions
- have motions restated before they are voted upon
- call recesses during long meetings
- reconvene at specified time
- adjourn the meeting

2.18 Public Participation

Members of the public shall have an opportunity, under public comment periods, to address the board for no more than 3 minutes in each comment period. The supervisor may suspend the time limitation when warranted with informal board consensus such as when the board initiates questions of or a dialogue with the speaker.

A sign-up sheet may be used to help facilitate organization of speaker order.

If called upon, and with informal board consent, members of the public may also address a specific agenda item at the time the item is taken up by the board.

Unruly members of the public who disrupt a meeting and/or pose a threat to proceedings and persons, shall be asked to come to order or shall be asked to leave. The supervisor, in consultation with the board, may call for law enforcement assistance in that removal as necessary.

2.19 Invited Guests

Invited guests shall be asked to limit presentations to the board to 5 minutes. The supervisor may suspend the time limitation, with informal board consensus, when warranted.

If asking for board action, invited guests shall provide any accompanying hard copy materials 8 days prior to meeting day, or 7 days prior if transmitting digitally.

2.20 Minutes

~~Every~~ **All board and planning commission** meetings' proceedings shall be recorded by a clerk or a secretary, who ~~will~~ **shall** have the minutes available for public inspection within 8 business days after the meeting and for approval at the next meeting of the board or commission.

As required by the Michigan Open Meetings Act, the clerk shall ensure that minutes of board meetings record

- time, date and place of the meeting;
- board members present and absent;
- motions/resolutions/actions by the board at a meeting open to the public;
- roll-call votes taken at the meeting; and
- (when applicable) the purpose(s) for which a closed session is held.

In addition to the minutes, and their contents listed above, the full minutes shall list persons who addressed the board under general public comment periods and the topic of their remarks.

The content of minutes shall reflect the collective will of the township board as expressed in official board decisions. Minutes shall not include personal comments or opinions of individuals.

The board shall make any corrections in the minutes at the next meeting after the meeting to which the minutes refer. Corrected minutes shall be available to the board at or before the next subsequent meeting after correction. The corrected minutes shall show both the original entry and the correction. Approved copies of minutes must be available for public inspection within five business days after approval.

Minutes should be signed by the clerk or the secretary after approval at the subsequent meeting and then preserved in a dedicated "Minutes" book which is arranged in chronological order and in an index of important actions or decisions. Meeting minutes will also be posted and archived on the township website.

The proceedings of meetings must be published within 21 days after the board meeting. However, a synopsis of the proceedings, prepared by the clerk and approved by the supervisor, is sufficient compliance with publication requirements.

Closed meeting minutes are to be kept separate and confidential for a minimum of one year and one day after the approval of the meeting minutes from the open session. They are not available to the public but may be required to be disclosed if a civil action is filed challenging the validity of the closed session.

2.21 Voting

A township board member shall vote upon all matters that require a vote of the township board.

If a township board member has a conflict of interest regarding a matter on which the township board is required to vote, the board member will disclose that interest, the remaining board shall accept it with a majority vote, and subsequently the board member shall recuse him/herself, and not participate in deliberations, discussions or voting on that matter.

Decisions by the board shall be by a motion and an oral vote, or by a resolution and a roll call vote. Motions generally are used for shorter-term, less weighty administrative decisions. Resolutions are used for longer-term and more serious decisions, especially those involving commitment of obligation and/or monies. Many statutes require a resolution such as those pertaining to the following issues:

- adoption of an ordinance
- issuance of bonds or other indebtedness
- budget adoption
- calling an election
- purchasing or leasing property
- determining the schedule of regular meetings
- designating depositories of township funds
- setting salaries of township board members
- approving a special assessment district and assessment roll
- calling a closed township board meeting
- approving an Act 198 district or tax exemption certificate
- approving an Act 425 conditional transfer

When a vote calls for a “majority of the board members serving,” it is calculated by taking the total number of board members and subtracting vacant positions and any member(s) abstaining on the vote. Members who are absent are counted.

2.22 Electronic Taping/Recording

The clerk or secretary may be assisted by a recording device to aid in taking minutes.

Audience members may also record meeting procedures, via sound and/or photographic equipment, if such recording is deemed not to interfere with proceedings.

3. Ethics

3.1 Code of Ethical Conduct

The township board recognizes that to carry out its mission of service the township staff must earn the full confidence of the Crystal Lake Township community. The residents and taxpayers expect and are entitled to a local government that conducts its affairs in a fair, ethical, transparent and accountable manner.

To accomplish these ends, the township board expects compliance with the following Code of Ethical Conduct:

- Conducting their duties, all township staff shall observe both the spirit and intent of all applicable laws, township ordinances, and township policies and procedures.
- Township officials shall act in a fair, impartial manner.
- Actions of officials and employees shall be consistent with the township's best interests, rather than for personal interests.
- The township shall practice transparency in its affairs, unless there is a legal necessity for confidentiality.
- Civility and respect will be demonstrated in all governance processes and in the delivering of township programs and services.

3.2 Implementation, Compliance and Enforcement

All staff shall comply with state laws regulating the conduct of public officials, employees, appointees and volunteers and the applicable provisions of state law related to conflicts of interest.

As an expression of the standards of conduct for all staff expected by the township, the Code of Ethical Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when everyone is thoroughly familiar with it and embraces its provisions. Each person has 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.

Every staff member has the responsibility to report and/or intervene when an individual's actions that appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct are brought to their attention.

Township ordinances, policies, procedures, rules and regulations shall be uniformly applied and enforced, unless consideration of extenuating circumstances, unintended consequences or undue hardship is explicitly authorized in the applicable ordinance, policy, procedure, rule or regulation.

3.3 Actions Not for Personal Benefit

The township staff shall act in the best interest of the township, rather than for personal interests or gain.

3.4 Actions on Behalf of Third Parties

As stewards of the public interest, members of the township staff shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the township board, or any board, commission, committee or proceeding of the township, nor shall members of boards and commissions, or committees appear before their own bodies or before the township board on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies, without full disclosure of personal, political or financial relationships.

3.5 Conflict of Interest

Township staff shall not enter into any business relationships that would put them into conflict with their obligations to the township. All staff shall avoid the appearance of conflict between public duties and personal interests and activities in all township public forums, pursuant to state law and township policies and procedures. When a decision or action would create a personal financial impact, the official, appointee, employee or volunteer shall promptly disclose the conflict of interest and shall not, directly or indirectly, participate in the decision or in any manner influence others who participate in the decision or action.

3.6 Gifts and Special Benefits

Township staff shall not accept any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits that might compromise or give the appearance of compromise of their independence of judgment or action. Gifts and benefits valued at more than \$25 will not be accepted from vendors or others who in a position to benefit from township decisions.

3.7 Township Resources

Township resources will be utilized efficiently and effectively, with excess and waste avoided.

Township resources will not be used for personal, political or financial benefit.

3.8 Truthfulness

All information provided by township staff will be truthful and complete. No township staff shall knowingly make false or misleading statements, use false or misleading information as the basis for making a decision.

3.9 Confidential Information

Township staff shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or affairs of the township. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.

Information acquired in one's public position shall not be used for personal advantage.

3.10 Community Decisions

Township staff shall demonstrate effective approaches to solving problems. Township officials and appointees shall utilize their public forum to demonstrate how individuals with differing points of view can find common ground and seek compromises that benefit the community as a whole.

3.11 Community Role Models

Township staff members shall conduct themselves as role models for residents, business people and other stakeholders involved in public debate.

Township board members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive workplace environment for township employees, and for citizens and businesses dealing with the township.

Officials shall recognize their special role in dealings with township employees and shall in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

3.12 Commitment to Community

The township's care for and commitment to its community members shall be conveyed through township outreach, decisions and actions.

3.13 Development of Public Policy

Policy decisions of board officials and appointees will be based on the merits of the issues, will consider diversity of opinions and, whenever possible, shall reflect consensus of participants.

3.14 Meeting Inclusion

Relevant staff shall be invited to all meetings that affect their respective departments.

3.15 Public Input and Involvement

Decisions made in an open meeting shall be accompanied by opportunities for public input as stated in policy and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Expanded opportunities for public involvement in developing and evaluating township programs and services shall be actively considered by all boards, commissions and committees.

3.16 Discussions and Interactions

The professional and personal conduct of township staff shall be above reproach and avoid the appearance of impropriety. While recognizing First Amendment rights, all should refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of others.

Interactions by the public with township processes shall be as stress-free as possible.

Interactions with others shall demonstrate fairness, respect, impartiality and equitable treatment. To provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, including discrimination or harassment that is based on any legally protected status, township staff shall not engage in any form of harassment defined by township policy. Any form of discrimination or harassment that violates policy will not be tolerated. This policy forbids any unwelcome conduct that is based on an individual's age, race, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or association with anyone who has, or is perceived to have, any protected characteristic, or any other basis protected by state, federal or local law.

3.17 Representation of Township

When representing the township on a regional or multijurisdictional board or commission, and confronted with an issue that pits the township's interests against the greater interests of the broader jurisdiction, the township board shall be consulted for direction and guidance. When such guidance cannot be sought, representatives of the township must consider the broader regional or statewide implications of that body's decision and issues.

Individuals authorized to do so will, to the best of their abilities, accurately communicate official positions of the township. Personal opinions will not be misrepresented as the official position of the township.

3.18 Promises and Commitments

Township staff shall not make promises that one would reasonably consider as unrealistic or which there are no intentions to ultimately honor.

Township staff shall follow through with commitments, keep others informed, and promptly respond to requests for information.

3.19 Credit

Township staff members are encouraged to recognize and to give credit to those who contribute to the township's successes and accomplishments.