

Chisago County
Board of Commissioners



Operating Guidelines

2021

ADOPTED 1/5/2021

Chisago County Board of Commissioners

2021

District 1 – Chris DuBose

District 2 – Rick Greene

District 3 – Marlys Dunne

District 4 – Ben Montzka

District 5 – Mike Robinson

County Administrator – Chase Burnham

County Attorney – Janet Reiter

County Sheriff – Brandon Thyen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	OVERVIEW	5
A.	Purpose	5
B.	Statement of Principles	5
C.	Effective Date	5
II.	AMENDMENTS TO THE OPERATING GUIDELINES	5
III.	COUNTY BOARD ORGANIZATION	6
A.	Membership	6
B.	Commissioner District	6
C.	Terms of Office	6
D.	Vacancy	6
E.	Officers	8
F.	Compensation	8
G.	Indemnification	8
IV.	COUNTY MEETINGS	8
A.	Regular Meetings	8
B.	Statutory Meeting	9
C.	Open Meeting Law	9
D.	Closed Meetings	9
E.	Special/Emergency Meetings	9
F.	Work Sessions and Informal Meetings	10
G.	Public Hearings	10
H.	Audience/Citizen Requests	11
I.	Board Committees	11
J.	Quorum	11
K.	Role of Presiding Officer	12
L.	Addressing the County Board	12
M.	County Administrator	12
V.	RULES OF PROCEDURE	13
A.	Statement of Purpose of the Board	13
B.	Statement of Principles of the Rules	13
C.	Statement of Purpose of the Rules	13
VI.	TYPES OF COUNTY BOARD ACTION	13

A.	Resolution.....	13
B.	Ordinance.....	14
C.	General Consensus	14
D.	Policy Development	14
VII.	COUNTY BOARD AGENDA.....	14
A.	Preparation and Distribution	14
B.	Order of Business	15
C.	Agenda.....	15
D.	Committee Reports/Commissioner Updates	15
E.	Official Records.....	15
VIII.	COUNTY BOARD COMMITTEES.....	16
A.	Special Committees.....	16
IX.	ADVISORY COMMITTEES.....	16
A.	Policy.....	16
B.	Role and Purpose of Committees	16
C.	Operating Procedures	17
D.	Resignations	17
E.	Terms	17
F.	Ex-Officio Members	17
G.	Appointment of Chairs	17
X.	CODE OF ETHICS	18
XI.	CITIZENS.....	18
A.	Public Communication.....	18
B.	Open Meeting Law	19
C.	Audience Participation at Board Meetings.....	19
D.	Responding to Correspondence/Inquiries/Complaints from Citizens	19
XII.	STAFF	20
A.	County Administrator.....	20
B.	Role of Staff	21
C.	Legislative Protocol for Staff	21

I. OVERVIEW

A. Purpose

The Chisago County Board of Commissioners hereinafter may also be referred to as “Board” or “County Board”, is the body charged by law with the management of the affairs of Chisago County. The County Board operates as a deliberative and legislative assembly, meeting to discuss and determine the direction and policies of the County within the confines of State and Federal Law.

The County Board functions within the statutory framework of Minnesota Law. General duties, powers, and responsibilities are found in Minnesota Statutes, especially but not exclusively Chapters 370, 373, and 375. Minnesota Statutes supersede all bylaws, rules, and policies established by the Board.

The Operating Guidelines of the County Board are intended to facilitate the transaction of business by the County Board, County staff, and the established committees. The following principles shall guide the County Board in its interpretation and application of the Guidelines.

B. Statement of Principles

The Operating Guidelines are designed to produce a procedural balance that considers all principles and articulates a specific process by which those principles interact and work.

C. Effective Date

These guidelines shall become effective upon passage by the County Board on January 5, 2021.

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE OPERATING GUIDELINES

Any member of the County Board may initiate action to amend the Operating Guidelines. Amendments to the Operating Guidelines may also be initiated by the County Administrator.

During the annual organizational meeting, also known as statutory meeting (see page 9), the County Board shall adopt the Operating Guidelines for the year.

At any time throughout the year the County Board may amend the Operating Guidelines by an affirmative vote of the members. Changes shall be effective immediately upon passage.

Any changes in statute or law affecting the guidelines are effective immediately and will be reflected in the next draft of the guidelines.

III. COUNTY BOARD ORGANIZATION

A. **Membership**

The County Board consists of five (5) members elected from single-member districts appointed on the basis of population as provided by law.

B. **Commissioner District**

The boundaries of commissioner districts, including the procedures to follow in the event that a redistricting is needed, are established pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 375.025.

C. **Terms of Office**

The term of each Board member is four years, except as otherwise established pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 375.03.

D. **Vacancy**

A vacancy in the office of County Board is filled pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 375.101:

Subdivision 1. **Option for filling vacancies; special election.** (a) Except as provided in subdivision 3, a vacancy in the office of County Commissioner may be filled as provided in this subdivision and subdivision 2, or as provided in subdivision 4. If the vacancy is to be filled under this subdivision and subdivision 2, it must be filled at a special election. The County Board may by resolution call for a special election to be held according to the earliest of the following time schedules:

- (1) Not less than 120 days following the date the vacancy is declared, but no later than 12 weeks prior to the date of the next regularly scheduled primary election;
- (2) Concurrently with the next regularly scheduled primary election and general election; or
- (3) No sooner than 120 days following the next regularly scheduled general election.
- (4) The person elected at the special election shall take office immediately after receipt of the certificate of election and upon filing the bond and taking the oath of office and shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term. If the county has been reapportioned since the commencement of the term of the vacant office, the election shall be based on the district as reapportioned.

Subd. 2. **When victor seated immediately.** If a vacancy for which a special election is required occurs less than 120 days before the general election preceding the end of the term, the vacancy shall be filled by the person elected at that election for the ensuing term who shall take office immediately after receiving the certificate of election, filing the bond, and taking the oath of office.

Subd. 3. **Inability or refusal to serve.** In addition to the events specified in section 351.02, a vacancy in the office of County Commissioner may be declared by the County Board when a commissioner is unable to serve in the office or attend Board meetings for a 90-day period because of illness, or because of absence from or refusal to attend Board meetings for a 90-day period. If any of the preceding conditions occurs, the County Board may, after the Board by resolution has declared a vacancy to exist, make an appointment to fill the vacancy at a regular or special meeting for the remainder of the unexpired term or until the ill or absent member is again able to resume duties and attend County Board meetings, whichever is earlier. If the original member is again able to resume duties and attend Board meetings, the Board shall, by resolution, so determine and remove the appointed officeholder and restore the original member to office.

Subd. 4. **Vacancies of less than one year; appointment option.** Except as provided in subdivision 3, and as an alternative to the procedure provided in subdivisions 1 and 2, any other vacancy in the office of County Commissioner may be filled by Board appointment at a regular or special meeting. The appointment shall be evidenced by a resolution entered in the minutes and shall continue until an election is held under this subdivision. All elections to fill vacancies shall be for the unexpired term. If one year or more remains in the unexpired term, a special election must be held under subdivision 1. If less than one year remains in the unexpired term, the County Board may appoint a person to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term, unless the vacancy occurs within 90 days of the next county general election, in which case an appointment shall not be made and the vacancy must be filled at the general election. The person elected to fill a vacancy at the general election takes office immediately in the same manner as for a special election under subdivision 1, and serves the remainder of the unexpired term and the new term for which the election was otherwise held.

Subd. 5. **County Boards vacancy appointment; public hearing.** Before making an appointment to fill a vacancy under subdivision 4, the County Board must hold a public hearing not more than 30 days after the vacancy occurs with public notice given in the same manner as for a special meeting of the County Board. At the public hearing, the Board must invite public testimony from persons residing in the district in which the vacancy occurs relating to the qualifications of prospective appointees to fill the vacancy. Before making an appointment, the Board also must notify public officials in the affected district on the appointment, including town board and city council members, and must enter into the record at the Board meeting in which the appointment is made the names and addresses of the public officials notified. If after the public hearing, the Board is unable or decides not to make an appointment under subdivision 4, it must hold a special election under subdivision 1, but the time period in which the election must be held begins to run from the date of the public hearing.

E. Officers

The County Board, at its annual meeting, elects from its members a Chair and a Vice Chair. The Chair presides at the County Board meetings, decides on questions of order, and signs all documents requiring signature on the Board's behalf. The Chair's signature, attested to by the County Administrator, Clerk of the Board or designee, is binding as the signature of the County Board.

The County Board elects from its membership a Vice Chair at the same time and place and in the same manner as provided for the election of the Chair. The Vice Chair performs the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to perform the duties.

If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent from any meeting, the members present shall choose one of their members as temporary Chair, and all documents requiring the signature of the County Board shall be signed by a majority of it and attested to by the County Administrator (Minnesota Statutes 375.13). Robert's Rules of Order defines majority as "more than half" of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting."

F. Compensation

County Board members receive, as compensation for services, an annual salary as set by resolution of the County Board. The salary must be established prior to the end of the preceding year, and is effective January 1 of the new year. The resolution shall contain a statement of the new salary as defined on an annual basis and must be published in the official County newspaper.

G. Indemnification

Chisago County Board members are protected by the defense and indemnification provisions through Chisago County's membership in the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust.

IV. COUNTY MEETINGS

A. Regular Meetings

Members of the County Board are entitled to ten (10) days' notice of regular Board meetings (Minnesota Statutes 375.07). At the annual organizational meeting of the Board, the County Board shall adopt a schedule of regular Board meetings for the upcoming year. The schedule will include the location, date, and time of the meetings. During the year, the schedule may be amended by vote of the County Board.

Unless otherwise stated, all regular meetings of the County Board will be convened in the Board Room of the Chisago County Government Center in Center City, Minnesota. All regular meetings of the County Board are open to the public.

Anyone attending a County Board meeting, excluding emergency response personnel, will be required to have cell phones or any other electronic device on silent mode. This includes all meetings of the County Board referenced in Section IV. of the Operating Guidelines.

According to the Open Meeting Law, at any meeting that must be open to the public, there must be at least one copy of any printed materials relating to the agenda available for inspection in the meeting room.

B. Statutory Meeting

By state law (Minnesota Statute 375.07) the County Board must meet at the county seat on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January, which is when the terms of new Board members begin. The County Board transacts the following organizational business during this annual organizational meeting:

1. Administration of the Oath of Office (if required).
2. Election of Officers.
3. Appointments of Commissioners to commissions, committees, and boards.
4. Appointment of voting delegates to AMC.
5. Awarding of Official County Newspaper (or confirming Official Newspaper).

C. Open Meeting Law

All meetings of the County Board and Board Committees are subject to the Open Meeting Law (Minnesota Statutes 13D).

D. Closed Meetings

The County Board may, by motion, convene in closed session for the purposes of transacting business. Business which may be considered in closed session are as follows:

- In accordance with the attorney/client privilege;
- To consider strategy for labor negotiations;
- To consider real estate negotiations;
- To consider security measures;
- Or as otherwise required or permitted by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law.

Before closing a meeting, the Board will state, on record, the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed.

E. Special/Emergency Meetings

The Chisago County Board may, by Board action, establish a special or emergency meeting. Special meetings shall be preceded by three (3) days' notice, including a posting of the meeting notice on the Chisago County website, outside the County Boardroom and either (1) mailed or delivered notice to persons who have requested such notice, or (2) publication of the notice in the official newspaper (Minnesota

Statutes 471.705). Procedures to schedule a special meeting shall be in accordance with Minnesota Statutes.

Adjourned or reconvened meetings may be held at any specific time, date, and place the Board may adopt without additional notice. However, the time, date, and place must be publicly specified by the Board prior to adjourning the meeting in which the time, date, and place are established.

F. Work Sessions and Informal Meetings

From time to time, the County Board may schedule work sessions, workshops, retreats, forums, or additional meetings at such times and concerning such subjects as may be established by action of the Board. A schedule of such meetings shall be maintained in the County Administration office. Work sessions and other informal meetings of the Board not regularly held, shall be subject to the same notice requirements of the Open Meeting Law.

At the beginning of each year, the County Board will schedule a time, at a regular Board meeting or a work session, to discuss and review topics of importance such as the County's Strategic Plan, the County's financial status, current and future levies, County goals and priorities, and other department or committee/commission topics/issues, if needed.

G. Public Hearings

From time to time, the County Board conducts formal public hearings. In addition to those required by law, the County Board may hold public hearings on matters of business when it decides that such hearings are in the best interest of the general public or issues under consideration. The order of business for public hearings generally follows this procedure:

1. Presiding officer opens the hearing and states the purpose.
2. Brief description of issue by County staff.
3. Presentation, if applicable, by affected or interested persons.
4. Open discussion by members of the general public.
5. Discussion by the County Board.
6. Public hearing closed by Chair.
7. Decision of the County Board.

At any time during the process, the County Board may address any questions as deemed appropriate.

The County Board may alter the public hearing procedure as needed to assure that the hearings are conducted in an orderly, fair, and expeditious manner, including establishing reasonable time limits for speakers individually or on each side of the issue before the Board.

Rules adopted for public hearing procedures are intended to promote an orderly discussion, to give every person an opportunity to be heard, and to ensure that no individual is embarrassed by exercising the right to free speech.

All comments by members of the public shall be made at the microphones, if available, and individuals making comments shall first give their name and address. This is required for an official record of the public hearing. Members of the public interested in addressing the County Board are requested to sign in and make it known at the appropriate time that they wish to speak.

H. Audience/Citizen Requests

The County Board prefers all business matters initiated by citizens coming before them to first be reviewed by staff and scheduled for discussion on the County Board agenda.

If an individual seeks to appear before the County Board, he/she should notify County Administration of his/her intention and the issue to be presented. Staff will confer with the individual, address the issue, and, if necessary, schedule the issue accordingly on the County Board agenda after consultation with the County Board Chair.

Chisago County also has a public comment session during each regular Board meeting. At the call of the Chair and after signing in, individuals will have an opportunity to address concerns to the County Board. The Rules of Conduct for the public comment session are posted in the County Board Room. Each comment is limited to 3 minutes. However, the Chair has the discretion to allow individuals greater than the 3 minute time limitation during for topic experts, or for individuals speaking for multiple parties.

Generally, all Planning Commission and/or Zoning matter shall be decided before Citizen's Forum, or any other items where the Board of Commissioners acts as a 'quasi-judicial' Board.

I. Board Committees

For the purpose of assisting the Board in carrying on its business, committees shall be formed and shall be composed of members as determined by resolution of the Board. Minutes of the committee meetings shall be kept and shall become official upon approval of the committee. All actions of the committees are considered recommendations to the County Board or appropriate committee.

J. Quorum

A quorum is necessary for transaction of business. A majority of the members of the Board constitutes a quorum and no business shall be transacted unless approved by a majority (three votes) of the whole County Board (Minnesota Statutes 375.07).

Less than a majority of members may convene a meeting, but no business may be transacted. Less than a majority may adjourn the meeting.

Any County Board member who, for any reason, anticipates or plans an absence at any regular or special meeting, is encouraged to contact the County Board Chair or the County Administrator to indicate his or her planned absence.

K. Role of Presiding Officer (Chair)

The presiding officer of the meeting is the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, the presiding officer will be a Vice Chair. The duties and powers of the presiding officer include the following:

1. Preside at all meetings of the County Board.
2. Preserve order and decide questions raised by members subject to appeal to the Board.
3. Vote all questions regularly moved and announce the result.
4. Serve as representative of the Board in execution of contracts, orders, determinations, and minutes of the Board.
5. At discretion of the Chair, the Chair may allow individuals greater than the 3 minute time limitation during Citizen's Forum for topic experts, or for individuals speaking for multiple parties.

L. Addressing the County Board

Formal protocol is used when speaking to the County Board. The County Board Chair is addressed as Mr. /Madam Chair and other Commissioners are addressed as Commissioner or Commissioner "last name". Members of the public may speak on any matter before the County Board when recognized by the Chair and within established procedures as outlined in the guidelines.

M. County Administrator

The County Administrator or designee shall attend all meetings of the County Board. The County Administrator represents the staff at the meetings. The County Administrator may participate in the discussion or recommend a resolution or action to the County Board. A member of the Board may call on the County Administrator to participate in the discussion or request a verbal recommendation on any subject pending before the Board.

The County Administrator or designee shall prepare a written agenda for all regular and special meetings of the County Board. The County Administrator or designee shall also:

1. Makes regular entries of all Board resolutions and decisions upon all questions.
2. Records the vote of each member on any question submitted to the Board.
3. Preserves and files all business acted upon by the Board.

4. Certifies, under seal of the County, copies of any and all resolutions or decisions of the Board.
5. Performs such further duties as designated by the Board.

V. RULES OF PROCEDURE

A. Statement of Purpose of the Board

The County Board is the body charged by law with the ultimate management and control of all of the affairs of Chisago County. As such, it operates as a deliberative and legislative assembly, meeting to discuss and determine the direction and policies of the County within the framework of state and federal law and ordinances the County Board may adopt. The various elected and appointed officials charged by law or the County Board with the operation of substantive areas of service delivery must conduct the management of their respective departments within the limits established by law and the County Board.

B. Statement of Principles of the Rules

The foundation for Rules of Order lies in the basic and enduring principles of rights. Specifically enunciated, these rights include the right of the majority to rule, the right of the minority to be heard, and the right of the individual to participate in the decision-making process. Along with these rights are important canons of efficiency; namely, attend to one matter at a time, and the balancing of the affirmative and negative factions to a pending matter.

Finally, the Rules foster courtesy and decorum, holding firm to the maxim that one must debate motions, not members. All members should conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

C. Statement of Purpose of the Rules

The Rules intend to strike a procedural balance that considers all principles and enunciates a specific process by which those principles interact and work. The Rules are representative of principles, both to give specific guidance on method and to provide a reasonable compromise in the event of conflict.

IF AN ISSUE IS NOT COVERED UNDER THE CHISAGO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RULES OF PROCEDURE, ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER (NEWLY REVISED) WILL APPLY.

VI. TYPES OF COUNTY BOARD ACTION

A. Resolution

The County Board takes formal actions by resolution (Minnesota Statutes 373.02), ordinance (Minnesota Statutes 375.51), or a motion, second and majority support

by members of the Board. A motion may be introduced by any member of the County Board.

The main motion in the form of a resolution is the means by which a member may present a substantive proposal to the County Board for consideration and action. Since it is the basic motion for the transaction of business only one subject may be considered at a time and the main motion may be postponed only when no other motions are before the County Board.

B. Ordinance

The County Board may take formal action by ordinance (Minnesota Statutes 375.51.) An ordinance is a legislative act prescribing general, uniform, and permanent rules of conduct relating to the affairs of the County Board. Action shall be taken by ordinance when required by law, or to prescribe permanent rules of conduct which continue in force until repealed, or where such conduct is enforced by penalty.

C. General Consensus

The County Board provides informal direction by consensus. Informal direction is most often used to provide staff with preliminary Board perspective on a matter which will require future formal action. Informal direction is also used to provide additional insight into formal actions previously taken. Informal direction standing alone does not establish Board policy or authorize action.

D. Policy Development

Authority for the development of policies in Chisago County is granted to the County Board through Minnesota Statutes Chapter 373 (Counties, Powers, Duties and Privileges), Minnesota Statutes Chapter 375 (County Boards) and other statutes.

With the powers granted within these statutes, the County Board may delegate certain authority, as appropriate. These delegations on authority may be rescinded at any time by the Board.

The County Board may at any time refer an item or resolution to the appropriate Committee for further review and deliberation.

VII. COUNTY BOARD AGENDA

A. Preparation and Distribution

The County Administrator shall cause preparation of the agenda and supporting material for each regular and special meeting. Members of the Board may request an item to be placed on the agenda by informing the County Administrator.

Copies of the agenda and supporting material are made available to County staff, public, and media as appropriate. A distribution list is maintained in the County Administration office. Members of the public who are interested in following issues considered by the Board may register their name and address with County Administration to be placed on the agenda distribution list.

The agenda and minutes are available on the Chisago County web site at www.chisagocounty.us.

B. Order of Business

The order of business for each regular meeting of the County Board shall be as follows:

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of agenda
4. Committee reports (monthly)
5. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
6. Public Comment
7. Business
8. Miscellaneous
9. Adjournment

The order of business may be changed as needed to accomplish objectives and priorities of the meeting. The order of business may be changed at the recommendation of the Chairperson, any members of the Board, or the County Administrator, subject to County Board consensus.

C. Agenda

The agenda consists of all items which require discussion, review, or action. Items of business within the agenda are considered individually and in the order of business noted on the agenda or at the discretion of the Board Chairperson.

D. Committee Reports/Commissioner Updates

Commissioners will give reports or updates on various meetings attended on a monthly basis.

E. Official Records

The County Administrator or designee (Clerk of the Board) shall cause preparation of the official minutes of each meeting. Board meeting minutes shall be kept in accordance with all provisions of statute in order to provide an accurate record of County Board actions. The record is not intended to be a verbatim transcript of all discussion and debate; the record is primarily a compilation of official actions.

The minutes of the County Board meeting shall be prepared and submitted for approval at the next succeeding County Board meeting. Official proceedings of

County Board meetings shall be published in the official County newspaper (Minnesota Statutes 375.12). The official Board proceedings are distributed to staff and interested parties, and are also available on the Chisago County web site at www.chisagocounty.us.

The official public record of County Board meetings is available in the County Administration office.

All regular County Board meetings will be broadcast on the Chisago County website at www.chisagocounty.us.

VIII. COUNTY BOARD COMMITTEES

A. Special Committees

The Board may establish a special committee or task force as deemed necessary. A special committee or task force shall advise the Board as directed and may report recommendations to the Board for appropriate action. Unless expressly stated in the creation of the special committee or task force, it shall automatically dissolve when its work is accepted by the Board.

IX. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. Policy

The County Board appoints individuals/citizens to various boards, committees, or commissions, (hereinafter referred to as committees) which have been established by the County Board or pursuant to Minnesota Statutes and in Board policy. The County Administration will maintain a complete list of committees and their underlying source of creation.

The current list of committees is available in the office of the County Administrator.

B. Role and Purpose of Committees

Each committee serves a statutory, policy, or operational purpose to further the interests of Chisago County. Each committee may have specific staff assigned and designated to support its function. The function and reporting relationship to the Board varies from committee to committee.

Committees are established to serve a variety of functions. The fundamental purposes for utilizing committees in support of County government are:

1. To involve members of the public in the decision making process.
2. To meet requirements of state law.

3. To ask residents to help define community standards and norms.
4. To provide technical expertise in certain areas.
5. To serve as advocates for the County.
6. To provide an independent sounding-board for issues, ideas, and policy matters.

C. Operating Procedures

Appointments are made by the County Board. Individuals appointed by the County Board to committees are authorized to receive a per diem reimbursement for attendance at regular or special meetings of such committees. An annual resolution establishing the per diem rate is adopted by the County Board at the annual organizational meeting.

Additionally, Minnesota Statutes 375.06 provides, in part, that “members of the County Boards in counties other than Hennepin, Ramsey, and St. Louis may be paid a per diem pursuant to section 375.055, subd.1, for each day necessarily occupied in the discharge of their official duties while acting on any committee under the direction of the Board...” Furthermore, the Minnesota Attorney General has concluded:

Thus, County Commissioners are authorized to receive annual salaries and may also be paid “per diem” for performing the duties of office, including work on committees “under the direction of the Board,” and individual services as commissioners “when required by law.”

Compensation shall not be authorized for public officials or employees of other jurisdictions who serve on such committees or advisory bodies by virtue of their office.

D. Resignations

All written and verbal resignations of committee members are acknowledged by the Board and authorization is given to begin the open appointments process to fill the vacancy.

E. Terms

The terms of the appointees to the various committees vary per committee, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes or at the discretion of the County Board. The County Administrator maintains a complete list of all committees, including information on member terms and applicable term limits. Annually, the County Administrator will request all advisory committee members to express their interest in remaining on their respective committee.

F. Ex-Officio Members

Ex-Officio members on any committees are non-voting members.

G. Appointment of Chairs

Chairs of various committees are selected according to committee bylaws.

X. CODE OF ETHICS

Effective county government is premised upon public respect and confidence in the integrity and principles of the elected Board members.

It is the belief of the County Board that the trust bestowed upon them as elected officials is of utmost importance in the relationship between themselves and the public. With this belief, the following statements serve to augment the Code of Ethics and further emphasize the priority and commitment the County Board has placed on ethical standards.

In the execution of their official duties, all County Board members shall strive to:

- Observe the highest moral and ethical standards.
- Maintain and respect confidentiality or private and confidential information.
- Avoid discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, national origin, age, disability, marital status, place of residence, or status with regard to public assistance.
- Comply with the ethical obligations imposed by law, including Minnesota Statutes 10A.07, 10A.071, 382.18, 471.87-895, including, where appropriate, disclosing conflicts of interest, abstaining from decision-making, eliminating conflicts of interest, and declining gifts.
- Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where all individuals may feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
- Allow citizens, staff, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views. Be tolerant, respectful, attentive and professional at all times. Avoid comments, body language, or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect for the presentations from citizens, staff, or colleagues.

XI. CITIZENS

A. Public Communication

Individual Citizen Outreach. The County Board believes members of the public have the right to be informed of the Board's process and decisions and should have the opportunity to present their views to the Board. Meetings are open to the public. Board agendas are available on the county website, by email, or mailed to interested parties at their request. The County Board encourages the residents of Chisago County to participate in all aspects of the Board's business, including citizen committees, commissions, and advisory groups.

Information/News Media Outreach. Chisago County information is distributed through announcements to local news media and in articles provided by staff to local news publications. Information is also available on the Chisago County web site.

Public Hearings Outreach. The County Board is interested in securing optimal public input on matters of business. In addition to hearings required by law, public hearings and open forums may be conducted at the discretion of the Board.

B. Open Meeting Law

All regular and committee meetings of the County Board and notice of such meetings are subject to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13D.01: Open Meeting Law.

The County Board may hold closed meetings as authorized by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13D.01. Before closing a meeting, the Board will state on record the specific grounds permitting the meeting to be closed and describe the subject to be discussed.

C. Audience Participation at Board Meetings

It is the intention of these rules to support the interest of the general public in following Board business during their meetings.

Audience/Citizen's Comments. Interested citizens have an opportunity to appear and speak on any issue or topic related to County Board business in accordance with the Rules of Conduct.

To the extent possible, interested citizens shall notify the County Administration office of their intent to speak at the meeting and the issue to be discussed. In an effort to encourage efficiency and early resolution of issues, the County Board recommends that citizens first contact staff to try to resolve matters before coming formally to the County Board meeting.

Distribution of the Agenda. Members of the public who are interested in following issues considered by the County Board may register their name and email address with the County Administrator to be placed on the agenda distribution list. The agendas are emailed prior to the regularly scheduled County Board meeting. As previously stated, the agenda and supportive materials are made available to the public at the County Board meeting.

D. Responding to Correspondence/Inquiries/Complaints from Citizens

County Board members and staff are committed to customer service and will endeavor to provide timely and efficient response and communication to the citizens of Chisago County.

Written. Upon receipt of a written inquiry, request for information, or complaint about Chisago County business which has been sent to a Board member, upon notification and directions from the County Administrator or designee, staff will confer with the member to determine the appropriate course of action. The inquiry

will be handled as directed with the County Administrator or designee advising the Board member(s) upon completion.

Telephone. Incoming telephone calls requesting a specific Board member are forwarded to the Board member per his/her instructions. Administration staff will periodically review with Board members the preferred methods of handling telephone inquiries. Every effort will be made to maintain open lines of communication between Board members and their constituents.

Telephone calls requesting information about specific areas of County business are forwarded to the appropriate department. Customer service is of primary importance to the County Board and staff.

XII. STAFF

A. County Administrator

The position of County Administrator is established pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 375A.06. The County Administrator is the administrative head of the County, responsible for the administration of the affairs of the County delegated to him/her by Minnesota Statutes and the County Board. The County Board has approved a job description which outlines in detail the duties and responsibilities of the County Administrator.

In general, the County Administrator supervises the departments which function under the jurisdiction of the Chisago County Board. The County Administrator coordinates the various activities of the County, unifies the management of its affairs, and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the structure of County departments and functions, including reporting relationships, physical facilities, and locations. The County Administrator is accountable for hiring, training, advising, motivating, and appraising the performance of subordinates.

The County Administrator recommends the annual budget and long-range capital expenditure programs to the Board for approval.

The County Administrator recommends to the Board proposed policies concerning the administrative affairs of the County. The County Administrator will keep the Board informed, make recommendations, and comment upon legislative initiatives which affect the County and, as directed by the Board, will represent the County in its relations with other governments. The County Administrator has authority over the non-elected department heads, recommends short and long-term goals to the Board, and periodically measures organizational and individual accomplishments against goals, objectives, and timetables.

The County Board is responsible for annually evaluating the performance of the County Administrator and will review the evaluation with the Administrator. The evaluation results will be reviewed with the County Board and a copy of the evaluation will be placed in the Administrator's personnel file. During the course of the year, if Commissioners have performance concerns regarding the Administrator, they are encouraged to discuss said concerns with the Chair and Vice Chair.

B. Role of Staff

The County Administrator, with the support of staff, in a timely and responsible manner, answers inquiries and requests regarding issues and concerns brought by Board members or the citizens of Chisago County. In certain instances, Board members may want assistance of County staff in evaluating policy and/or programmatic changes. Board members who wish to initiate policy or program change are encouraged to first present such requests for discussion and possible direction to the County Administrator and staff.

Functions which are deemed routine, such as interpretation of policy and procedure, general constituent business, and/or research which require minimal time may be directed, by the Board or individual member, to the County Administrator or designee for action.

C. Legislative Protocol for Staff

Staff participation should be immediately communicated to the County Administrator.

If a member of staff lobbies in a professional capacity, either at the request of a legislator or a professional association, she/he must note in testimony that she/he is speaking as a professional, not as a County representative. Any testimony given or contacts made by staff should be communicated to the County Administrator. Staff should not presume to speak for the County Board unless the Board's positions have been reviewed or staff has checked with the Board on specific issues.

When the County is paying the dues for membership in a professional association, staff should not take a position within that professional association that is inconsistent with County Board policy.

Staff and appointed representatives shall notify the County Board of a pending appointment to an advisory board or task force initiated outside of the scope of County Board authority.