



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Governing Principles for Adams County, Colorado

Introduction:

These Rules of Engagement are the protocol for the Board of County Commissioners' ("BoCC") interactions and communications with proscribed individuals and categories of people with whom they direct, interact with, and serve. These rules are not intended to discourage free discussion and communication with the Board of County Commissioners or individual members thereof. Rather they establish a code of decorum intended to facilitate and enhance the effectiveness of those communications, and to ensure that the policies and directives of the Board of County Commissioners are carried out timely, accurately and efficiently.

I. Board of County Commissioners

Guiding Principles of Communication:

The Board of County Commissioners shall adhere to high levels of professionalism and ethical standards, both individually and as a Board, in all its communications and interactions both formal and informal within their official capacities. These communications will be guided by the following general principles:

- The Board of County Commissioners commits to treat all individuals who appear before them or do business with or on behalf of the County with respect, courtesy, honesty, and integrity.
- The Board of County Commissioners shall strictly adhere to and abide by the requirements of the Colorado Open Meetings Laws and strive for complete transparency and accountability in its decision making and conduct of day-to-day County business.
- Direction and decision-making by the Board of County Commissioners shall occur as a board. Individual members of the Board shall not attempt to exercise independent authority over the County Manager, director, official, or employee thereof.

Role of the Board of County Commissioners:

- The job of the Board of County Commissioners is to lead Adams County Government towards an appointed vision and set of goals. The vision and goals shall be set by the BoCC. The BoCC's vision and goals shall reflect the needs of the citizens and taxpayers as they relate to Adams County's activities and scope of influence. The BoCC is the linkage between Adams County Government and the citizens and taxpayers of Adams County.
- The Board of County Commissioners connects its authority and accountability to the citizens and taxpayers of Adams County, and sees its task as servant-leaders to and from them.
- The role of the Board of County Commissioners is separate and distinct from the role of the County Manager, Deputy County Managers, Department Directors, and staff insofar as the BoCC's vision and goals are derived by looking outwardly to the needs and interests of Adams County citizens and taxpayers, while implementation of the BoCC's vision and goals are the responsibility of the County Manager.
- The Board of County Commissioners acknowledges the roles and statutory responsibilities of the county's other Elected and Appointed Officials, as well as the BoCC's duty to provide funding and organizational support necessary for them to carry out their statutory duties.
- The Board of County Commissioners will appoint/hire, review and hold accountable the County Manager and the County Attorney's performance.

Communications By and Between Commissioners:

- The Board of County Commissioners holds itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity and commits to abide by both the spirit and the letter of the Adams County Code of Ethics. The BoCC recognizes that the actions of one Commissioner can affect the reputation and integrity of the BoCC as a whole. If a Commissioner suspects a violation of BoCC policy or applicable law by another Commissioner, s/he shall bring the matter to the attention of the individual Commissioner and the BoCC, and work to resolve the matter expeditiously.
- If an interpersonal conflict or problem develops amongst individual members of the BoCC, such members shall work with only the people involved and strive to settle the conflict or problem in a constructive manner.
- Full disclosure and communication amongst BoCC members is necessary to enable the BoCC to work together to advance the interests of Adams County citizens, taxpayers, and government. To insure that all Commissioners are informed, the BoCC commits to promptly communicate with one another when issues affecting the integrity, interests,

and/or operation of Adams County government are discussed outside the presence of the full BoCC.

- Citizen trust in government is critically important, and the Board of County Commissioners recognizes that a key to building and maintaining that trust is to place a high value on respecting other BoCC members and those with whom the BoCC works and serves. To that end, the BoCC agrees to communicate openly with one another, to take others' concerns seriously, to work together as a team, and to make an effort not just to listen but to try and understand the points of views of others.
- Members of the Board of County Commissioners must represent unconflicted loyalty and accountability to the interests of all citizens of Adams County. This accountability supersedes any competing interests, including loyalty to political parties, other elected officials, members of appointed boards, as well as when any Commissioner is acting as an individual consumer of the County government's services. Commissioners will respect and support the legitimacy and authority of all BoCC decisions, regardless of any Commissioner's personal position on a matter.

II. County Manager

Role of County Manager:

The BoCC's official connection to county organizational operations shall be through the County Manager. As the policy-making body of the county, the BoCC is responsible for visionary policies and goals. The BoCC must clearly communicate its vision, goals, and related objectives to the County Manager. Implementation of operational policies and ancillary decision making, consistent with the BoCC's vision and goals, is then the responsibility of the County Manager to implement as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Duties of County Manager:

The BoCC's job is generally confined to establish the broadest vision and policies. Implementation and subsidiary decision making is delegated to the County Manager.

- Management of County Organizational Structure—this includes annual evaluation of departmental structure and duties throughout the county and recommendations to BoCC for more efficient and/or cost-effective ways to provide county services. The County Manager also provides the selection and management of all department directors under the Board's responsibility.
- Operational Policies—the County Manager shall be responsible for delivering, implementing, and enforcing written operational policies consistent with the BoCC's vision and objectives including but not limited to: Purchasing Policies, Employment Policies, Ethics Policy, Emergency Preparedness & Communications Policy, Performance

Measures Policy, a Customer Service Policy, and any other such written policies as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.

- Financial—it is the County Manager’s duty to annually produce and present a fiscally responsible balanced budget recommendation to the BoCC. The County Manager’s budget recommendation must be consistent with the BoCC’s stated priorities in allocating amongst competing budget needs, meet statutory requirements, be based on credible projections of revenues and expenses, include contingency planning, and provisions for annual auditing and adequate fund reserves.
- Communication—The County Manager is responsible for communicating the BoCC’s visionary policies and goals to the elected officials, department directors, employees, and citizens pursuant to an adopted communications plan. Information that impacts the county’s ability to effectively implement BoCC visionary policies and goals must likewise be communicated by the County Manager to the BoCC in a timely manner.

Ethical Responsibilities of County Manager:

Within the scope of authority delegated to him/her by the BoCC, the County Manager shall not cause nor allow any policy, activity, or organizational action that is unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of commonly accepted business or professional ethics. Furthermore, to the extent of his/her ability, the County Manager shall not cause or allow any condition or action by a Commissioner, director, employee, or board member that is dishonest, disrespectful, or unprincipled. When the County Manager becomes aware of imprudent or unprincipled policies, behaviors, or conditions, s/he is responsible for remedying such matters to the extent possible and communicating the same to the BoCC. The County Manager shall not participate in Adams County politics or otherwise support in any way campaigns of Adams County elected officials or candidates.

Deputy County Manager(s):

To protect the BoCC and County from sudden loss of the County Manager services, and to assist the County Manager in the performance of his/her duties, the County Manager shall hire an appropriate number of Deputy County Managers to most effectively manage the operations of the County. It is the responsibility of the County Manager to keep the Deputy County Manager(s) fully advised of the BoCC and County Manager issues and processes so as to enable the Deputy County Manager(s) to effectively step in on a temporary or interim basis, as necessary.

Relationship with BoCC:

The BoCC’s interaction with the County Manager must recognize and be respectful of the authority that must necessarily be vested in the County Manager to enable him/her to perform

the functions and duties of that position. The County Manager is accountable only to the BoCC as a whole, and not to individual Commissioners. Therefore, no individual member of the Board of County Commissioners has authority over the County Manager. Information may be requested by individual Board members, but if such requests, in the County Manager's judgment, requires a material amount of resources or is detrimental to other necessities, the County Manager may ask for majority Board action on such requests. Except for the purpose of inquiry, the Board and its members shall deal with day-to-day administrative functions of all departments, under the Board's responsibility, solely through the County Manager and neither the Board nor any member thereof shall give orders or direction to any of the subordinates of the County Manager or County Attorney.

With the exception of the County Attorney, the County Manager shall have general authority over all county departments and Department Directors under the Board of County Commissioners. This authority shall include supervision and oversight of structural, budgetary, and day to day functions and management decisions required to carry out the objectives of the BoCC. It is the role of the County Manager to evaluate the performance of Department Directors, and to promptly address any performance concerns or disciplinary matters. When he/she concludes it is in the best interest of the County, the County Manager is also authorized to negotiate severance or transition agreements for any employee. The compensatory value of any such agreement shall not exceed six (6) months compensation, in addition to those benefits authorized for all separating employees. The County Manager must receive Board approval for any exceptions to this provision.

III. COUNTY ATTORNEY

Role of County Attorney:

The County Attorney is the legal representative of and advisor to the Board of County Commissioners in matters relating to the BoCC's official duties and functions as county officers. To assist in the performance of this duty, the County Attorney shall maintain and direct an office of licensed and experienced attorneys who shall also provide general legal services to other county elected officials, department directors, and appointed boards as authorized by the Board of County Commissioners. The County Attorney has a duty to keep the Board of County Commissioners fully advised of legal matters that affect or could potentially affect the BoCC or the operation of county government.

Limitations on Role:

The County Attorney is accountable to the BoCC acting as a body, and not to any individual Commissioner or the County Manager. The County Attorney shall not advise Commissioners,

elected officials, directors, or staff on individual personal or political matters, or matters outside the scope of that person's official duties.

Ethical Duties:

The County Attorney has an ethical duty to provide sound and well-researched legal advice that is guided and dictated by the County Attorney's independent and genuine view of what is in the best legal interests of the county. The County Attorney has a duty to communicate and deliver such advice irrespective of any real or perceived personal or political interests of any individual commissioner. As an officer of the legal system, the County Attorney shall abide by the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys, as adopted and amended by the Colorado Supreme Court. When the County Attorney or any members of the County Attorney's Office are acting in their capacities as prosecutors, they must maintain all control over prosecutorial discretion consistent with the Rules of Professional Conduct for prosecutors. The County Attorney shall not participate in Adams County politics or otherwise support in any way campaigns of Adams County elected officials or candidates.

Conflicts of Interest:

The County Attorney's principal duty is to provide legal advice and representation to the Board of County Commissioners. The County Attorney and members of his/her office are also responsible for providing general legal services to the elected officials, department directors and appointed boards of the County. In the event the interests of the BoCC and the interests of an elected officer, department director, or appointed board are in conflict, the allegiance of the County Attorney is to the Board of County Commissioners.

Attorney-Client Confidentiality:

Legal advice of the County Attorney given to the BoCC in executive session or otherwise is protected by the attorney-client privilege and must be kept confidential and private. The attorney-client privilege is held by the Board of County Commissioners and disclosure of confidential legal matters to third parties without consent of the BoCC majority shall be prohibited.

Authority of County Attorney:

The County Attorney does not exercise line authority over the County Manager or Department Directors. However, the County Attorney is responsible and accountable for ensuring that all department directors act consistent with legal policies and procedures recommended by the County Attorney's Office and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Such policies may include but not be limited to employment policies and procedures, procedures for

compliance with the Colorado Open Records Act, and Finance Department purchasing policies and procedures. It is also the responsibility of the County Attorney to maintain written policies that provide for the timely review of county contracts, policies, legislation, litigation, employment issues, and other matters requiring legal representation, review, direction, or consideration by the County Attorney's Office. These policies and procedures shall be adhered to by all department directors and all elected and appointed officials that utilize County Attorney's Office services.

IV. Adams County Employees

The Board of County Commissioners recognizes the critical role county employees have in carrying out the mission and vision set by the BoCC. Communication between the BoCC and county employees can facilitate the trust, understanding, and loyalty necessary for employees to provide the highest level of service to county taxpayers and citizens.

Forums of Communication Between BoCC and Employees:

There shall be two channels of direct communication of ideas between the Board of County Commissioners and Adams County employees: formal, and informal. Formal communication shall be facilitated through regular organized employee communication programs developed by the Director of Human Resources or by authorized county employee committees. Informal communications between members of the BoCC and county employees are also encouraged. While the BoCC does not provide individual direction to county employees, the BoCC does commit to listening and considering the feedback it receives from its employees, and to communicate all constructive or worthwhile ideas or concerns expressed by employees to the rest of the BoCC for consideration.

Chain of Command:

The Board of County Commissioners recognizes the importance of respecting the chain of command inherent in the county government structure. The BoCC will not undermine or disrupt the authority of department directors, elected officials, or other designated managers in handling employee relations issues.

County Intranet:

The County's intranet site will be the primary communication tool for the BoCC, Elected Officials, and County Manager to communicate important issues, programs, activities, and messages that affect county employees. Other forms of communication may be utilized as necessary to ensure employees are informed in a timely manner issues that impact the organization or their specific job duties.

V. Citizens and Taxpayers of Adams County

The BOCC's primary responsibilities are to represent the citizens and taxpayers of Adams County with vision and purpose and to establish an organization that achieves this mission within its statutory duties in a fiscally responsible manner. The BoCC, as a single entity and individually, is accountable to the citizens of Adams County. To remain accountable, the BoCC must create mechanisms for constant transparent communication with this most important stakeholder group.

Duties to Citizens:

- An essential step in achieving linkages to the citizens is to assess Adams County's community needs. The needs assessment and information gathering may occur in many forms; including, but not limited to:
 - direct personal communication by a taxpayer/citizen with a BoCC member;
 - neighborhood meetings;
 - town hall gatherings;
 - advisory boards;
 - surveys;
 - electronic submittals from the county's website, social media; and,
 - other standard forms of communication.

The BoCC will then strive to identify the greatest needs of the citizens, taxpayers, and patrons of the County in their scope of influence, and shall articulate these needs into a vision, purpose, and overarching governing principles.

- Opportunity for citizen communication will be a part of the agenda in the BoCC's weekly public hearings.
- Study session meetings are open to the public. The County will continue to ensure accessibility and transparency in the conducting of those meetings.
- Information provided to the BoCC such as staff reports, draft contracts, RFPs etc. for study sessions and the public hearing process will be made available to the general public via the county website and/or through other media and in the public hearing room prior to the occurrence of such meeting.
- Contracts, RFPs, bid awards and other records of decision will be noticed on the county's website in a timely manner.