

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

Ulysses S. Ross, Chairman
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Janet W. Humphries

Loria D. Williams
County Manager

Angelena Kearney-Dunlap
Clerk to the Board

The stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depends upon the continuing consent of the governed, upon the public confidence in the integrity of the government and upon responsible exercise of trust conferred by the people. Government decisions and policy must be made and implemented through proper channels and processes of the governmental structure. The purpose of this code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for Warren County Commissioners. It should not be considered a substitute for the law or a county commissioner's best judgement.

Warren County Commissioners must be able to act in a manner to maintain their integrity and independence, yet must be responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent. Warren County Commissioners serve in an important advocacy capacity in meeting the needs of their citizens and should recognize the legitimacy of this role as well as the intrinsic importance of this function to the proper functioning of representative government. At the same time, Warren County Commissioners must, at times, act in an adjudicatory or administrative capacity and must, when doing so, act in a fair and impartial manner. Warren County Commissioners must know how to distinguish these roles and when each role is appropriate and they must act accordingly. Warren County Commissioners must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of their constituents. Each Warren County Commissioner must find within his or her own conscience the touchstone on which to determine appropriate conduct.

Canon One

A Warren County Commissioner Shall Obey the Law

Warren County Commissioners shall support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of North Carolina and the laws enacted by the Congress of the United States and the General Assembly pursuant thereto.

Canon Two

A Warren County Commissioner Should Uphold the Integrity and Independence of His or Her Office

Warren County Commissioners should demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fortitude in all their public activities in order to inspire public confidence and trust in county government. Warren County Commissioners should participate in establishing, maintaining, and enforcing, and should themselves observe, high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of their office may be preserved. The provisions of this Code should be construed and applied to further these objectives.

Canon Three

A Warren County Commissioner Should Avoid Impropriety and the Appearance of Impropriety in All His or Her Activities

- A. It is essential that Warren County government attract those citizens best qualified and willing to serve. Warren County Commissioners have legitimate interests - economic, professional and vocational - of a private nature. Warren County Commissioners should not be denied, and should not deny to other county commissioners or citizens, the opportunity to acquire, retain and pursue private interests, economic or otherwise, except when conflicts with their responsibility to the public cannot be avoided. Warren County Commissioners must exercise their best judgment to determine when this is the case.
- B. Warren County Commissioners should respect and comply with the law and should conduct themselves at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of the office of county commissioner and of county government.
- C. Warren County Commissioners should not allow family, social, or other relationships to unduly influence their conduct or judgement and should not lend the prestige of the office of county commissioner to advance the private interests of others; nor should they convey or permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence them.

Canon Four

A Warren County Commissioner Should Perform the Duties of the Office Diligently

Warren County Commissioners should, while performing the duties of the office as prescribed by law, give precedence to these duties over other activities. In the performance of these duties, the following standards should apply:

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A. Legislative Responsibilities

1. Warren County Commissioners should actively pursue policy goals they believe to be in the best interests of their constituents within the parameters of orderly decision-making, rules of the Board of County Commissioners and open government.
2. Warren County Commissioners should respect the legitimacy of the goals and interests of other county commissioners and should respect the rights of others to pursue goals and policies different from their own.

B. Adjudicative Responsibilities

1. Warren County Commissioners should be faithful to the general and local laws pertaining to the office and strive for professional competence in them. They should be unswayed by partisan interests, public clamor, or fear of criticism.
2. Warren County Commissioners should demand and contribute to the maintenance of order and decorum in proceedings before the Board of County Commissioners.
3. Warren County Commissioners should be honest, patient, dignified and courteous to those with whom they deal in their official capacity, and should require similar conduct of their staff and others subject to their direction and control.
4. Warren County Commissioners should accord to every person who is legally interested in a proceeding before the commission full right to be heard according to law.
5. Warren County Commissioners should dispose promptly of the business of the county for which they are responsible.

C. Administrative Responsibilities

1. Warren County Commissioners should clearly distinguish legislative, adjudicatory and administrative responsibilities and should refrain from inappropriate interference in the impartial administration of county affairs by county employees. Commissioners should diligently discharge those administrative responsibilities that are appropriate, should maintain professional competence in the administration of these duties and should facilitate the diligent discharge of the administrative responsibilities of fellow commissioners and other county officials.
2. Warren County Commissioners should conserve the resources of the county in their charge. They should employ county equipment, property, funds and

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personnel only in legally permissible pursuits and in a manner that exemplifies excellent stewardship.

3. Warren County Commissioners should require county employees subject to their direction and control to observe the standards of fidelity and diligence that apply to commissioners as well as those appropriate for employees.
4. Warren County Commissioners should take or initiate appropriate disciplinary measures against a county employee for improper conduct of which the commissioner may become aware.
5. Warren County Commissioners should not employ or recommend the appointment of unnecessary employees and should exercise the power of employment only on the basis of merit, avoid favoritism and refrain from illegal discrimination and nepotism. They should not approve compensation of employees beyond the fair value of services rendered.

Canon Five

A Warren County Commissioner Should Conduct the Affairs of the Board in an Open and Public Manner

Warren County Commissioners should be aware of the letter and intent of the State's Open Meetings law, should conduct the affairs of the Board of County Commissioners consistent with the letter and spirit of that law and consistent with the need to inspire and maintain public confidence in the integrity and fairness of county government and the office of county commissioner. Consistent with this goal or preserving public trust, county commissioners should be aware of the need for discretion in deliberations when the lack of discretion would pose a threat to the resources of the county, to the reputation of current or potential county employees, to orderly and responsible decision making, to the integrity of other governmental processes or to other legitimate interests of the county.

Canon Six

A Warren County Commissioner Should Regulate His or Her Extra-Governmental Activities to Minimize the Risk of Conflict with His or Her Official Duties

- A. Warren County Commissioners should inform themselves concerning campaign finance, conflict of interest and other appropriate state and federal laws and should scrupulously comply with the provisions of such laws.
- B. Warren County Commissioners should refrain from financial and business dealings that tend to reflect adversely on the board or on county government or to interfere with the proper performance of official duties.
- C. Warren County Commissioners should manage their personal financial interests to minimize the number of cases in which they must abstain from voting on

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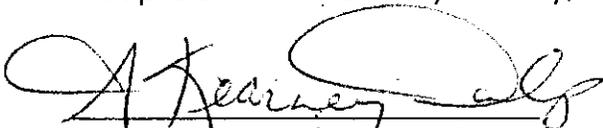
matters coming before the Board.

- D. Information acquired by county commissioners in their official capacity should not be used or disclosed in financial dealings or for any other purpose not related to official duties.

**Canon Seven
A Warren County Commissioner Should Refrain from Political Activity
Inappropriate to His or Her Office**

Warren County Commissioners have a civic responsibility to support good government by every available means, to continue to inform and educate the citizenry about the affairs and processes of county government, and to make themselves available to citizens of the county so that they may ascertain and respond to the needs of the community. In doing so, county commissioners may and should join or affiliate with civic organizations whether partisan or non-partisan, may and should attend political meetings, may and should advocate and support the principles or policies of civic or political organizations consistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States and North Carolina.

Adopted this the 5th day of May, 2003.


Angelena Kearney-Dunlap
Clerk to the Board


Ulysses S. Ross, Chairman
Warren County Board of Commissioners

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