

Tracy Rural County Fire Protection District

Board of Directors

John Muniz
John Vieira
Pete Reece
Bob Pombo
Jeff Ramsey

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TRACY RURAL COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT CODE OF ETHICS POLICY

SUBJECT: Code of Ethics Policy

DATE UPDATED: March 6, 2020

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

As members of the Tracy Rural County Fire Protection District, we recognize our responsibility to those we serve and the ethical standards that are expected of us. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we put the interests of our citizens first and carry out our duties in most effective and with the highest ethical standards.

SECTION 2: POLICY

Members of the Tracy Rural County Fire Protection District is committed to providing excellence in legislative leadership that result in the provision of the highest quality of services to its constituents while maintaining a high ethical standard in the process. No Board member has more power than any other Board member and all should be treated with equal respect. The work of the District is a team effort. All individuals should work together in the collaborative process, assisting each other in conducting the affairs of the District in compliance with the highest ethical standards under all applicable laws, rules and procedures.

SECTION 3: PROCEDURES

In order to assist in the governance of the behavior between and among members of the Board of Directors and District staff, the following rules shall be observed:

- A. The primary responsibility of the Board of Directors is the formulation and evaluation of policy. All matters concerning the operational aspects of the District are to be brought to the attention of the Fire Chief.
- B. Recognize that we serve in a position of public trust that imposes responsibility to use publicly owned resources effectively and judiciously.
- C. Board members are to comply with all California laws and statutes affecting the ethical behavior of Board members including, but not limited to compliance with the Brown Act and the Administrative Procedures Act.

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- D. The needs of the District's constituents should be the priority of the Board of Directors. When a Director believes he/she may have a conflict of interest, the legal counsel shall be requested to offer advice whether one exists or not.
 - E. Board members are expected to conduct themselves ethically, honestly and with integrity in all District business. This means principles of fairness, good faith and respect consistent with laws, regulations and District policies govern conduct with others both inside and outside the District. Each situation needs to be examined in accordance with this *Code of Ethics*. No unlawful practice or a practice at odds with these standards can be justified on the basis of customary practice, expediency, or achieving a "higher" purpose.
 - F. Differing viewpoints are healthy in the decision-making process. Individuals have the right to disagree with ideas and opinions, but without being disagreeable. Once the Board of Directors takes action, all Directors commit to support said action and not to create barriers to the implementation of said action.
 - G. Board members are not to discuss personnel or legal issues that have been conducted in closed session outside of those closed sessions.
 - H. Board members are expected to avoid conflicts of interest regarding financial dealings or Board positions on actions before the Board. Board members are expected to prioritize positions and opinions to best serve the public and District's interests and not personal interests of the Board member.
 - I. Board members are not to hold private meetings with a majority of the Board present, nor are they to use any form of serial communication to get around this prohibition.
 - J. Directors should commit themselves to focusing on issues and not personalities. The presentation of the opinions of others should be encouraged. Cliques and voting blocs based on personalities rather than issues should be avoided.
 - K. In accordance with TRCFPD Bylaws, the Board will prepare in advance of Board Meetings and be familiar with issues on the Agenda.
 - L. Make no promises on behalf of the District. Board Members will frequently be asked to explain a Board action and/or give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with community members. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of policy and to refer to District staff for further information. According to the Ralph M. Brown Act, it is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Board action, or to promise District staff will do something specific.

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- M. Board members shall recuse themselves from any Board vote involving a matter in which the Board member has a personal financial interest.
- N. In seeking clarification on informational items, Directors shall contact the Fire Chief, who will obtain the supplemental information from management staff.
- O. In seeking clarification for policy-related concerns, especially those involving personnel, legal action, land acquisition and development, finances, and programming, said concerns should be referred directly to the Fire Chief and District's Legal Counsel.
- P. Board members are expected to avoid verbal or written public statements regarding the District or the District's position on a public matter without the express approval of majority of the Board.
- Q. No Board member or staff of the District may directly or indirectly solicit any gift and/or accept or receive any gift, or multiple gifts from the same donor, having an aggregated value of seventy-five dollars or more when:
 - (1) it appears that the gift is intended to influence the Board member or staff in the exercise or performance of his or her official powers or duties;
 - (2) the gift could reasonably be expected to influence the Board member or staff in the exercise or performance of his or her official powers or duties; or
 - (3) the gift is intended as a reward for any official action on the part of the Board member or staff.

Board Members Behavior and Conduct: Board Members who intentionally and repeatedly do not follow proper conduct are subject to be reprimanded or formally censured by the Board.

Approved as to form:

Policy/Procedure approved by:
