

**RESOLUTION 2025-12 ADOPTING A CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE  
ORIENTAL MAYOR AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Whereas, the proper operation of democratic government requires that public official be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; and

Whereas, government decisions and policy must be made in proper channels of the governmental structure; and

Whereas, the public office must not be used for personal gain; and

Whereas, the public must have confidence in the integrity of its government; and in recognition of these goals,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Oriental, North Carolina that the following is adopted:

**CODE OF ETHICS  
FOR THE ORIENTAL MAYOR AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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 the 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 the Mayor and Board of Commissioners and all references herein to the Board of Commissioners shall be understood to include the Mayor. It should not be considered a substitute for the law or a Board of Commissioners member's best judgment.

Board of Commissioners members 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. Board of Commissioners members 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, Board of Commissioners members must, at times, act in an adjudicatory or administrative capacity and must, when doing so, act in a fair and impartial manner. Board of Commissioners members must know how to distinguish these roles and when each role is appropriate and they must act accordingly. Board of Commissioners members must be aware of their obligation to conform their behavior to standards of ethical conduct that warrant the trust of their constituents. Each Board of Commissioners member must find within his or her own conscience the touchstone on which to determine appropriate conduct.

## **Article I**

### **A Board of Commissioner Member Shall Obey the Law**

Board of Commissioners members 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. Members specifically acknowledge and agree to comply with the requirements of NCGS §14-234 entitled "Public officers or employees benefiting from public contracts; exceptions."

## **Article II**

### **A Board of Commissioners Member Should Uphold the Integrity and Independence of His or Her Office**

Board of Commissioners members 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 town government. Board of Commissioners members 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.

## **Article III**

### **A Board of Commissioners Member Should Avoid Impropriety and the Appearance of Impropriety in All His or Her Activities**

It is essential that town government attract those citizens best qualified and willing to serve. Board of Commissioners members have legitimate interests-economic, professional and vocational-of a private nature. Board of Commissioners members should not be denied, and should not deny to other Board of Commissioners members 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. Board of Commissioners members must exercise their best judgment to determine when this is the case.

Board of Commissioners members 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 Board of Aldermen and of town government.

Board of Commissioners members should not allow family, social, or other relationships to unduly influence their conduct or judgment and should not lend the prestige of the office of Board of Commissioners 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. Board of Commissioners members shall not grant any special consideration, treatment or advantage to any citizen beyond that which is available to every other citizen.

In accordance with Section 23 of the Town Charter, the Mayor or any member of the Board of Commissioners who has an interest in any official act or action before the Board shall publicly disclose on the record of the Board the nature and extent of such interest and shall withdraw from any consideration of the matter if excused by the Board pursuant to NCGS §160A-75.

#### **Article IV**

##### **A Board of Commissioners Member Should Perform the Duties of the Office Diligently**

Board of Commissioners members 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:

A. Legislative Responsibilities

1. Board of Commissioners members 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 Commissioners and open government.
2. Board of Commissioners members should respect the legitimacy of the goals and interests of other Board of Commissioners members and should respect the rights of others to pursue goals and policies different from their own.

B. Adjudicative Responsibilities

1. Board of Commissioners members 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. Board of Commissioners members should demand and contribute to the maintenance of order and decorum in proceedings before the Board of Commissioners.
3. Board of Commissioners members 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. Board of Commissioners members should accord to every person who is legally interested in a proceeding before the Board full right to be heard according to law.
5. Board of Commissioners members should dispose promptly of the business of the

town for which they are responsible.

C. Administrative Responsibilities

1. Board of Commissioners members should clearly distinguish legislative, adjudicatory and administrative responsibilities and should refrain from inappropriate interference in the impartial administration of town affairs by town employees. Board of Commissioners members 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 Board of Commissioners members and other town officials.
2. Board of Commissioners members should conserve the resources of the town in their charge. They should employ town equipment, property, funds and personnel only in legally permissible pursuits and in a manner that exemplifies excellent stewardship.
3. Board of Commissioners members should require town employees subject to their direction and control to observe the standards of fidelity and diligence that apply to Board of Commissioners members as well as those appropriate for employees.
4. Board of Commissioners members who become aware of improper conduct by a town employee should promptly inform the Administrator, or, in the case of a Town employee who reports directly to the Board, initiate appropriate disciplinary measures.
5. Board of Commissioners members 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.

**Article V**

**A Board of Commissioners Member Should Conduct the Affairs  
of the Board of Commissioners in an Open and Public Manner**

Board of Commissioners members should be aware of the letter and intent of the State's Open Meetings Law, should conduct the affairs of the Board of 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 town government and the office of Board of Commissioners. Consistent with this goal of preserving public trust, Board of Commissioners members should be aware of the need for discretion in deliberations when the lack of discretion would pose a threat to the resources of the town, to the reputation of current or potential town employees, to orderly and responsible decision making, to the integrity of other governmental processes or to other legitimate interests of

the town.

## **Article VI**

### **A Board of Commissioners Member Should Regulate His or Her Extra Governmental Activities to Minimize the Risk of Conflict with His or Her Official Duties**

1. Board of Commissioners members 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.
2. Board of Commissioners members should refrain from financial and business dealings that tend to reflect adversely on the Board or on town government or to interfere with the proper performance of official duties.
3. Board of Commissioners members should manage their personal financial interests to minimize the number of cases in which they must abstain from voting on matters coming before the Board.
4. Information acquired by Board of Commissioners members in their official capacity should not be used or disclosed in financial dealings or for any other purpose not related to official duties.

## **Article VII**

### **A Board of Commissioners Member Should Refrain from Political Activity Inappropriate to His or Her Office**

1. Board of Commissioners members 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 town government, and to make themselves available to citizens of the town so that they may ascertain and respond to the needs of the community. In doing so, Board of Commissioners members 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.
2. Candidates for the office of Board of Commissioners, including incumbents:
  - A. Should inform themselves concerning the laws of this state with regard to campaigns and relevant disclosure requirements and should scrupulously comply with the provisions of such laws;
8. Should maintain the dignity appropriate to the office, and should encourage members of their families to adhere to the same standards of political conduct that apply to Board of

Commissioners;

- C. Should not make pledges or promises of conduct in office that they will not or cannot perform or would be illegal if it were performed;
- D. Should not misrepresent their identity, qualifications present position, or other fact; and
- E. Should avoid pledges or promises of conduct in office other than the faithful and impartial performance of the duties of the office.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that:

1. A violation of this Code of Ethics may subject a Mayor/Commissioner to a censure Resolution by the Oriental Board of Commissioners; however, no such censure resolution shall be adopted until the person alleged to have committed the violation has been given notice of the alleged violation and provided with the opportunity to appear before the Board and be heard regarding the allegation.

2. When a Mayor/Commissioner has a question as to the applicability of this code to a particular situation, he or she may apply, orally or in writing, to the Town Attorney for advisory guidance. Upon receipt of a request for advisory guidance and based only upon the information given to the Town Attorney, the Town Attorney will provide advisory guidance to the Mayor/Commissioner. In the Town Attorney's discretion, he may retain outside legal counsel to advise him in connection with any request for advisory guidance. In no event will the Town Attorney's advisory guidance excuse a Mayor/Commissioner from complying with the Code of Ethics or other applicable law.

**ADOPTED THIS 9<sup>th</sup> Day of December, 2025**

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**Mayor Sally Belangia**

**Attest:**

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Diane Miller, Clerk to the Board