

**PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATION OFFICE – ROOM #6
1605 E. BURNLEY ST., CAMARILLO, CALIFORNIA**

**POLICY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

**Wednesday, November 3, 2021
3:00 P.M.**

Please Note: Under current orders from the Ventura County Health Officer, all individuals, (whether vaccinated or unvaccinated) are required to wear a face covering at all times in indoor public settings and businesses. PVRPD thanks you for your cooperation and understanding.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- 4. BOARD DECORUM AND NORMS**
- 5. ORAL DISCUSSION**
- 6. ADJOURNMENT**

Note: Written materials related to these agenda items are available for public inspection in the Office of the Clerk of the Board located at 1605 E. Burnley Street, Camarillo during regular business hours beginning the day preceding the Committee meeting.

Announcement: Should you need special assistance (i.e. a disability-related modification or accommodations) to participate in the Committee meeting or other District activities (including receipt of an agenda in an appropriate alternative format), as outlined in the Americans With Disabilities Act, or require further information, please contact the General Manager at 482-1996, extension 114. Please notify us 48 hours in advance to provide sufficient time to make a disability-related modification or reasonable accommodation.

**PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT
STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REPORT**

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: MARY OTTEN, GENERAL MANAGER

DATE: November 3, 2021

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND GUIDANCE FOR A DECORUM AND
NORMS POLICY FOR BOARD MEMBERS**

SUMMARY

The Board of Directors is charged with taking appropriate, necessary, and timely action to maintain the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District. The District is obligated to comply with several Government codes based on law; decorum and norms are voluntary and nonbinding. They are set forth to clarify what can be a successful procedure or best practices for conduct of civic affairs. After taking the initial Decorum and Norms Policy to the Policy Committee staff brought the item to the full board for review. The Board requested this draft policy go back before the Policy Committee for further review and to encapsulate Resolution #532.

BACKGROUND

The Policy Committee had reviewed the Board Bylaws and District's policy setting compensation, reimbursement of board member expenses, providing for ethics training and related matters. The District is obligated to comply with several Government codes, in particular the Public Resource Code Section 5784.13 and Government Code Section 54954(a) governing all aspects of the management and operation of Special Districts. The Policy Committee reviewed these individual Policies and requested to expand upon these items in a third document related to Board of Directors Decorum and Norms. Except for those decorum/norms that are based on law, these norms are voluntary and non-binding.

The Policy Committee initially reviewed a draft policy related to Board of Directors Decorum and Norms. At the June 2, 2021, Board meeting the Board reviewed the draft policy and had some concerns and asked that this policy and Resolution #532 return to the Policy Committee for further review.

ANALYSIS

This Board Decorum and Norms Policy is designed to describe the manner in which Board members should treat one another, District staff, constituents, and others they come into contact with when representing the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District. This policy is to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

The Policy reflects the consideration of a wide variety of themes designed to make public meetings and the process of governance run more smoothly. The constant and consistent theme through all of the decorum guidelines is "respect." Board members experience 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 the Board to do the right thing in even the most difficult situations.

The effective functioning of government therefore requires that Board members: gather information and knowledge, promote organizational accountability through appropriate controls and procedures, keep the common good as the highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit, create an atmosphere of respect and civility; keep a long-range perspective, exercising compassion, kindness, integrity, fairness and respect for others; hold to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct and be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular.

The Decorum and Norms Policy has been broken up into six key areas: 1) General Principles, 2) Public Meetings, 3) Board Member Interaction and Communication, 4) Board Member Interaction with Staff, 5) Elections, and 6) Enforcement.

These guidelines are to promote communication, understanding, fairness, and trust among the members of the Board and staff concerning their roles, responsibilities and expectations for management of the business of the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District.

While attempting not to be overly restrictive, procedures are established so that expectations and practices can be clearly articulated to guide Board members in their actions. It is anticipated that this Decorum and Norms Policy will be reviewed every two years and may be revised from time to time.

FISCAL IMPACT

District staff does not anticipate a fiscal impact associated with approval of the Board of Directors Decorum and Norms Policy for elected officials.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Policy Committee provide guidance and further direction. Should the Policy Committee have no further changes, it is recommended that this policy return to the full Board for further action.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Board of Directors Decorum and Norms Policy Redline (6 pages)
- 2) Resolution #532 (2 pages)



PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DECORUM AND NORMS FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS Board Approved xxx, 2021

The Board of Directors of the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District (the District) is committed to providing excellence in legislative leadership to provide the highest quality of services and facilities to constituents. It is the overall responsibility of the Board to:

- Gather information and knowledge.
- Promote organizational accountability through appropriate controls and procedures.
- Keep the common good as the highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit by listening to the public and making the needs of the constituents a priority.
- Help create an atmosphere of respect and civility where individual members, staff, and the public are free to express their ideas and work to their full potential.
- Keep a long-range perspective.
- Exercising compassion, kindness, integrity, fairness and respect for others.
- Hold to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct in the performance of its duties.
- Be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Respect for Process. Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the District Board governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the District Board by District staff.
2. Policy Role of Board Members. In this structure, the majority of the Board members determine the policies of the District with advice, information and analysis provided by the public, committees, and District staff. The General Manager, through District staff, implements District policy. Routine matters concerning the operational aspects of the District shall be delegated to the District's professional staff.
3. Responsibility. Represent and work for the common good of the District and not for any personal or private interest as well as provide fair treatment for all persons and matters coming before the Board or committee. In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of the Board shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Board, nor shall members of the Board, appear before their own bodies on behalf of a private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies. A person elected to the Board plays two roles: a member of a body elected to represent the District in its entirety and a private resident of the District. The second role is not relinquished when the first role is assumed. It is important to distinguish between the two roles at all times and to conduct business in one role separately from the other. The elected Board member retains the right to speak as an individual, not as a member of the District Board, but must make it very clear that they speak on their own behalf and not as a member of the District Board.
4. Tolerant. Refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character, motives, ethics or morals of other members of the committee, Board, District staff, or the public or other personal comments not germane to the issues before the body. Members are to be tolerant of all views expressed at public meetings.



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5. Decision-Making Process. Differing viewpoints are healthy in the decision-making process. Individuals have the right to disagree with ideas and opinions, but without being unpleasant. Once the Board takes action, Directors should support said action and not create barriers to the implementation of said action.
6. Conduct of Members. The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Board, committees, the staff and/or public. Cliques and voting blocs based on personalities rather than issues should be avoided.
7. Directors should function as a part of the whole. Issues should be brought to the attention of the Board as a whole, rather than to individual members selectively.
8. Laws. The Board ~~shall comply~~ shall comply with all laws of the nation, State of California and those relating to but not limited to open meetings, public records, and conflicts of interest, and others in the performance of their public duties.
9. Confidential Information. Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or affairs of the District. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests held pursuant to laws.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

1. The Chair of the Board is the presiding officer at the Board's meetings. The Board Chair oversees Board deliberation to move the Board to final action on each item. In the Chair's absence, the Vice Chair is the presiding officer.
2. Conduct of Public Meetings. Members shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers; making personal comments not germane to the business of the body; or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings. Board members must refrain from engaging in a dialogue with members of the public during public comments on non-agenda items.
3. The Board Chair controls the meeting and discourages personal attacks of any kind from speakers and the audience by encouraging them to productively address the issues at hand when it is their turn to speak.
4. Board members should, if possible, avoid surprising their colleagues or staff. Should a Board member become aware of an unexpected issue that may be brought up by a member of the public or need further clarification on a District related item at a Board meeting, committee meeting, or ad hoc meeting, they should advise the General Manager whenever possible, prior to the meeting. ~~This refers to issues and questions that staff would not normally anticipate or have researched for that particular meeting~~ This allows Staff the time to address Board Member's concern and provide all Board Members with additional information.



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5. Board members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the District Board and committees governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the District Board by District staff.
6. Board members should demonstrate effective problem-solving approaches as 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.

BOARD MEMBER INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

The work of the District is a team effort. All individuals should work together in the collaborative process, assisting each other in conducting the affairs and accomplishing the mission and vision of the District.

1. Board members should be sensitive to the negative impact that inappropriate conduct has on the public perception of the District. Board members should be mindful of the fact that they are representatives of the District in all their public and private activities/encounters.
2. When responding to constituent requests and concerns, Directors should be courteous, responding to individuals in a positive manner and routing their questions through appropriate channels and to responsible management personnel.
3. 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. Members have a responsibility to show how individuals with disparate points of view can find common ground and seek compromise that benefits the community as a whole.
4. Elected and appointed officials are always on display and should act accordingly in all private and public interactions in order to uphold a positive image and set an example of good conduct. ~~—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.~~
5. Technology allows words written or said without much forethought to be distributed wide and far. Written notes, voicemail messages and e-mail should be treated as potentially "public" communication. Hence, Board members must maintain a respectful decorum, and avoid personal attacks during public meetings, in the press, social media, or at any other time.
6. Each Board member has the responsibility to initiate action to resolve problems cooperatively and as soon as possible, either directly with other Board members or with the General Manager.



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7. Make no promises on behalf of the Board of Directors. No individual Board member has the authority to represent or make commitments on behalf of the District Board. It is inappropriate to overtly or implicitly promise Board action, or to promise District staff will do something specific.

8. Members must maintain the confidentiality of all written materials and verbal information provided to members which is confidential or privileged. Members shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, or financial interests.

BOARD MEMBERS INTERACTION WITH STAFF

Governance of the District relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy, and District staff who implement and administer the District'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. To accomplish this, Directors shall:

1. Treat all staff as professionals. Clear, honest communication that respects the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual is expected. Poor behavior towards staff is not acceptable.
2. Develop a working relationship with the General Manager wherein current issues, concerns and District projects can be discussed comfortably and openly.
3. Not get involved in administrative functions. Elected officials acting in their individual capacity must not attempt to influence District staff on awarding of contracts, selecting of consultants, processing of applications, or granting of District and permits.
4. Refer complaints received by residents and property owners of the District to the General Manager.
- ~~5. Make all special requests of staff through the General Manager.~~
- ~~6.5. Make all special requests of staff through the General Manager. However, should you be seeking~~ clarification on informational items, Directors may contact the appropriate staff person directly to obtain information needed to supplement, upgrade, or enhance their knowledge to improve the decision-making process.
- ~~7.6. Report items related to safety, concerns for safety or hazards to the General Manager or to the District office. Emergency situations should be dealt with immediately by seeking appropriate assistance.~~
- ~~8.7. In seeking clarification for policy-related concerns, especially those involving personnel, legislation, finances, projects and programs, contact the General Manager directly.~~



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9.8. No Attorney-Client Relationship. The District's Attorney (and other members of that firm) represent the District, not individual Directors such that Directors who consult with the District's Attorney do not establish an attorney-client relationship with the attorney.

ELECTIONS

Campaigning can sometimes be the cause of a serious breakdown of communications and trust between District Board members. To minimize the potential for such a breakdown, it is best for participants in a campaign, whether candidate or supporter, to abide by some ground rules of fairness.

1. It is never fair to misrepresent the facts of a candidate's record, or to make other assertions that are simply not true or accurate in fact.
2. If a Board member decides to actively support the opponent of a fellow Board member, it is a matter of courtesy to advise that Board member personally at an appropriate time before going public.
3. Board members agree to abide by the Code of Fair Campaign Practices, whether they are a candidate or not. The Code of Fair Campaign Practices can be found in the California Elections Code, Section, 20440. There are basic principles of decency, honesty, and fair play in order conduct a fair campaign. Campaign dirty tricks, such as disrupting an opponent's event, removing or defacing signs, or removing flyers delivered door to door, must never be permitted or condoned.
- Board members agree to abide by the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). A member who has a potential conflict of interest regarding a particular decision shall disclose the matter to the Districts General Council and reasonably cooperate with General Council to analyze the potential conflict. If advised by General Council to seek advice from the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) or other appropriate state agency, a member shall not participate in a decision unless and until they have requested and received advice allowing the member to participate. Any conflict of interest item under legal review would be moved to the next Board meeting upon completion of review. Code of Fair Campaign Practices, whether they are a candidate or not. The Code of Fair Campaign Practices can be found in the California Elections Code, Section 20440.
4.
5. Board members have the right to endorse candidates for all District seats or other elected offices. However, it is inappropriate to mention or display endorsements during Board meetings, committee meetings, or other official District meetings or functions.
6. Board members and candidates for Board positions must not solicit any type of political support (financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) from District staff while staff are on duty or utilizing District resources. District staff may, as private citizens, exercise their constitutional rights to support political candidates, but all such activities must be done away from the workplace. will be guided by internal staff documents.

ENFORCEMENT



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The Board of Directors Decorum and Norms for Elected Officials is intended to be self-enforcing and is an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the District. It therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions.

Every District official is expected to observe the foregoing policies and rules when engaged in District business.

Complaints alleging a violation of this Code of Conduct by a District official should be directed to the General Manager and/or the District's General Council. Upon receipt of a complaint of a minor nature, the General Manager and the District's Attorney will collaborate to determine a recommended course of action. The General Manager and the District's Attorney will, should they fail to resolve the complaint, or should the complaint be of a serious nature, consult with the Chairperson (unless the Chairperson is the subject of the complaint, in which event they will consult with the Vice Chairperson or other Board members, in order of seniority, as is appropriate under the circumstances) in order to determine an appropriate course of action.

The goal of enforcement of this Code of Conduct is corrective, rather than penal, and a progressive approach to curing violations will be employed beginning with informal methods and proceeding to more formal methods as necessary. Hence, should less drastic measures fail to curb inappropriate conduct by a District Board member, the Board may in a public meeting, as an agenda item, impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- Reprimand
- Censure
- Loss of committee or liaison assignments
- Removal from an appointed committee, commission or board
- Other penalties as may be applicable under the circumstances

RESOLUTION NO. 532

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT CAMARILLO, CALIFORNIA STATEMENT OF DIRECTOR CONDUCT, VALUES AND NORMS

WHEREAS, the Board accordingly desires to establish a Statement of Director Conduct, Values and Norms to be observed in order to assist in the governance of the District and provide commitment to excellent local government leadership to serve the community with high quality parks and programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby establishes the following Director Conduct, Values and Norms:


- Act ethically and with integrity, demonstrating the highest standards of honesty.
- Treat members of the public, staff and other board members with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness.
- Contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive work environment by promoting a professional workplace that is safe, productive, and free from bullying or harassment.
- Serve the government of the day by fulfilling our purpose and statutory requirements.
- Respect the dignity, style, values and opinions of each Director, staff and community. Understand that differing viewpoints are healthy in the decision making process.
- Focus on the formulation of policy. Routine matters concerning the operational aspects of the District are to be delegated and managed by the General Manager to professional staff of the District.
- The work of the district is a team effort. All individuals shall work together as a team and in a collaborative process assisting each other in conducting the affairs of the District.
- Uphold a positive image and representation of the District through communication with, but not limited to community members, media outlets and staff.
- Directors shall prepare themselves accordingly for meetings, thoroughly reading material and asking professional staff when clarification is needed.
- Promote orderly conduct of District meetings.
- The General Manager or designee is the spokesperson for the District when media or external organization requests are made.
- Adhere to the District's Conflict of Interest Code.
- On behalf of the common good, Directors shall not use their official position to influence government decisions which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- Place the best interest of the District above the Director's own personal interests or personal points of view.
- Remain informed about the District's mission statement, strategic plan and operational performance.
- Ensure the District has the necessary financial and human resources including the necessary leadership, required for the District to achieve its mission.
- Comply with applicable provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act in all proceedings of the District Board and its Committees.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District this 6th day of August, 2014, by the following vote:

AYES: Dir. MROPER, Dir. DIXON, Dir. MALON, D. KELLEY

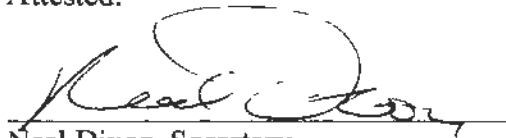
NAYS: _____

ABSENT: Dir. HUBBARD



Robert Kelley, Chairman, Board of Directors
PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION
AND PARK DISTRICT

Attested:



Neal Dixon, Secretary
PLEASANT VALLEY RECREATION
AND PARK DISTRICT