



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS POLICY

Applicability: All CVRD Elected Officials

Effective Date: July 24, 2019

PURPOSE:

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Code of Conduct for Elected Officials details the shared expectations for responsible conduct as determined by the CVRD Board for the 2018-2022 term. Responsible conduct is grounded in conducting oneself with honesty, integrity and in a way that furthers the Board's ability to provide good governance to the region. Outcomes of responsible conduct include transparency, accountability, effective and efficient decision-making and a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

It is each elected official's individual responsibility to uphold both the letter and the spirit of this Code of Conduct in their dealings with other elected officials, staff and the public.

POLICY:

Standards of Conduct for Working With Each Other

As elected representatives of the CVRD, we have a responsibility to listen, to consider and to communicate respectfully with each other, staff and members of the public to make decisions that shape our community. By working together with professionalism, respect and open minds, we can be successful in our role as community leaders, regardless of differences of opinion.

To this end we commit to:

1. Demonstrating respect through:
 - a. Fostering a safe and welcoming space for debate and decision-making;
 - b. Professional and respectful verbal and body language;
 - c. Seeking to understand and asking questions rather than making assumptions;
 - d. Arriving prepared for meetings and specific agenda items;
 - e. Staying present and engaged with the business of the meeting;
 - f. Approaching issues with an open mind to consider new information;
 - g. Directing critique at the issue and not at the individual that raises it;
 - h. Providing direct, honest and timely feedback to questions and concerns; and
 - i. Being sensitive to others when they are passionate about an issue.
2. Ensuring commentary at meetings remains focused on the issues, avoiding repetition or re-stating what has already been said;
3. Chairing meetings in a consistent manner that keeps the meeting on task, respects everyone's time and ensures each elected official has an equal opportunity to be heard;

4. Attending all Board and assigned Committee meetings regularly and punctually, and providing the Chair with as much notice as possible when unable to attend a meeting due to extraordinary circumstances;
5. Making a collective effort to ensure a united voice for the Board by;
 - a. Respecting the collective decision of the Board when representing the Board in other public forums and in intergovernmental relations;
 - b. Working together for effective governance; and
 - c. Holding each other accountable for our conduct.

Standards of Conduct For Interacting With the Public

As elected officials, our role is to listen to a wide variety of community stakeholders, deliberate as a Board and make decisions on behalf of the CVRD in a manner that is professional, inclusive and maintains public confidence. Ensuring a fair, consistent and professional process at meetings will support a welcoming environment in which all members of the region feel safe to share their views.

To this end, we commit to:

1. Maintaining a safe, professional and welcoming tone at the Board or Committee table through:
 - a. Respectful verbal and body language, making few interjections;
 - b. Seeking to understand and asking questions in an inquiring tone;
 - c. Directing critique at the issue and not at the individual that raises it, understanding that speakers may be representing the view of their organization, not their own;
 - d. Avoiding repetition or re-stating what was just said;
 - e. Acknowledging how speakers are feeling, recognizing the vulnerability that speakers may feel when presenting their issues at a meeting; and
 - f. Giving acknowledgment and thanks to members of the public for their contribution to the meeting.
2. Fostering public confidence by:
 - a. Leading by example through respectful and professional conduct and an open mind;
 - b. Explaining meeting guidelines as appropriate;
 - c. Ensuring all members of the public are treated in the same manner and in accordance with this Code of Conduct;

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- d. Ensuring that the public feels heard by avoiding inflammatory comments;
- e. Ensuring that the Board is heard by those present and watching online by speaking clearly into the microphone, and at a moderate volume if there is no microphone;
- f. Diffusing elevated situations to promote a safe and respectful environment; and
- g. Keeping the meeting on task, listening to all opinions and summarizing what was heard around the table when acting as Chair.

Standards of Conduct for Working With CVRD Staff

As elected officials, our role is to provide direction to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) so that he may best manage CVRD staff resources to accomplish the strategic priorities of the Board.

To this end, we commit to:

1. Giving direction to staff only at a Board or Committee meeting;
2. Contacting staff through the CAO or appropriate General Manager;
3. Respecting that staff time is a public resource and that production of information and answering of enquiries should be accomplished through proper channels and be appropriate in scope;
4. Interacting with staff in a respectful manner including;
 - a. Becoming familiar with the CVRD's *Respectful Workplace Policy* and adhering to standards of behaviour that support a positive work environment that embraces diversity and treats everyone with dignity and respect;
 - b. Seeking to understand and asking questions in an inquiring tone;
 - c. Directing critique at the issue and not at the individual, understanding that staff may be following management direction and representing the policies and procedures of the CVRD, not their own views;
 - d. Acknowledging that staff are experienced and qualified professionals; and
 - e. Recognizing staff for their commitment to public service.

Standards of Conduct on Media Platforms

As elected officials we recognize the value of media platforms, including social media, for public engagement and communication. We commit to conducting ourselves in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct including:

1. Adhering to confidentiality requirements and using caution in reporting Board decision-making before the CVRD has released its formal communication;

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2. Using “in my opinion” or similar disclaimer to ensure it is expressly clear that we are speaking for ourselves and not on behalf of the Board or Committee as a whole;
3. Using respectful language and avoiding inflammatory remarks;
4. Ensuring that comments reflect an open mind;
5. Refraining from criticizing Board Policy; and
6. Refraining from criticizing other Board members or staff or calling their professional capabilities into question.

Complaints and Disciplinary Action

If disputes arise under this policy, elected officials shall endeavour to resolve them in good faith, recognizing that interpersonal rancour does not facilitate good governance. Should a breach of this policy need investigation, a complaint may be submitted by an elected official or member of staff to the CAO. Depending on the severity of the complaint, an investigation may be conducted internally or by a independent third party jointly selected by the Complainant and Respondent. In the event of no agreement on an investigator, the CVRD’s solicitor will select the investigator.

For complaints that are determined to be founded, the Board may consider recommendations for resolution that may include but are not limited to;

1. Censure;
2. Removal from Committee membership;
3. Prohibition from representing the CVRD at events or attending conferences or seminars;
4. Recommendation that an apology be given;
5. Counselling, coaching or training; and/or
6. Recommendations deemed appropriate by the the third party investigator

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| Approved by: Board Approval date: July 24, 2019 |
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