



# *Standards of Conduct for Seminole County Commissioners*

- (1) Commissioners will **act collectively, not individually, when adopting and/or amending County legislation and governing policies, and when issuing decisions related to quasi-judicial matters;** and acknowledge that it is the role of the County Manager and staff to administer such legislation, policies, and decisions.
- (2) Commissioners will **not attempt to manage executive activities** (a) by intruding into daily operations or spheres of responsibility designated by Charter to the County Manager as the chief executive officer or to administrators acting as County Manager designees; or (b) by undermining the County Manager's authority.
- (3) Commissioners will **represent the interests of the entire county** when making decisions and will rely upon available facts and their independent judgment, while placing significant value on objective evidence and the recommendations provided by the County Manager and other professional subject matter. Commissioners will avoid all conflicts of interest and avoid using their position as an elected County Commissioner for personal, professional, or partisan gain.
- (4) Commissioners will **demonstrate dignity, respect, and courtesy** toward those with whom they contact in their capacity as a Commissioner, and will refrain from intimidation and ridicule of fellow Commissioners, the County Manager, staff, and other stake-holders in the county.
- (5) Commissioners will **refrain from inappropriate language** including statements that are judgmental, malicious, threatening, disparaging, mean-spirited, vulgar or abusive. All disagreements, concerns or criticisms shall be framed in language that is in keeping with the dignity and professionalism of an elected official.
- (6) Commissioners will **focus on solving problems**, and will maintain appropriate decorum and professional demeanor in the conduct of County business, working cooperatively and conscientiously with others as they request or receive information, examine data or weigh alternatives in the decision-making process.
- (7) Commissioners will **demonstrate patience** and refrain from demanding interruptive access to staff or immediate responses or services when requesting information that requires significant staff time in research, preparation, or analysis or that will result in staff neglect of more urgent duties. Such requests will be made through the County Manager for scheduling and prioritizing or through consensus of the Board.
- (8) Commissioners will **devote sufficient time for adequate preparation** prior to Board meetings and will be in attendance, insofar as possible, at those meetings and all other scheduled events at which Commissioner participation is required. Commissioners will prepare themselves through study, inquiry, and thought so as to be informed thoroughly about issues to be discussed in public meetings, and will be focused on the issues and discussions during those meetings and not distracted by outside influences or technology.

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## *Standards of Conduct for Seminole County Commissioners* *(Continued)*

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- (9) Commissioners will **respect diversity and encourage the open expression of divergent ideas and opinions** from fellow Commissioners, staff, and citizens of the county. Commissioners will actively and objectively listen to others' concerns or constructive criticisms.
- (10) Commissioners will **refrain from any individual action that could compromise the integrity** of the County or fellow Commissioners, and will delineate clearly for any audience whether they are acting or speaking as an individual citizen or in their capacity as a representative of Seminole County.
- (11) Commissioners will **maintain confidentiality of privileged information** and **will abide by *the Government in the Sunshine Law*** in both its spirit and its intent. Commissioners will treat any information generated, stored, or sent through electronic means in the same manner as any written document that may be subject to Florida's Public Records Act, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and will not use electronic resources, including social media, to discuss with other Commissioners any matter that would be subject to the Government in the Sunshine Law, regardless of whether the communication occurs on a personal device or through a County-owned account or equipment.
- (12) Commissioners will **promote constructive relations in a positive climate** with all employees as a means to enhancement of productivity and morale. Commissioners will support employment of best qualified persons for staff positions, and will recognize the achievements of staff and others sharing Seminole County's mission.
- (13) Commissioners will **update and improve their knowledge, contributions, and value to the County** by keeping abreast of current issues and trends through reading, continuing education, and training. Commissioners will study policies and issues of the County, State, and nation and will strive to attend training programs such as those offered through the Florida Association of Counties, National Association of Counties, and other professional organizations with a continuing goal to improve their individual performance as an elected County Commissioner.
- (14) Commissioners will **value and assist fellow Commissioners** by exchanging ideas, concerns, and knowledge gleaned from their own research or training. Commissioners will help build positive community support for the County in general and with respect to particular actions, by cooperation and mutual exchanges of praise when deserved, apologies when mistaken, and recommendations when needed.
- (15) Commissioners will, **while taking a stand for their individual beliefs, remain flexible enough to understand others' views**. Commissioners will recognize that they share in the responsibility for all Board decisions and will accept the will of the majority.
- (16) Commissioners will **remember always that their first and greatest concern must be the safety and welfare of citizens and the staff of the County**.