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**Policy: E8 Staff Code of Conduct**

**Department: Office of the CAO**

**Effective Date: April 5, 2018**

**Revision Date:**

**Review Date:**

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“Your life is a trajectory. Every choice you make alters that trajectory, in a positive or negative way. Will you categorize that dinner with friends as a business expense? Will you be honest with your daughter? Will you take more credit than you’re due? These are just the small questions that we face every day, and little by little, the answers influence the trajectory of our lives and beings.” – Donald Van de Mark

## **1. Coverage**

This policy applies to all employees of the Corporate of Bruce County (hereinafter referred to as “Bruce County” or the “County”).

## **2. Purpose**

- a) To provide staff of the County with a commonly understood and readily accepted code of conduct that guides our actions.
- b) To provide a unified statement of values and express who we are as County employees.
- c) To celebrate the path that we will travel down individually and collectively, and to identify the path we simply will not travel down.

## **3. Our Shared Values**

We, the employees of the Bruce County, share the following common values:

- a) Being a part of Bruce County is a journey of exploration and discovery. We work for the County, and we are the guides.
- b) Part of being a guide means providing outstanding service to our fellows in the workplace, those who live here and carry out business, to those that visit, and ultimately to County Council.
- c) We are accountable beginning to end, working for the public interest, actually owning any questions until an answer is found.
- d) We deal with obstacles, but do not create our own. Instead, we innovatively build the bridges, work together inside and outside of the County to find resolutions and opportunities.
- e) Working for the County of Bruce provides a sense of discovery. What we can accomplish together is truly amazing.

#### **4. The Path We Will Take:**

##### **By Ourselves and Those with Whom We Work:**

- a) We will faithfully and diligently implement County Council directions through our policies, programs, operations and daily work.
- b) We shall provide honest, balanced and accurate advice and information to County Council, to assist them in making important informed decisions for the greater good of the Bruce County Community.
- c) A sense of honour and respect will guide the work that we do individually and collectively for the County. This means maintaining respect, loyalty trust and support for each other in our daily work.
- d) We shall employ our personal and professional passion at work, empower ourselves and others to operate with a great sense of pride, enthusiasm and professionalism.
- e) We will be authentic, and act out of a sense of integrity. This involves reaching out and engaging others, improving ourselves and others, and fixing what does not work.
- f) Our work involves the care for others, both those who we work alongside of and those we serve. We value open and transparent communications, and realize that our actions reflect upon ourselves, those we work with and our County.

- g) In a forthright and honest fashion, we communicate ideas, opinions and creative solutions for the betterment of all staff, and those we serve.
- h) We understand, help others learn about, and fully activate ourselves in other core values that guide our County. We take up the rally cry for workplace wellness and for the health and safety of our people, and for the elimination of harassment and violence in the workplace.

#### **With Those We Serve:**

- i) No matter the job description, we are all here to provide excellent customer service. This means being as helpful as we can in our own areas of expertise, as well as bringing in others when a solution is not at hand. There is no wrong door. "Not my department" is never uttered.
- j) We recognize and take pride in our role as public servants. We owe a duty of fidelity to the County of Bruce. We preserve, with determination, our impartiality and objectivity in undertaking our work, as we know this reflects positively on our organization.
- k) We earn and sustain the public trust. We do this because our advice to the public is frank, judicious, impartial, merit based, timely, and free from personal interest and/or judgement.
- l) The public expects accountability. We deliver this by sharing information in a clear manner, accepting responsibility for our individual and group actions, and submitting ourselves to public scrutiny.

#### **5. The Path We Will Not Take:**

At Bruce County, staff recognize that unbiased and professional judgment, common sense and wisdom must be employed on a daily basis. Individually and collectively, we fundamentally understand that we shall abide by the following:

- a) County employees will not engage in any criminal activity and must comply with all relevant applicable laws.
- b) Employees shall protect County property and resources, which includes without limitation, vehicles, computers, data and records. Employees shall not be irresponsible or reckless with County property and resources.
- c) We will not use our status or position within the County to influence or gain a benefit or advantage for ourselves, our families, our business associates or others with whom we have a significant personal or business relationship.
- d) We do not knowingly place ourselves in situations of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest that arises from our work activities, such as, but not limited to making

recommendations to County Council, the CAO, procurement and hiring practices. When in doubt, or in cases where a conflict may be perceived as opposed to real, we immediately disclose potential conflicts to our supervisors, or designates, so that an objective determination might be made as to whether those circumstances adversely affect the County and should be avoided or discontinued.

- e) We do not take on outside employment, and/or engage in or hold a private business interest, where such employment or engagement is or can be seen to conflict with our duties (performance and/or impartiality) with the County.
- f) When in doubt regarding a real or perceived conflict when seeking ancillary employment or engaging a business interest, we proactively disclose and discuss the matter with our supervisor or designate.
- g) We do not accept gifts, hospitality and other benefits that may be extended in gratitude for our work, other than the normal exchange of gifts between friends or business colleagues, tokens exchanged as part of protocol or the normal presentation of gifts to people participating in public functions, with such gifts or tokens not exceeding fifty dollars in value.
- h) We protect and safeguard confidential and personal information, and use it only for the purposes for which it was originally collected or created. We will comply with protocols that guide the collection, storage, use, transmission and disclosure of information including without limitation, applicable legislation.
- i) We do not gossip or comment on the activities of those within our organization or those we serve.
- j) We will not knowingly disregard or manipulate management controls designed to ensure the proper management of County activities.
- k) County employees will not take property and resources that belong to the County and use same for their own purposes.
- l) We will not make public announcements, or share opinions through the media (including social media) that are derogatory in nature towards others including, without limitation, the County, an elected official or a County staff member.
- m) We will not consume alcohol or illicit substances in a way that affects our performance and safety, or the performance and safety of our colleagues, or that negatively impacts us as a County. We shall not purchase or provide alcohol to others as part of our professional roles, other than in social situations outside of normal work hours.
- n) We shall follow the example outlined in the *Municipal Act* and refers individuals to the *Ontario Public Sector Employee Act* protocols. Individuals retain their right to vote in local, provincial and federal elections. However, we shall not publicly endorse candidates, make financial contributions, serve on a candidate's campaign team, sign or circulate petitions, or participate in fund-raising activities for candidates seeking or holding elected

office.

- o) If we are involved in volunteer work, the volunteer activity must not influence or conflict with decisions relating to the County. Employees are encouraged to exercise caution and exempt themselves when an item of County or local Council is before the volunteer body.
- p) The County may from time to time appoint an employee as a County representative on local, regional provincial or federal boards, panels, associations or committees. However, County staff shall not act as a citizen appointee to a standing committee of County Council or a local council.

## **6. Notes on Code Application:**

- a) The application of a code of conduct is in of itself a journey. This code is not meant to cover all questions, situations or circumstances that may arise. Instead, it is designed to show who we are, how we would like to act, and to reinforce our expectations of each other. This code of conduct should evoke “ethical thinking” rather than forcing a standard. It is all about critically examining our actions, and asking ourselves “are we doing the right things”? If we are, then we are in good stead with each other, the public we serve and our elected officials.
- b) Some County employees are also bound by conduct standards found in applicable collective agreements and professional code standards. This code was written in a spirit so that it dovetails with the general principles of the other applicable codes.