

**NEW HANOVER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RESOLUTION  
ADOPTING A CODE OF ETHICS**

**WHEREAS**, G.S. 160A-86 requires local governing Boards to adopt a code of ethics; and

**WHEREAS**, New Hanover County citizens deserve to be served by public officials who maintain the highest ethical standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the stability and proper operation of democratic representative government depends upon public confidence in the integrity of the government, and upon responsible exercise of the trust conferred by the citizens upon their elected officials; and

**WHEREAS**, Board members must act in a manner that maintains their integrity and independence and be responsive to the interests and needs of those they represent; and

**WHEREAS**, Board members must know how to distinguish among their various roles, to determine when each role is appropriate, and to act accordingly:

1. As advocates, who strive to advance the legitimate needs of their citizens.
2. As legislators, who balance the public interest and private rights in considering and enacting ordinances and resolutions, and
3. As fair and impartial decision-makers, when making quasi-judicial and administrative determinations.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners does hereby adopt the following Code of Ethics to guide the Board of County Commissioners in its decision-making. The Board of Commissioners directs all County boards and committees to respect and abide by this Code of Ethics in the performance of their duties.

**CODE OF ETHICS**

**Purpose.**

The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for the Board of County Commissioners. It should not be considered a substitute for the law or for a Board member's best judgment.

**Section 1.**

- A. Board members should obey all laws that apply to their official actions. The spirit as well as the letter of the law should guide their actions. Board members should feel free to assert policy positions and opinions without fear of reprisal from fellow Board members or citizens.
- B. Board members should endeavor to keep themselves current, through the County Attorney and other sources, of the most pertinent constitutional, statutory, and other legal requirements with which they must be familiar in order to meet their legal responsibilities.
- C. Board members shall comply with G.S. 160A-87 in receiving two clock hours of ethics education within twelve months of each election or appointment to office.

**Section 2.**

Board members should act with integrity as they exercise the functions of their offices. Characteristics and behaviors that are consistent with this standard are:

- A. Behaving consistently and with respect towards everyone with whom they interact.
- B. Exhibiting trustworthiness.
- C. Living as if they are on duty as elected officials regardless of where they are or what they are doing.
- D. Using their best independent judgment to pursue the common good, while being able to consider the opinions of others, presenting their opinions to all in a forthright manner.

- E. Remaining incorruptible, self-governing, and not subject to improper influence.
- F. Disclosing contacts and information about issues that they receive outside of public meetings and refraining from seeking or receiving information about quasi-judicial matters outside of the quasi-judicial proceedings.
- G. Treating other Board members and the public with respect, and honoring the opinions of others even when they disagree.
- H. Being careful not to reach conclusions on issues until all sides have been heard.
- I. Recognizing that individual Board members are not generally allowed to act on behalf of the Board, but may only do so if the Board specifically so authorizes because the Board must take official action as a body.

**Section 3.**

Board members should be faithful in the performance of the duties of their office. Board members should faithfully attend and prepare for meetings. They should carefully analyze all credible information that is properly submitted to them, mindful of the need not to engage in communications outside the meeting in quasi-judicial matters. They should demand full accountability from those over whom the Board has authority.

**Section 4.**

Elected members of local governing Boards should conduct the affairs of their Boards in an open and public manner. They should comply with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records, recognizing that doing so is an important way to be worthy of the public's trust. They should remember when they meet that they are conducting the public's business. They should also remember that the records of their local government belong to the public. A climate of openness is to be maintained at all times.

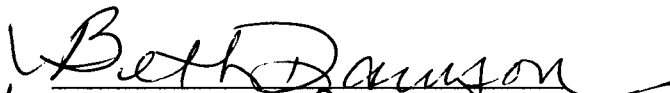
They should take deliberate steps to ensure that any closed sessions held by the Board are conducted lawfully, and that such sessions do not stray from the purposes for which they are called.

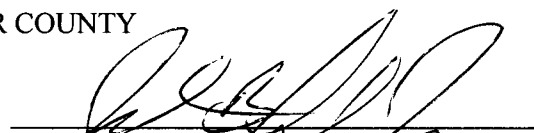
**Section 5.**

This Code of Ethics shall be effective upon adoption, unless modified, amended, or repealed.

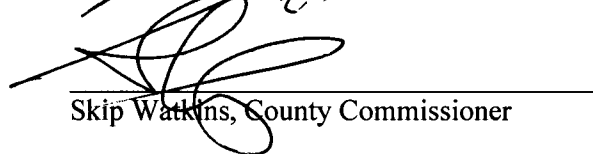
**ADOPTED** this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2016.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY

  
Beth Dawson, Chairman

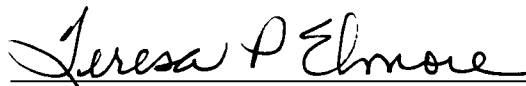
  
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., Vice-Chairman

  
Woody White, County Commissioner

  
Skip Watkins, County Commissioner

  
Rob Zapple, County Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
Teresa Elmore, Clerk to the Board