

10 GUIDELINES FOR BOARD MEMBER ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

1. Attendance is crucial, not only to meet the needs for a quorum, but to fulfill one's responsibilities as an elected or appointed board member.

What are the reasons a board member should attend the board meetings he or she was elected or appointed to serve on?

2. Preparation for meetings is required.

How do you prepare for a board meeting?

3. No preferential treatment or grudges should influence decisions.

How does special treatment affect board performance? How does special treatment or decisions based on bias leave a board open to liability action?

4. Board decisions must be supported, even if a member personally disagrees. It's not ethical to talk against a decision outside of a meeting.

What is the proper forum for disagreement among board members?

5. Learn enough to provide true financial oversight.

Do you, as a board member, understand how your board is funded? Do you understand how the funding can be spent? Who is responsible for financial oversight of your board? How do you know if that person is using proper procedures to administer the board's funds? What is your role in administering funds from other agencies, foundations, etc.? Example: Cost-Share Programs, Grants.

6. Understand what the community needs. This means that you must have some communication with those people you represent.

A board represents all members of the community they serve. Does your board represent the needs of that community? How does your board maintain contact with the community?

7. Accountability is relevant both in personal matters and in the role of a board member. Don't let your actions diminish the reputation of your board.

As a board member, who are you accountable to? What role does staff (conservation district, council, and NRCS employees) have in a board's accountability? Who is staff accountable to?

8. Model the mission of the board.

Can a board be effective if board members do not adhere to the purpose of the board? Or: Do you practice what you preach?

9. Keep confidentiality when needed, stay on agenda topic and avoid gossip.

10. Use common sense and good manners to guide your board participation.

How does 9 and 10 affect board performance? How does it affect the length and focus of a board meeting?

[This list was compiled by the conservation districts of Kansas]