

Town Trustee Handbook

Town of Hennessey

2022

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INTRODUCTION

Educating ourselves and creating a more stable local government should be the goal of all elected officials. With a more stable government, cities and towns can successfully meet the needs of the community. This handbook aims to help provide stability by compiling resources to assist in training your town trustees. By adopting a “best practices” resolution, your Town can continue working toward stability.

BEST PRACTICES RESOLUTION

Many cities establish their own “best practices” policies, approved by resolution, to ensure their Town sustains operational traditions that have worked. Many of those best practices deal with public transparency, trustee accountability and engagement in the operations of the Town, and staff responsibility. The “best practices” of the Town can consist of the following topics:

A. Elected Official Accountability: The Board of Trustees shall ensure accountability by:

- a. Attendance reporting to ensure other members and the public are aware of the attendance history of the elected officials.
- b. An annual training event with staff to review ethics, finances, operations, and to address the expectations and goals of the Town, including a self-assessment of the accomplishments and improvements needed by Board of Trustees and management to achieve the goals of the Town.
- c. The use of committees dealing with topics as the Board of Trustees deems appropriate, including financial and project related oversight.
- d. The use of well-defined purchasing policies of the Town to ensure management and staff are clear concerning the purchasing policies and expectations of the Town.
- e. The implementation of the “transparency” policies adopted by Board of Trustees to make information about town government easily accessible to the public.
- f. A “Code of Conduct” of Board of Trustees that is reviewed annually by Board of Trustees and readily available for Trustees reference. (see section below concerning ethics)

B. Management and Staff Accountability: The town board shall ensure management and staff accountability by:

- a. An annual evaluation and review of the departments of the town, with feedback to the employees concerning their job performance.

- b. An annual strategic planning or budget session with to evaluate the satisfaction of expectations and goals of the Town for the immediately preceding year and to ensure that the expectations and goals of the town have been met, and are clearly defined for both the trustees in the coming year and years.
- c. Monthly financial and expenditure reports provided to the trustees on a timely basis, including a proposed review and approval of a comprehensive fee schedule for all fees charged by the Town.
- d. Expenditure reporting by department.
- e. Implementation of the “transparency” policies adopted by the board to make information about Town government easily accessible to the public.
- f. Direction to all Town employees that a “whistleblower” policy exist for the Town.
- g. Compliance with a well-defined purchasing policy of the Town.
- h. An annual report of the departments of the Town that outlines the activities of each department, including the risks, liabilities and any litigation involving the Town.

Setting these minimal standards will ensure stability and continuity in operations.

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT & ROLE OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

ORGANIZATION & PERSONNEL

Oklahoma recognizes several forms of government, including Aldermanic, Council-Manager, Town Trustee, Strong Mayor or Town Charter and know how the rules apply for your form.

- Aldermanic: Mayor has the greatest authority.
- Council Manager: Town Manager has authority over day to day operations.
- Strong Mayor: Similar to the Town Manager form, but the Mayor has extensive authority.
- Town Trustee: Flexibility for the elected officials to decide how they want to handle it, and they should have clear rules.
- Charter: Refer to your charter for organizational rules.

All elected officials must understand their municipality's form of government to understand their role.

- What are the powers of the elected officials?
- Who is in charge of what aspects of Town government?
- What areas of operations are none of their business?
- What are the limits of their authority with personnel and why?

SUMMARY OF TRUSTEE ROLE: TOWN TRUSTEE FORM

The Town of Hennessey operates as a Town Trustee form of government. In the Town Trustee form of government, the roles of the mayor are outlined by statute as follows:

The mayor shall preside at meetings of the board and shall certify to the correct enrollment of all ordinances and resolutions passed by it. He/she shall be recognized as head of the town government for all ceremonial purposes and shall have such other powers, duties and functions as may be prescribed by law or ordinance. The mayor shall have all the powers, rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of a trustee, including the right to vote on questions. During the absence, disability or suspension of the mayor, the board shall elect from among its members an acting mayor. When a vacancy occurs in the office of mayor, the board shall elect another mayor from among its members to serve for the duration of the unexpired term.

The roles of the town trustees are also set by statute as:

All powers of a statutory town board of trustees, including the determination of matters of policy, shall be vested in the board of trustees. Without limitation of the foregoing, the board may:

- A. Appoint and remove, and confirm appointments of, designated town officers and employees as provided by law or ordinance;
- B. Enact municipal legislation subject to limitations as may now or hereafter be imposed by the Oklahoma Constitution and law;
- C. Raise revenue, establish rates for services and taxes, make appropriations, regulate salaries and wages and all other fiscal affairs of the town, subject to limitations as may now or hereafter be imposed by the Oklahoma Constitution and law;
- D. Inspect the books and accounts maintained by the town treasurer;
- E. Inquire into the conduct of any office, department or agency of the town, and investigate municipal affairs, or authorize and provide for such inquiries;
- F. Create, change and abolish offices, departments or agencies, other than those established by law; assign additional functions and duties to offices, departments and agencies established by this article; and define the duties, powers and privileges of all officers which are not defined by this article; and
- G. Grant pardons for violation of municipal ordinances, including the remission of fines and costs.

Again, the powers of the trustees belong to the group of trustees and are not individual powers that belong to each of the individual members. The group of trustees can divide functions (for example, by appointing individual members to supervise certain departments) and can hire an administrator and delegate authority as determined by the trustees.

MEETINGS & THE OPEN MEETING ACT

OPEN MEETING ACT SUMMARY

Meetings of public bodies (such as town trustees) are governed by the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act. **A violation of the Open Meeting Act can result in criminal charges against the individual Trustee.** The Open Meeting Act has four areas that cause the most concern:

1. **Defining Meeting:** The Open Meeting Act defines a meeting as "the conducting of business of a public body by a majority of its members being personally together." As you can see by the definition, an informal get-together involving three Trustees can constitute a "meeting." Further, there is no requirement that there be a vote taken, but only discussion.

Meetings cannot be held unless an agenda is posted and the public is advised that the meeting is going to take place. Therefore, in order to avoid any type of problem with an illegal meeting, each of you should be especially careful to avoid any discussion of any Town business, or any matter indirectly related to Town business, at any time in which three of you are present. It is the responsibility of the individual Trustees to avoid this problem. (Telephone or computer communication by a majority of members is also prohibited.)

Further, extreme care should be taken in regard to discussions held either immediately before or immediately after Trustees meetings.

2. **Notice and Agenda:** State law requires that an agenda be posted for any meeting that is to be held. If an item is not posted on an agenda, with the exception of new business that is discussed later, it should not be discussed or acted upon at a meeting of the Town Board of Trustees. (If three of you meet informally and discuss Town business, a violation of the Act occurs by the failure to post an agenda.)
3. **Consent Agenda:** A consent agenda is used by cities to allow approval, by one motion and vote, of a number of items that are considered routine. Staff will recommend those items that are included; any Trustee who wants a vote on any individual item can remove the item from consent. Additionally, Trustees can discuss any consent issue without removing it from the consent agenda.
4. **New Business:** New business for purposes of the Open Meeting Act is defined as "any

matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to posting of the agenda."

Based on the above definition, if an item arises, either from the Trustees or from the public, under the New Business portion of the agenda, the first question by the Trustees should be whether that matter could have been placed on the agenda. If it could have, and was not, it should not be discussed and no action should be taken; the matter should be placed on the next agenda so the public, not just those present at the meeting, will be on notice that the Town may take some action in regard to that item. The same is true in regard to items the Trustee wishes to discuss at the meeting; unless the item to be discussed is one that could not have been placed on the agenda, it should not be raised by Trustee under New Business. There is a mistaken assumption many times that New Business is a general catch-all that can be used to discuss any item.

There is no requirement under the Open Meeting Act that the Trustees allow the public to appear at a meeting and discuss any item they want under the "New Business" portion of the agenda. The only purpose of the New Business portion is to allow the Trustees to discuss those matters that are not on the agenda because they could not have been placed on the agenda because of the time in which they arose.

5. No item shall be consecutively placed on monthly board agendas unless that item concerns an ongoing project which requires discussion by the Trustees. Any routine reports shall be placed on the consent agenda with approval of a majority vote of the Trustees.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

Executive sessions can only be held for certain specific reasons, such as to discuss pending litigation or claims, the purchase of property, union negotiations and the employment, hiring, appointment, promotion, demotion, discipline or resignation of an individual, salaried, public officer or employee.

Executive sessions cannot be used to discuss general personnel problems of the Town or a department and cannot be held unless they are listed on the agenda. The Open Meeting Act also requires a specific listing of the type of matter being discussed in an executive session; therefore, executive sessions are limited to the specific item to be discussed and other general Town business cannot be discussed at that time. Any action taken as a result of an executive session must be voted on in public. Executive sessions are intended as private, confidential meetings in which the private discussions cannot be disclosed by any of those present – the "Town," and not the individuals present, own that right to confidentiality and only the "Town" by a vote of the

elected officials can agree to disclose the private discussion.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at town board meetings by members is addressed by statute (or by your Town's charter). Any Trustee who misses more than half of the regular and special meetings that occur within any four-month time period forfeits, as a matter of law, their office. There are no exceptions to the statutory requirement, no ability of the Town to waive that requirement, and no action for removal that is required - the forfeiture occurs as a matter of law without any affirmative vote by the other members.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST, ETHICS & CONDUCT

One of the more dangerous and sensitive subjects involving Trustees the question of conflict of interest. The topic is especially troublesome because the penalty involved, if there is a conflict with a Trustee and some action being taken by the Town, is severe (primarily involving the Trustee).

SUMMARY OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND STATUTES

In general, the conflict of interest statutes fall into four categories, as follows:

- A.** A general prohibition that precludes any Town officer, employee, or family member of any officer or employee from doing any business of any type with the Town. The violation of the statute is a misdemeanor, the contract or agreement entered into is void as a matter of law, and any member voting to approve the contract is personally liable for the amount of the transaction.

- B.** There are a series of statutes dealing with public trust that preclude the public trust from contracting with trust members or their families; again, if that conduct occurs, the trustee is removed as a matter of law and the contract is void. Further, the public trust statutes preclude bidding in certain instances by family members and again results in any contract approved, even after the bid, being void and the member who has a conflict being guilty of a felony. Further, willful violations result in removal of the trustee.

- C.** There are public finance statutes that provide that no contract with a board member or in which a member "directly or indirectly is interested" will be valid. The contract is treated as void. The purpose of the statute is to provide an additional safeguard concerning the expenditure of monies by public bodies in which individual board members are receiving some interest.

- D.** In addition to the above three conflict of interest statutes, there is also a criminal statute that provides that it is unlawful for any Trustee to sell materials, supplies or other goods to the Town. Any such contract is also void. All members voting yes are personally liable for the amount of the purchase; fines and criminal penalties are provided for.

- E. Lastly, if you serve on the board of directors of a company doing business with the Town, a conflict exists that will require you to excuse yourself from the discussion and voting on those business dealings.

Per the above statutes, the best approach in dealing with possible conflicts is to act with caution. The very basic summary of the rule is that the Town cannot contract with any Trustee or family of any Trustee; this rule applies even if the Trustee involved abstains and does not participate in the agreement.

The most likely situation is one in which there is not a direct conflict but some appearance of a conflict because of other business dealings or family members. In those instances, the potential conflict should be disclosed, the potential conflict investigated, and a decision made as to whether the potential conflict is a real conflict.

The statutes that regulate Trustees fall into the following categories:

TRUSTEES PROHIBITION FROM DOING BUSINESS WITH THE TOWN

The following statute prohibits Trustees from doing business with the Town:

11 Okla.Stat. §8-113 - Prohibited Conduct

- A. Except as otherwise provided by this section, no municipal officer or employee, or any business in which the officer, employee, or spouse of the officer or employee has a proprietary interest, shall engage in:
 - 1. Selling, buying, or leasing property, real or personal, to or from the municipality;
 - 2. Contracting with the municipality; or
 - 3. Buying or bartering for or otherwise engaging in any manner in the acquisition of any bonds, warrants, or other evidence of indebtedness of the municipality.
- B. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any officer or employee of any municipality of this state with a population of not more than two thousand five hundred (2,500) according to the latest Federal Decennial Census, who has a proprietary interest in a business which is the only business of that type within five (5) miles of the corporate limits of the municipality. However, any activities permitted by this subsection shall not exceed Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for any single activity and shall not exceed Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) for all activities in any calendar year.

Provided, however, such activity may exceed Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) per year if the municipality purchases items therefrom that are regularly sold to the general public in the normal course of business and the price charged to the municipality by the business does not exceed the price charged to the general public.

- C. Provisions of this section shall not apply where competitive bids were obtained consistent with municipal ordinance or state law and two or more bids were submitted for the materials, supplies, or services to be procured by the municipality regardless of the population restrictions of subsection B of this section. Provided the notice of bids was made public and open to all potential bidders.
- D. All bids, both successful and unsuccessful, and all contracts and required bonds shall be placed on file and maintained in the main office of the awarding municipality for a period of five (5) years from the date of opening of bids or for a period of three (3) years from the date of completion of the contract, whichever is longer, shall be open to public inspection and shall be matters of public record.
- E. For purposes of this section, "employee" means any person who is employed by a municipality more than ten (10) hours in a week for more than thirteen (13) consecutive weeks and who enters into, recommends or participates in the decision to enter into any transaction described in subsection A of this section. Any person who receives wages, reimbursement for expenses, or emoluments of any kind from a municipality, any spouse of the person, or any business in which the person or spouse has a proprietary interest shall not buy or otherwise become interested in the transfer of any surplus property of a municipality or a public trust of which the municipality is beneficiary unless the surplus property is offered for sale to the public after notice of the sale is published.
- F. For purposes of this section, "proprietary interest" means ownership of more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the business or of the stock therein or any percentage which constitutes a controlling interest but shall not include any interest held by a blind trust.
- G. Any person convicted of violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Any transaction entered into in violation of the provisions of this section is void. Any member of a governing body who approves any transaction in violation of the provisions of this section shall be held personally liable for the amount of the transaction.
- H. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any officer, director or employee of a financial institution may serve on a board of a public body. Provided, the member shall

abstain from voting on any matter relating to a transaction between or involving the financial institution in which they are associated and the public body in which they serve.

PUBLIC TRUST CONFLICTS STATUTE

The following statute applies to public trusts and limits the activity of trustees of those trusts:

60 Okla.Stat. §178.8 - Conflict of Interest - Transactions Exempt

- A.** Except with regard to residents of a facility for aged persons operated by a public trust, who are trustees of the public trust operating the facility and who comprise less than a majority of the trustees, a conflict of interest shall be deemed to exist in any contractual relationship in which a trustee of a public trust, or any for-profit firm or corporation in which such trustee or any member of his or her immediate family is an officer, partner, principal stockholder, shall directly or indirectly buy or sell goods or services to, or otherwise contract with such trust. Upon a showing, thereof, such trustee shall be subject to removal and such contract shall be deemed unenforceable as against such trust unless the records of such trust shall reflect that such trustee fully and publicly disclosed all such interest or interests, and unless such contractual relationship shall have been secured by competitive bidding following a public invitation to bid.

The following types of transactions are exempt from the aforementioned provisions of this section:

1. The making of any loan or advance of any funds to, or the purchase of any obligations issued by such public trust, in connection with the performance of any of its authorized purposes;
2. Any legal advertising required by law or indenture or determined necessary by the trustees of such public trust;
3. The performance by any bank, trust company or similar entity or any services as a depository; or
4. The sale of any public utility services to such public trust, in which the price of said services is regulated by law.

It shall be the duty of each public trust to compile a list of all conflicts of interest for which its trustees have made disclosure. It shall also be the duty of each trust to compile a list of all dealings between its trustees and the trust which involve the exempted transactions

listed above. Such lists shall be compiled semiannually for periods ending June 30 and December 31 of each year. Such lists shall be compiled on forms prescribed by the Oklahoma Tax Commission and shall be matters of public record. Copies of such lists shall be filed with the Secretary of State by September 1 and March 1 of each year.

- B. The provisions of this section shall be inapplicable to any public trust created and existing prior to July 1, 1988, if all bonds issued by such public trust are required to be issued under and pursuant to a single bond indenture by amendment or supplement thereto and if the instrument or will creating such public trust and the bond indenture under which such trust must issue all bonds shall have been held to be valid and binding agreements in an opinion of the Supreme Court of the State of Oklahoma; and nothing in this section shall impair or be deemed to impair the trust indenture, the bond indenture, or existing or future obligations of such public trust.

PUBLIC COMPETITIVE BIDDING ACT PROHIBITION FOR BIDDING

The following statute applies to contracts entered into pursuant to the Oklahoma Public Competitive Bidding Act:

61 Okla.Stat. §114 - Conflict of Interest

The chief administrative officer and members of the governing body of the awarding public agency authorizing or awarding or supervising the execution of a public construction contract, and their relatives within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity, are forbidden to be interested directly or indirectly through stock ownership, partnership interest or otherwise in any such contract. Contracts entered into in violation of this section shall be void. Persons willfully violating this section shall be guilty of a felony and shall be subject to removal from office.

CRIMINAL STATUTES

The following criminal statutes may apply to Trustees in certain circumstances:

21 Okla.Stat. §355 - Furnishing Public Supplies for Consideration-Exceptions

- A. It shall be unlawful for any member of any board of county commissioners, town trustees or other governing body of any Town, board of trustees of any town, board of directors of any township, board of education of any Town or school district, to furnish, for a consideration any material or supplies for the use of the county, Town, town, township, or school district.

- B. The provisions of this section shall not apply to those municipal officers who are subject to Section 8-113 of Title 11 of the Oklahoma Statutes or to a member of any board of education of a school district in this state which does not include any part of a municipality with a population greater than two thousand five hundred (2,500) according to the latest Federal Decennial Census when the board member is the only person who furnishes the material or supplies within ten (10) miles of the corporate limits of the municipality. However, any activities permitted by this subsection shall not exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) for any single activity and shall not exceed Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for all activities in any calendar year.
- C. It shall not be unlawful for any member of any board of county commissioners, town trustees or other governing body of any Town, board of trustees of any town, board of directors of any township, or board of education of any school district to vote to purchase materials or supplies from a business that employs a member of the governing body or employs the spouse of a member if the member or the spouse of a member has an interest in the business of five percent (5%) or less.

21 Okla.Stat. §344 - Personal Interest of Official in Transaction-Penalty

- A. Except as otherwise provided in this section, every public officer, being authorized to sell or lease any property, or make any contract in his or her official capacity with the Town, who voluntarily becomes interested individually in such sale, lease or contract, directly or indirectly, is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- B. The provisions of this section shall not apply to:
 - 1. Municipal officers who are subject to the provisions of Section 8-113 of Title 11 of the Oklahoma Statutes; and
 - 2. Conservation district board members participating in programs authorized by Section 3-2-106 of Title 27A of the Oklahoma Statutes.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The following is a sample Code of Ethics for Elected Officials; many cities have adopted a Code of Ethics to ensure that, over time, consistent rules are applied to those who may be elected. The Code of Ethics is in place, and has as its foundation, the principle that the governing body should enact rules for its conduct, and should be responsible to ensure that those rules are enforced. (This sample may need slight modification depending on your form of government.)

THE THREE R'S OF GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPECT

Oklahoma State Statutes and Town Ordinances provide detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of Trustees, the vice mayor and the mayor. This code is intended as a policy statement for the Trustees to help ensure fair, ethical and accountable local government.

This Code of Ethics is designed to describe the manner in which should treat one another, Town staff, constituents, and others that they may come into contact with while representing the Town. The policy defines more clearly the behavior, manners and courtesies that are suitable for various occasions. The policy also considers a wide variety of policy changes and clarifications designed to make public meetings and the process of governance run more smoothly.

The constant and consistent theme through all of the conduct guidelines is "respect." Trustees experience huge workloads and tremendous stress in making decisions that could impact thousands of lives. Despite these pressures, elected officials are called upon to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. Demonstrating respect for each individual, through words and actions, is the touchstone that can help guide Trustees to do the right thing in even the most difficult situations.

OVERVIEW OF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Other resources that are helpful in defining the roles and responsibilities of elected officials can be found in the Oklahoma State Statues, Town Charter and Code of Ordinances and the Municipal Handbook from the Oklahoma Municipal League.

MAYOR

- Acts as the official head of the Town for all ceremonial purposes and military law.
- Chairs Trustee meetings.
- Calls for special meetings.
- Recognized as spokesperson for the Town
- Selects substitute for Town representation when mayor cannot attend
- Makes judgment calls on proclamations.
- Recommends subcommittees, as appropriate, for Trustee approval.
- Leads the Trustees into an effective, cohesive working team.
- Signs documents on behalf of the Town.

VICE MAYOR

- Performs the duties of the mayor if the mayor is absent or disabled.
- Chairs board meetings at the request of the mayor.

- Represents the Town at ceremonial functions at the request of the mayor.
- Moves or makes motions on agenda items at board meetings.

BOARD MEMBERS

- All members of the town trustees, including those serving as mayor and vice mayor, have equal votes. (may vary depending on charter or some forms of government)
- No board member has more power than any other board member, and all should be treated with equal respect.
- Moves or makes motions on agenda items at board meetings.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL BOARD MEMBERS

- Fully participate in board meetings and other public forums while demonstrating respect, kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others, including the public, other board members, and employees of the Town.
- Prepare in advance of meetings and be familiar with issues on the agenda.
- Represent the Town at ceremonial functions at the request of the mayor.
- Be respectful of other people’s time.
- Stay focused and act efficiently during public meetings.
- Serve as a model of leadership and civility to the community.
- Inspire public confidence in our government.
- Provide contact information with the administration in case an emergency or urgent situation arises.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement.
- Participate in scheduled activities to increase team effectiveness and review Trustee procedures, such as this Code of Conduct.

MEETING CHAIR

The mayor will chair official meetings of the town board, unless the vice mayor or another Trustee is designated as chair of a specific meeting.

The Chair shall:

- Maintain order, decorum and the fair and equitable treatment of all speakers.
- Keep discussion and questions focused on specific agenda items under consideration. Make parliamentary rulings with advice, if requested, from the Town manager, who shall act as an advisory parliamentarian.

POLICY ROLE OF THE TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Members shall respect and adhere to the structure of the Town government as outlined by

Oklahoma Statutes (and Town Charter if applicable). The Board members shall be informed of their role in their form of government and shall not interfere in those areas of operation that are the responsibility of others in their form of government. Except as where specifically allowed by statute, Board members should not interfere with the administrative functions of the Town or the professional duties of Town staff, nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Trustee policy decisions.

POLICIES & PROTOCOL RELATED TO CONDUCT

- A. Ceremonial Events:** Requests for a Town representative at ceremonial events will be handled by Town staff. The mayor will serve as the designated Town representative. If the mayor is unavailable, then Town staff will determine if event organizers would like another representative from the board. If yes, then the mayor will recommend which Trustee should be asked to serve as a substitute. Invitations received at Town hall are presumed to be for official Town representation. Invitations addressed to Trustees at their homes are presumed to be for unofficial, personal consideration.
- B. Correspondence Signatures:** Town staff will assist, through the management of the Town, in the preparation of any official correspondence needed by the Board. All board members should be aware that all correspondence generated by them in their official capacity of the Town will likely be subject to the Open Records Act and, therefore, will become a public record subject to inspection by any member of the public.
- C. Endorsement of Candidates:** Board members have the right to endorse candidates for all Trustee seats or other elected offices. It is inappropriate to mention endorsements during Trustee meetings or other official Town meetings.
- D. Public Meeting Hearing Protocol:** The applicant or appellant shall have the right to speak first. The chair will determine the length of time allowed for this presentation. Speakers representing either pro or con points of view will be allowed to follow. The chair will determine how much time will be allowed for each speaker, with three to five minutes the standard time granted. The applicant or appellant will be allowed to make closing comments. The chair has the responsibility to run an efficient public meeting and has the discretion to modify the public hearing process in order to make the meeting run smoothly. After the close of a public hearing, no more public testimony will be accepted unless the chair reopens the public hearing for a limited and specific purpose.
 - a. Board members should not express opinions during the public hearing portion of the meeting except to ask pertinent questions of the speaker or staff. "I think" and

"I feel" comments by Trustees are not appropriate until after the close of the public hearing. Board members should refrain from arguing or debating with the public during a public hearing and shall always show respect for different points of view.

- E. Travel Expenses:** All Trustees, in which the Trustee expects to officially represent the Town and/or be reimbursed by the Town for travel costs, must be approved in accordance with the Town's travel and expense reimbursement policy.

BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT WITH ONE ANOTHER

Boards are composed of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds, personalities, values, opinions and goals. Despite this diversity, all have chosen to serve in public office in order to preserve and protect the present and the future of our community. In all cases, this common goal should be acknowledged even as the Trustees may "agree to disagree" on contentious issues.

IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

- A. Practice Civility and Decorum in Discussions and Debate:** Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. This does not allow, however, Trustees to make belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive or disparaging comments. No shouting or physical actions will be tolerated.
- B. Honor the Role of the Chair in Maintaining Order:** It is the responsibility of the chair to keep the comments of Trustees on track during public meetings. Board members should honor efforts by the chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the chair's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.
- C. Avoid Personal Comments That Could Offend Other Board Members:** If a board member is personally offended by the remarks of another board member, the offended member should make notes of the actual words used and call for a "point of personal privilege" that challenges the other member to justify or apologize for the language used. The chair will maintain control of this discussion.
- D. Demonstrate Effective Problem-Solving Approaches:** Board members have a public stage to show how individuals with disparate points of view can find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the community as a whole.

IN PRIVATE ENCOUNTERS

- A. Continue Respectful Behavior in Private:** The same level of respect and consideration of differing points of view that is deemed appropriate for public discussions should be maintained in private conversations.
- B. Be Aware of the Insecurity of Written Notes, Voicemail Messages, And Email:** Technology allows words written or said without much forethought to be distributed wide and far. Would you feel comfortable to have this note faxed to others? How would you feel if this voice mail message was played on a speaker phone in a full office? What would happen if this email message was forwarded to others? Written notes, voice mail messages and email should be treated as potentially "public" communication.
- C. Even Private Conversations Can Have a Public Presence:** Elected officials are always on display -- their actions, mannerisms, and language are monitored by people around them that they may not know. Lunch table conversations will be eavesdropped upon, parking lot debates will be watched, and casual comments between individuals before and after public meetings noted.

BOARD CONDUCT WITH TOWN STAFF

Governance of a Town relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy, and Town staff, who implement and administer the board's policies. Therefore, every effort should be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

- A. Treat All Staff as Professionals:** Clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience and dignity of each individual is expected. Poor behavior toward staff is not acceptable.
- B. Limit Contact to Specific Town Staff:** Questions of Town staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed through the appropriate channels and management. Requests for follow-up or directions to staff should be made only through the proper channels. When in doubt about what staff contact is appropriate, Trustees should confer with management for direction and be sure that the contact is appropriate in the form of government applicable. Materials supplied to a board member in response to a request will be made available to all members of the board so that all have equal access to information.
- C. Never Publicly Criticize an Individual Employee:** Board members should never express concerns about the performance of a Town employee in public, to the employee directly, or to the employee's department head. Comments about staff performance should only

be made through management through private correspondence or conversation.

- a. Do not get involved in daily administrative functions, except those involving committees established by the board and those involving Trustee agenda items in which management is presenting the item to the board for consideration.
- b. Board members must not attempt to influence Town staff on the making of appointments, awarding of contracts, selecting of consultants, processing of development applications, or granting of Town licenses and permits, except to the extent those items involve board agenda items or items presented to board committees.

D. Check with Town Staff on Correspondence Before Taking Action: Before sending correspondence, board members should check with Town staff to see if an official Town response has already been sent or is in progress.

E. Limit Request for Staff Support: Routine secretarial support will be provided to all Trustee members. All mail for board members is opened by management, unless other arrangements are requested by a board member. Requests for additional staff support, even in high priority or emergency situations, should be made through management, who is responsible for allocating Town resources in order to maintain a professional, well-run Town government.

TRUSTEES ACCESS AND USE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The board acknowledges that the powers bestowed on Trustees by state law are granted to the board as a whole, and not to individual board members. As such, the powers granted to Trustees are only exercised in public meetings in compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

Individual board members, (including the mayor in some forms of government), do not have any greater access to public facilities, work sites, or Town owned property and equipment than the public at large. Neither the board nor mayor (depending on form of government) are provided offices at Town hall or any other Town facility, and should direct any request for assistance with official duties (clerical, mailing, travel arrangements, etc.) through management.

The use of any Town equipment, even if authorized and provided through the proper channels, shall be in accordance with the policies of the Town, and not for personal use.

If the board members are provided Town email accounts for Town business, in order to comply with legal requirements for the preservation of public records and to ensure that there is compliance with the Town's computer usage policies, all Trustees should conduct Town business through the Town email account only, with the failure to do so subject not only to the sanctions outlined herein, but also the risk of other individual legal liability for violation of the Oklahoma Open Records Act.

BOARD CONDUCT WITH THE PUBLIC: IN PUBLIC MEETINGS

Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process. No signs of partiality, prejudice or disrespect should be evident on the part of individual Trustees toward an individual participating in a public forum. Every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony.

- A. Be Welcoming to Speakers and Treat Them with Care and Gentleness:** The way that the board treats people during public hearings can do a lot to make them relax or push their emotions to a higher level of intensity."
- B. Actively Listen:** It is disconcerting to speakers to have board members not look at them when they are speaking. It is fine to look down at documents or to make notes, but reading for a long period of time gazing around the room gives the appearance of disinterest. Be aware of facial expressions, especially those that could be interpreted as "smirking," disbelief, anger or boredom. If speakers become flustered or defensive by board questions, it is the responsibility of the chair to calm and focus the speaker and to maintain the order and decorum of the meeting. Questions by board members to members of the public testifying should seek to clarify or expand information. It is never appropriate to belligerently challenge or belittle the speaker. Board members' personal opinions or inclinations about upcoming votes should not be revealed until after the public hearing is closed.
- C. No Personal Attacks of Any Kind, Under Any Circumstance:** Board members should be aware that their body language and tone of voice, as well as, the words they use, can appear to be intimidating or aggressive.
- D. Follow Parliamentary Procedure in Conducting Public Meetings:** Final rulings on parliamentary procedure are made by the chair of the meeting.

TRUSTEES CONDUCT WITH THE PUBLIC: IN UNOFFICIAL SETTINGS

- A. Make No Promises on Behalf of the Board:** Board members will frequently be asked to

explain a Trustee action or to give their opinion about an issue as they meet and talk with constituents in the community. It is appropriate to give a brief overview of Town policy and to refer to Town staff for further information. It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Trustee action, or to promise Town staff will do something specific (repair a street, solve a drainage problem, install street signs, etc.).

- B. Make No Personal Comments About Other Board Members:** It is acceptable to publicly disagree about an issue, but it is unacceptable to make derogatory comments about other Trustees, their opinions and actions.
- C. Remember That This Is a Small Town at Heart:** Board members are constantly being observed by the community every day that they serve in office. Their behaviors and comments serve as models for proper deportment in the Town. Honesty and respect for the dignity of each individual should be reflected in every word and action taken by Trustees, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a serious and continuous responsibility.

BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT WITH OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

- A. Be Clear About Representing the Town or Personal Interests:** If a board member appears before another governmental agency or organization to give a statement on an issue, the Trustee must clearly state:
 - a. If his or her statement reflects personal opinion or is the official stance of the Town;
 - b. Whether this is the majority or minority opinion of the board. If the board member is representing the Town, the member must support and advocate the official Town position on an issue, not a personal viewpoint.
 - c. If the board member is representing another organization whose position is different from the Town, the member should withdraw from voting on the issue if it significantly impacts or is detrimental to the Town's interest. Board members should be clear about which organizations they represent and inform the mayor and Trustees of their involvement.
- B. Correspondence Also Should Be Equally Clear About Representation:** Town letterhead may be used when the board member is representing the Town and the Town's official position. A copy of official correspondence should be given to the Town manager for filing as part of the permanent public record.

BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT WITH BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Town has established several boards and commissions as a means of gathering more community input. Citizens who serve on boards and commissions become more involved in government and serve as advisors to the town board. They are a valuable resource to the Town's leadership and should be treated with appreciation and respect.

- A. If Attending a Board or Commission Meeting, Be Careful to Only Express Personal Opinions:** Board members may attend any board or commission meeting, which are always open to any member of the public. However, they should be sensitive to the way their participation -- especially if it is on behalf of an individual, business or developer -- could be viewed as unfairly affecting the process. Any public comments by a board member at a board or commission meeting should be clearly made as individual opinion and not a representation of the feelings of the entire town board.
- B. Limit Contact with Board and Commission Members to Questions of Clarification:** It is inappropriate for a Trustees to contact a board or commission member to lobby on behalf of an individual, business, or developer. It is acceptable for Trustees to contact board or commission members in order to clarify a position taken by the board or commission.
- C. Remember That Boards and Commissions Serve the Community:** The town board appoints individuals to serve on boards and commissions, and it is the responsibility of boards and commissions to follow policy established by the Board. But board and commission members do not report to individual Trustees, nor should Trustees feel they have the power or right to threaten board and commission members with removal if they disagree about an issue. Appointment and reappointment to a board or commission should be based on such criteria as expertise, ability to work with staff and the public, and commitment to fulfilling official duties. A board or commission appointment should not be used as a political "reward."
- D. Be Respectful of Diverse Opinions:** A primary role of boards and commissions is to represent many points of view in the community and to provide the Trustees with advice based on a full spectrum of concerns and perspectives. Board members may have a closer working relationship with some individuals serving on boards and commissions, but must be fair and respectful of all citizens serving on boards and commissions.
- E. Keep Political Support Away from Public Forums:** Board and commission members may offer political support to a Trustee, but not in a public forum while conducting official

duties. Conversely, Trustees may support board and commission members who are running for office, but not in an official forum in their capacity as a Trustee.

- F. Inappropriate Behavior Can Lead to Removal:** Inappropriate behavior by a board or commission member should be noted to the mayor, and the mayor should counsel the offending member. If inappropriate behavior continues, the mayor should bring the situation to the attention of the Trustees and the individual is subject to removal from the board or commission.

TRUSTEES CONDUCT WITH THE MEDIA

Trustees are frequently contacted by the media for background and quotes.

- A. The Best Advice for Dealing with The Media is to Never Go "Off the Record":** Most members of the media represent the highest levels of journalistic integrity and ethics, and can be trusted to keep their word. But one bad experience can be catastrophic. Words that are not said cannot be quoted.
- B. The Mayor Is the Official Spokesperson for the Town's Position:** The Mayor is the designated representative of the Trustees to present and speak on the official Town position. If an individual Trustees is contacted by the media, the Trustee should be clear about whether their comments represent the official Town position or a personal viewpoint.
- C. Choose Words Carefully and Cautiously:** Comments taken out of context can cause problems. Be especially cautious about humor, sardonic asides, sarcasm or word play. It is never appropriate to use personal slurs or swear words when talking with the media.

SANCTIONS

- A. Public Disruption:** Members of the public who do not follow proper conduct after a warning in a public hearing maybe barred from further testimony at that meeting or removed from the Trustees chambers.
- B. Inappropriate Staff Behavior:** Board members should refer to the administration any Town staff who does not follow proper conduct in their dealings with board members, other Town staff, or the public. These employees may be disciplined in accordance with standard Town procedures for such actions.

- C. Board Members Behavior and Conduct:** Town board members who intentionally and repeatedly do not follow proper conduct may be reprimanded or formally censured by the Board of Trustees, lose seniority or committee assignments (both within the Town or with inter-government agencies). Serious infractions of the Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct could lead to other sanctions as deemed appropriate by board.

Board members should point out to the offending Trustee infractions of the Code of Conduct. If the offenses continue, then the matter should be referred to the mayor in private. If the mayor is the individual whose actions are being challenged, then the matter should be referred to the vice mayor.

It is the responsibility of the mayor to initiate action if a board member's behavior may warrant sanction. If no action is taken by the mayor, the alleged violation(s) can be brought up with the full Trustee in a public meeting.

If violation of the Code of Conduct is outside of the observed behaviors by the mayor or Trustees, the alleged violation should be referred to the mayor. The town board should ask the appropriate staff member to investigate the allegation and report the findings to the town board. It is the town board's responsibility to take the next appropriate action. These actions can include, but are not limited to: discussing and counseling the individual on the violations; recommending sanction to the full Trustees to consider in a public meeting; or forming a Trustees ad hoc subcommittee to review the allegation; the investigation and its findings, as well as, to recommend sanction options for Trustees consideration.

- A.** Town staff shall provide a copy of this resolution to the members of all Town boards and commission to ensure they are familiar with the guidelines established by the town board.
- B.** Additional ethical restrictions, based on state law, apply to any financial conflict of interest issue that may arise, and those issues should be addressed on an individual basis as they arise.

PUBLIC TRUSTS & UTILITY AUTHORITIES

Oklahoma law allows for the creation of a public trust for limited purposes. In doing so, the Town gains some advantages in the ability to finance projects and some other differences in how it can conduct its' business. The greatest advantage is the ability to sell revenue bonds to finance construction of public utilities or other projects that can be funded by the revenue that is created. The revenue bonds can be approved and sold by a vote of the Trustees of the Trust and do not require a vote of the people, as do general obligation bonds that are used by the Town to finance projects.

Many trusts in Oklahoma have been created to allow that flexibility. The trust is for all purposes a separate, legal entity and therefore, required to have separate meetings and separate agendas for its meetings. The Trustees of the Trust are designated by the trust documents, and many times will be elected officials of the Town. Although we sometimes refer to the two entities as one and the same, they really are not. Each entity has its own budget, has its own financial structure, and does business in specific areas without mingling its financial affairs with the other entity. All of the open meeting and open record restrictions that apply to the Town will apply to the trust. Although your form of government may have special limitations on the roles of the Mayor and other elected officials, the Trust Indenture should be reviewed to determine the specific powers of the trustees of the trust that governs your operations.

TRAINING & BUILDING STABILITY

MANDATORY TRUSTEES EDUCATION

A statute was passed by the Oklahoma legislature requiring all Trustees elected after January 1, 2005, to attend eight hours of municipal government training within one year of taking office. The specific terms of the statute state:

Section 8-114 - First Time Elected or Appointed Officers Required to Attend Institute for Municipal Officers

A. Each person elected or appointed for the first time as an officer of a municipality as defined by paragraph 6 of Section 1-102 of this title, shall be required within one (1) year after taking the oath of office to attend an institute for municipal officials. The Institute shall be conducted at all times, in cooperation with the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, by or under the supervision of a statewide organization that is exempt from taxation under federal law and designated pursuant to the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C., Section 170(a). The statewide organization shall demonstrate to the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education that it has represented municipalities, had statutory functions and conducted training programs for municipalities for at least fifteen (15) years prior to November 1, 2005. It shall further demonstrate that its continuous official purpose is to promote the general welfare of cities and towns, to foster or conduct schools, short courses and other training sessions, to provide technical assistance and consulting services and other aids for the improvement and increased efficiency of Town and town government, and to serve as the representative of cities and towns in carrying out the duties and prerogatives conferred on it by state law.

B. The Institute shall consist of eight (8) hours of instruction. A certificate of completion shall be awarded to those persons who attend and successfully complete the Institute and a list of those persons shall be filed with the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

C. The curriculum for the Institute shall include, but not be limited to: municipal budget requirements, the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, the Oklahoma Open Records Act, ethics, procedures for conducting meetings, conflict of interest, and purchasing procedures.

D. The Institute shall be held at a minimum of six regional locations in the state. Every

effort shall be made by the Institute to accommodate training through long-distance learning.

E. A person elected or appointed to a municipal office who fails to satisfy the education requirements of this section shall cease to hold the office commencing at the next scheduled meeting of the governing body following the first-year anniversary of the person's taking the oath of office.

F. At the time of filing, the designated statewide organization shall provide the necessary information to the candidate of the option for attendance at the Institute as provided for in this section. In the case of officials nominated and elected for municipal offices at town meetings, the presiding officer of the town meeting shall notify the candidate of the option.

The failure to obtain the training results in a forfeiture of office without any affirmative vote by the other members, and may preclude the Trustee from being eligible to serve in the future. Please contact the Town clerk's office to obtain the necessary information to meet the requirements of this state law.

BUILDING STABILITY

Our goals should be the same for the mayor, elected Trustees and Town employee, that we want the following things in our Town government:

- A. **Stability:** Everyone we deal with needs our government to be stable, meaning predictable, reliable and consistent in how we do business.
- B. **Fulfilling:** Our Town government experience should be fulfilling for everyone involved, from the highest ranking to the lowest ranking person associated with our government. We get there by accomplishing good goals, and by leaving it better than we found it.
- C. **Enjoyable:** We deal with difficult issues sometimes, but the experience of working to make our government better should be enjoyable for everyone involved.

The more stable our cities are, the more fulfilling and enjoyable our service will be. The stability test was created as a way to measure how our cities are doing; the 10 categories used were chosen based on input from a number of municipal officials, with the idea that we should identify the broad areas that should be measured to determine how well our communities are functioning. Some cities have adopted this test as a framework for annual retreats, using it to identify areas in which they seek improvement and as a way to measure how they have improved

from year to year.

- 1. Financial Stability:** Do you have enough money to operate?
 - a. Create a written policy that establishes financial goals for the Town, approved by Trustees resolution that gives clear direction to staff.
 - b. Determine an appropriate reserve policy with realistic goals.
 - c. Clear, simple, monthly reports to elected officials.

- 2. Governing Body Stability:** How stable is your governing body?
 - a. Hold an annual training, including training to staff and elected officials about meeting protocol.
 - b. Plan to hold an annual retreat to set goals.
 - c. Hold regular meetings with staff to ensure all are working on the projects that are important.
 - d. Have a code of ethics for elected officials.
 - e. Have a best practices resolution for oversight.
 - f. Be professional.

- 3. Meetings:** How good are your meetings?
 - a. They should be business meetings.
 - b. Have respect for fellow elected officials.
 - c. Have and abide by clear meeting rules.
 - d. Include a good balance of public input limited to agenda topics.
 - e. Attend meetings in other cities and learn from them.

- 4. Employees:** How good is your workforce?
 - a. How do you instill pride in their work?
 - b. Improve uniforms and appearance with employee help.
 - c. Provide a good salary and benefits.
 - d. Create a sense of being a part of the team that works toward a common goal.
 - e. Show appreciation to your employees.

- 5. Public Image:** What does the public think of your Town?
 - a. Having good, professional meetings will help.
 - b. Emphasize what you do well.
 - c. What do your Town properties look like?
 - d. What does your Town equipment look like?
 - e. Do you show appreciation to vendors?

f. Do you pay on time?

6. Crisis Management: How do you handle a crisis?

- a. Understand everyone's role.
- b. Understand operations before an event.
- c. Have elected officials tour emergency management facilities and understand who is in charge.

7. Economic Development: Are you involved in economic development?

- a. Have you set goals for economic development?
- b. Does the Town own land for development?
- c. Do you have an economic development director or contract?

8. Planning & Goal Setting: How well do you plan and set goals for Town projects?

- a. Hold an annual or regular goal setting meeting with written results.
- b. Have short term and long term planning.
- c. Have clear communication, including action steps.

9. Administration: How stable has your upper management been?

- a. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of a good working relationship.
- b. Communicate about expectations.
- c. Build and maintain trust between the elected officials and the administration.

10. Communication: How well do you communicate?

- a. Create a communications system that is agreed to, that may include:
 - i. Weekly reports
 - ii. Annual reports
 - iii. Town newsletter
 - iv. Employee newsletter
 - v. Email of important events
- b. If possible, have Trustee committees
- c. Informal time with elected officials for management

If you can find stability in these 10 areas, your Town will operate more efficiently and achieve greater success throughout the years.

MEETINGS

Avoid bad meetings – the elected officials can control their own meetings. By improving your meetings:

- A.** The board members enjoy their service more than ever, and have a sense that they have been given the tools and power to make a permanent, positive change.
- B.** The image of the Town government has improved by the way meetings are conducted.
- C.** Meetings are shorter, better and more focused on the real issues.
- D.** It is a much better place to work; employees are better paid and treated better with a better work environment and good employees will stay.
- E.** The interest of the public is much better served than ever before.

PUBLIC IMAGE

One of the biggest problems facing municipalities across Oklahoma is a negative public image. Cities continue to work to improve services and accessibility to the community, yet the public focuses on the negatives. By utilizing social media, you can improve your public image and manage the message that your Town projects. Your Town becomes a primary news source, particularly with the decline in print media around the state. And, if utilized correctly, you will learn to engage with your community and build rapport. Social media can be a tool for notices and pushing information, but make a goal to build engagement and interaction as well.

A. Facebook

- a. Facebook allows businesses, organization and government agencies to create professional page profiles to promote and communicate information. These pages are different than a personal profile in that they allow space for your Town contact information, calendar events and statistics on who you are reaching in your community.
- b. Designating someone to consistently read the statistics on your page will help you determine what types of posts work and what your community is interested in. Typically, posts on public safety gain a lot of attention. Use posts like this to build your page following. Be strategic in how and when you post.
- c. Utilize photos as much as possible. These posts have more reach and will typically receive more engagement from followers.
- d. Utilize some of your budget for Facebook ads. Putting just \$5 toward a post about a new fire station can reach 10,000 people very quickly. It will be worth the small amount of money when your reach goes up by 10 percent in a day.
- e. Highlight what your Town does well. Ask department heads and Town staff to submit suggestions on projects, events, notices, etc. Highlight awards both for

your Town and your staff. Use this tool to get the good news out to those in your community.

- f. Make it your goal to create positive news. The more positive news you put out, the more the local media will pick it up, and the more trust your community will have in what you are doing.
- g. Work with your local chamber and businesses to share news.

B. Other Forms of Social Media

- a. Twitter: utilize for quick messages, news
- b. Instagram: utilize for photos; great if you want to highlight development in your Town
- c. Facebook Live: utilize for special events, special promotions, etc. This tool really generates new followers.

C. The Negatives of Social Media: Many people are turned off by social media and simply want to avoid it. However, it has only continued to grow throughout the last decade, and the public has become more reliant on social media updates than the daily newspaper. Cities should embrace this change and make a goal to push positive, accurate news to their community.

- a. Comments: Currently Facebook does not allow a page to turn off the ability to comment on a post. While there are those people who are constantly negative, you have the ability to hide any comments on your page without the commenter knowing.
- b. Public Posting: You can turn off the ability of the public to post on your Facebook page, limiting that to one or more people of your choosing.

TOWN TRUSTEE DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST FORM

The undersigned, in accordance with Town Ordinance and State Law, hereby discloses the following Conflict of Interest:

- A. I have an interest in following issue that is pending:
- B. My conflict exists because of the following:
- C. Does the transaction involve any of the following:
 - a. Selling, buying, or leasing property, real or personal, to or from the municipality;
 - b. Contracting with the municipality; or
 - c. Buying or bartering for or otherwise engaging in any manner in the acquisition of any bonds, warrants, or other evidence of indebtedness of the municipality.

If yes, AND you or an immediate family member are engaging in that activity, the action is illegal. If your interest is in a company doing business with the Town and your interests consists of a "proprietary interest" or ownership of more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the business or of the stock therein or any percentage which constitutes a controlling interest, the transaction is illegal. Does this section apply to your transaction? YES / NO

- D. Competitive Bidding. Is the contract for a construction project involving more than \$50,000? If yes, you are forbidden to be interested directly or indirectly through stock ownership, partnership interest or otherwise in any such contract. Does this section apply to your transaction? YES / NO
- E. I have an interest in an issue that will appear on a Town board agenda, as follows:
 - a. I understand that because my interest is a personal or family interest in which I have a financial risk in the outcome of the vote, I am precluded from voting on this issue. I understand I can present factual information to the board as a member of the public could, and understand that even though I am not legally required to leave the room during the Board of Trustees discussion of this matter, that I have been advised I should do so. Does this section apply to your transaction?
YES / NO
 - b. I or a family member has an interest in an issue appearing before Board of Trustees. I do not have any direct or indirect financial interest in the outcome of the vote, and am making this disclosure to avoid any allegation that I had an inappropriate conflict of interest. Does this section apply to your transaction? YES / NO

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20__

Signature

Town Clerk

Town Attorney

MEETING SIGN-IN

WELCOME:

Tonight’s meeting of the Town board is a regular business meeting in which the Trustees will consider only the specific items listed on the agenda. The agenda items are proposed by Trustees and staff as pending issues necessary for the Town. Citizen input is allowed regarding any agenda item. By Trustees policy, comments are limited to three minutes, should be directed to the Mayor, and should be presented in a civil and business-like manner that shows respect to your fellow citizens.

This meeting, as are other meetings of the Town, is governed by rules of conduct and a Code of Ethics approved by the Town board. That Code requires that the members of the Town board continue the long tradition in our Town of civility during meetings, proper conduct toward each other, staff and the public, and open discussion of issues without personal attack or animosity. The Trustees expectations regarding civility apply to all employees of the Town and to the public.

We look forward to your input and a productive meeting.

**PLEASE SIGN-IN ONLY
IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK ON AN AGENDA ITEM**

Name	Address	Phone

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

This Confidentiality Agreement between the parties signing below establishes that all information discussed, heard or read in the Town board Executive Session on _____, will not be released, copied, discussed or shared in any manner with any individual other than Town board members present in the Executive Session, members of Town staff present during the Executive Session, and other persons authorized by the Town board to be present in the Executive Session. Breach of this Confidentiality Agreement may result in personal liability and potential violation of the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

I have read the above statement regarding confidentiality and agree to abide by it to the best of my ability.

Signed on this _____ day of _____.

Mayor

Town Administrator

Vice Mayor

Town Attorney

EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSUM

Use on social media, particularly Facebook, so you can confidently hide or delete comments.

Comments posted to this page will be monitored. The Town of _____ reserves the right to hide or remove comments, including those that have obscene language or sexual content, threaten a person or organization, support or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions, promote or encourage illegal activity, promote commercial services or products, promote individual causes, websites or social media sites or are not topically related to the particular posting.