

ELECTED OFFICIALS
CODE OF DECORUM
Village of Oakdale, Nebraska

It is the policy of the Village of Oakdale that the proper operation of democratic government, requires that public officials and employees be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; that governmental decisions and policy be made in proper channels of the governmental structure; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. In recognition of these goals, a code of conduct for all Village officials and employees is adopted. The Village of Oakdale may adopt, amend and/or rescind this code. If any portion of the Code of Conduct is found to conflict with Village Ordinance or State Law, the provisions of the Village Ordinance or State Law shall be followed.

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest. Mark Twain

Board Chairman

- Presides at all meeting of the Village Board
- May debate any matter coming before the Board
- Votes when his or her vote shall be decisive and the Board is equally divided on any pending matter.
- Has superintending control of all officers and affairs of the Municipality and shall see that the State and Municipal law are complied with.
- Has the power to approve or veto any ordinance, order, by-law, resolution, award of contract, or allowance of a claim passed by the Board.
- Demonstrates respect, kindness, consideration and courtesy to others.
- Prepares in advance of Board meetings, and becomes familiar with agenda items.
- Will not willfully and knowingly use confidential information acquired in the course of and by reason of their official duties for personal gain. Including confidentiality is executive sessions.
- Shall communicate to the Board, such information and recommend such measures as in the Chairman's opinion may tend to improve the municipality.
- May call for a special meeting
- Make judgement calls on proclamations and similar situations
- Recognized as spokesperson for the Village. The Chairman may designate another.
- Selects substitute for Village representation when unable to attend events.
- Recommends subcommittees and names for appointment to committees for Village confirmation.
- Leads the Board into an effective, cohesive working team.
- Signs documents on behalf of the Village.
- Serves as official delegate of the Village at events and conferences.
- Provides advance notice to Village Clerk if he or she is unable to attend any called meeting.
- Demonstrates honesty and integrity in every action and statement.
- Inspires public confidence in Oakdale Village government.
- Treats all people fairly, based upon authority and recognized standards.

Vice Chairman

- Chairs Board meeting in absence of the Chairman.
- May debate any matter coming before the Board and may move, second, debate and vote from the chair, subject only to such limitations of debate, as are imposed by these rules on all members, and shall not be deprived of any rights and privileges of a Board member by reason of his or her acting as presiding officer.
- Performs the duties of the Chairman if the Chairman is absent or disabled.
- Represents Village at ceremonial functions as the request of Chairman.

Trustees

All members of the Village Board have equal votes. No member has more power than any other member, and all should be treated with equal respect. The Board is the policy maker of Oakdale government, and therefore the Board should feel free to ask for, and receive thorough answers to reasonable questions. It is their responsibility to make good policy by understanding the form of government and the role they play in that form. The Board shall make all decisions in Oakdale's best interest.

Board Trustees should:

- Fully participate in Board meetings and other public forums while demonstrating respect, kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others.
- Prepare in advance of Board meetings and be familiar with agenda items.
- Will not willfully and knowingly use confidential information acquired in the course of and by reason of their official duties for personal gain. Including confidentiality in executive sessions.
- Represent the Board at ceremonial functions at the request of the Chairman.
- Apply knowledge and expertise to the assigned activity and to the interpersonal relationships that are part of the job in a consistent, confident, and competent manner.
- Serve as a model of leadership and civility to the employees of the Village and the citizens of the community.
- Inspire public confidence in Oakdale government.
- Provide advance notice to the Clerk whenever possible if he or she is unable to attend any called meeting.
- A vacancy will exist on the Board if a Trustee is absent from more than five (5) consecutive regular meeting unless the absences are excused by a majority vote of the remaining members. This procedure, by law, requires notice and hearing be provided to the Trustee.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement.

Meeting Procedures

Regular Oakdale Board Meetings are held on the second (2nd) Monday of every month. The Chairman or three (3) Trustees can call for a special meeting, the object of which shall be submitted to the Board in writing.

In chairing official meetings of the Board, the Chairman, or Vice Chairman shall:

- Maintain order, decorum and the fair and equitable treatment of all speakers.
- Keep discussion and question focused on specific agenda items under consideration.
- Open public hearings at the designated time(s) and inform those in attendance that each person addressing the Board shall step up to the podium, state their name and address for the record, and unless further time is granted by the Board, limit their remarks to five (5) minutes in length.

Elected Officials Conduct in Public Meetings

- Every Board member desiring to speak shall address the Chairman, and upon recognition by the presiding officer, shall confine him or herself to the question under debate, avoiding all personalities and indecorous language.
- A member once recognized, shall not be interrupted when speaking, unless the presiding officer is required to call the member to order or as otherwise provided in this article. If a member, while speaking, is called to order, they shall cease speaking until the question of order is determined, and if in order, the member shall be permitted to proceed.
- A member having the floor shall yield the same for a point of order addressed to the chair, a question of personal privilege raised by any member and an inquiry for information addressed to the Chair. The member may, upon request of any member, temporarily yield the floor for a question or a statement by any member, at the conclusion of which they will again be entitled to the floor.
- The Board may, according to Robert's Rule, limit debate or discussion on any matter, by calling the question on a motion. Calling the question requires a second and must pass by a two-thirds vote.
- A Board member may request, through the Chairman, the privilege of having a transcript of their statement on any subject under consideration of the Board entered in the minutes.

Elected Officials Conduct With Village Staff

- Clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual is expected. Rude behavior toward staff is not acceptable.
- Question of Village Staff should be directed only to the Village Chairman, Attorney or Village Clerk. All requests for information concerning staff should be copied to the Chairman. Requests for follow up or directions to staff should be made only through the Chairman and should be in

writing so there is no confusion on the request. When in doubt about what staff contact is appropriate. Board members should contact the Chairman for direction. Materials supplied to a Trustee in response to a request will be made available to all members of the Board so that all have equal access to information.

- Trustees should never express concerns about the performance of an employee in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee's supervisor. Comments about staff performance should only be made to the Chairman through private correspondence or conversation.
- Trustees should not attempt to influence employees in their daily work or in the granting of Village licenses and permits.

Elected Officials Conduct with Consultants an the Public

- Making individual presenter feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality prejudice or disrespect should be evident. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to testimony that is presented.
- All speakers should be allowed the privilege of making an appropriate presentation without interruption. The Chairman should maintain order and decorum of the meeting. Questions directed to the public/consultant/engineers should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker.

Elected Officials Conduct With Other Agencies, Board & Commissins

- If an elected official appears before another governmental agency, legislative hearing or organization to give a statement on an issue, the elected official must clearly state: 1) if his/her statement reflects his/her personal opinion or if it is the official stance of the Village: 2) whether this is the majority or minority opinion of the Board
- If the elected official is officially representing the Village, he/she must support and advocate the official Village position on an issue, and not his/her personal viewpoint.
- Any public comments by an elected official should be clearly made as an individual opinion and not as representation of the entire body unless directed to do so. It is inappropriate for a Trustee to contract a Board or Commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business or developer.

Elected Officials Contact with the Media

- When dealing with the Media, never go off the record.
- If an individual Trustee is contacted by the media, the Trustee should be clear about whether his/her comments represent the Village or his/her personal opinion.

Elected Officials Conduct in Unofficial Settings

- Trustees should make no promises on behalf of the Board. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of the Village policy and to refer them to Village Staff for further information. It is inappropriate to promise Board action or to promise that Village staff will do something specific (fix a pothole etc....)

- It is acceptable for Trustees to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory, comments about other Trustees, their opinions or actions.

Requirement of the Public When Addressing the Board as a Body

- Any member of the public may direct a written communication to the Board on any matter concerning Village business by directing the communication to the Board or Clerk. Any such written communication that cannot be handled administratively shall be placed on the agenda at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- The presiding officer shall, from time to time, make such rules, as he/she may deem necessary to fulfill and carry out the intent of the provision of this section.
- Each person addressing the Board shall step up to the podium state his/her name and address for the record and unless further time is granted, limit the remarks to five minutes in length. All remarks shall be addressed to the Board as a body and not to any member thereof. No person other than the Board and the person having the floor shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Board, without permission of the Chairman.
- Nothing in this section shall prohibit any citizen from contacting a Trustee regarding an issue of concern.

Sanctions

- Members of the public who do not follow proper decorum after a warning in a public hearing may be barred from further testimony at that meeting or removed from the council chambers.
- Any Village Staff, who does not follow proper decorum in their dealing with Trustees, other Staff or the public, may be disciplined in accordance with Village Personnel regulations.
- Village Trustees who intentionally do not follow proper decorum may be reprimanded formally censured by the Board and or lose seniority or committee assignments. Serious infractions of the Code of Conduct could lead to their sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Board.
- It is the responsibility of the Chairman to initiate action if a Board member's behavior may warrant sanction. If the Chairman does not take action, the alleged violations can be brought up with the full Board in a public meeting.
- If a violation is outside the observed behavior of the Chairman or Board, the alleged violation should be reported to the Chairman who will then conduct a study on the report and take the next appropriate action. These actions can be, but are not limited to: discussion and counseling the individual on violations; recommending sanction to the full Board to consider in a public meeting; or forming a Board ad hoc subcommittee to review the allegation, the investigation and its findings, as well as to recommend sanction options for Board consideration.