

**CRYSTAL TOWNSHIP**  
**MONTCALM COUNTY, MICHIGAN**  
**(Resolution No. 23-14)**

At a regular meeting of the Township Board for Crystal Township held at the Crystal Township offices on November 8, 2023, this Resolution was offered by adoption by Township Board Member Daily and was seconded by Township Board Member Little:

**A CRYSTAL TOWNSHIP POLICY REGARDING ETHICS  
AND PROPER CONDUCT FOR CRYSTAL TOWNSHIP  
OFFICIALS AND RELATED MATTERS.**

**Section 1 – Code of Ethical Conduct**

The Crystal Township Board (the “Township Board”) recognizes that to carry out its mission of service to the community, the Township Board and Crystal Township (“Township”) officers, officials, employees and volunteers must earn the full confidence of the Crystal Township community. The Township’s residents, visitors, property owners and taxpayers expect, and are generally entitled to, a local government that conducts its affairs in a fair, ethical, transparent and accountable manner.

To accomplish these ends, the Township Board expects compliance with the Code of Ethical Conduct found in this Resolution and as follows:

- In conducting their official duties, Township officials, officers and employees shall observe both the spirit and intent of all applicable laws, Township ordinances, and Township policies and procedures.
- Township employees, officials and officers shall act in a fair and impartial manner.

- Actions of Township officials, officers and employees shall be consistent with the Township's best interests, rather than for personal gain or benefit.
- The Township shall practice transparency in its affairs, unless there is a legal or practical necessity for confidentiality or otherwise.
- Civility and respect will be demonstrated in all governance processes and in the delivering of Township programs and services.

### **Section 2 – Applicability**

The Code of Ethical Conduct incorporated in this Resolution (“Code of Ethical Conduct”) includes the policies in this Resolution and shall apply to all elected, appointed and hired Township officials, officers, employees and volunteers.

### **Section 3 – Implementation**

As an expression of the standards of conduct for elected and appointed officials, officers, employees and volunteers expected by the Township, the Code of Ethical Conduct is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when everyone is thoroughly familiar with it and embraces its provisions. For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientation for Township Board candidates, board and commission applicants, newly-elected and appointed officials, officers, employees and volunteers. Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall sign a statement affirming that they have read and understand the Code of Ethical Conduct. In addition, the Code of Ethical Conduct shall be reviewed annually by the Township Board, and other Township boards and commissions, appointees, employees and volunteers. The Township Board shall consider recommendations for updates to the Code of Ethical Conduct and will update it as necessary.

### **Section 4 – Compliance and Enforcement**

The Code of Ethical Conduct expresses general standards of ethical conduct expected for Township Board members, Township appointees, and other Township boards and commissions, officers, officials, employees and volunteers. Each person has the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of Township government.

The chairpersons of Township boards and commissions, department heads, managers and the Township Supervisor have the additional responsibility to intervene when an individual's actions appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct and are brought to their attention. The Township Board may impose sanctions on those individuals whose conduct does not comply with the Township's Code of Ethical Conduct standards, such as a reprimand, formal censure, loss of seniority or committee assignment, budget restrictions, termination or other sanctions as identified by the Township Board. *The Township Board may also have the option to remove members of boards, commissions and committees as the law allows.* A violation of this Code of Ethical Conduct shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Township Board or other Township board or commission's decision-making authority.

#### **Section 5 – Reporting Improper Actions**

Suspected improper actions shall be reported to the Township Board.

#### **Section 6 – Reporting Improper Actions of Elected and Appointed Officials**

Members of the Township Board shall intervene when the actions of elected and appointed officials, officers or employees are brought to their attention and appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct. A Township Board official who is made aware of an alleged violation shall report the complaint to the Township Supervisor. The Township Supervisor will investigate the allegation and shall provide a written report of the findings to the involved (i.e. accused)

elected or appointed official, officer or employee. The report shall also be presented to the Township Board at a public meeting. The Township Board may accept testimony on the matter and determine whether a violation of the Code has occurred.

#### **Section 7 – Conduct in Compliance with Laws**

Township officials, officers, employees and volunteers shall comply with all of the applicable provisions of state law related to conflicts of interest and incompatibility and also state laws regulating the conduct of public officials, officers, employees or volunteers.

#### **Section 8 – Uniformity of Enforcement**

Township ordinances, policies, procedures, rules and regulations shall generally be uniformly applied and enforced, unless consideration of extenuating circumstances, unreasonable expense, unintended consequences, undue hardship or other reasons are authorized (expressly or implicitly) in the applicable ordinance, policy, procedure, rule or regulation.

#### **Section 9 – Actions Not for Personal Gain**

The Township Board and Township appointees, officers, officials, boards and commissions, employees, and volunteers shall act in the best interest of the Township, rather than for personal gain or benefit.

#### **Section 10 – Actions on Behalf of Third Parties**

As stewards of the public interest, members of the Township Board and Township appointees, officials, officers, members of boards and commissions, employees and volunteers shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Township Board, or any board, commission, committee or proceeding of the Township, nor shall members of boards, commissions or committees appear before their own bodies or before the Township Board on

behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies.

**Section 11 – Conflict of Interest**

Township officials, officers, appointees, boards and commissions, employees and volunteers shall not enter into any business or other relationships that would put them into conflict with their obligations to the Township.

**Section 12 – Disclosure of Conflict of Interest**

When a decision or action would create a personal financial impact, the Township official, officer, appointee, employee or volunteer involved shall promptly disclose the current or potential further conflict of interest and shall not, directly or indirectly, participate in the decision or in any manner influence others who participate in the decision or action.

**Section 13 – Gifts and Special Benefits**

Gifts and special benefits will not be accepted from vendors or others who are in a position to benefit from Township decisions.

**Section 14 – Gifts and Special Benefits**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits that might compromise their independence of judgment or action, or give the appearance of impropriety or of being compromised.

**Section 15 – Township Resources**

Township resources will be utilized efficiently and effectively, with waste avoided.

**Section 16 – Use of Township Resources**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall not use public resources that are not available to the public in general, such as Township staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain, private purposes or personal purposes.

**Section 17 – Personal or Political Benefit**

Township resources will not be used or expended for personal or political gain or benefit.

**Section 18 – Maintaining the Integrity of Office**

A Township Board member who intends to enter into an office or position that is incompatible with his or her Township Board office shall resign from the Township Board office by submitting a letter of resignation to the Township Board stating the effective date of his or her resignation.

A Township Board member who intends to reside permanently outside the Township shall resign from the Township Board by submitting a letter of resignation to the Township Board stating the effective date of his or her resignation.

**Section 19 – Truthfulness**

All information provided by Township officials, officers, appointees, boards and commissions, employees and volunteers will be truthful and complete. The Township Board and Township officials, officers, appointees, boards and commissions, employees and volunteers shall not knowingly make false or misleading statements, or use false or misleading information as the basis for making a decision or taking action.

**Section 20 – Confidential Information**

Confidential information shall not be disclosed without legal authorization.

**Section 21 – Information Acquired**

Non-public information acquired in one's public position will not be unlawfully disclosed or be used for personal advantage or benefit.

### **Section 22 – Community Decisions**

Community service is the prevailing role and responsibility in deciding matters of public policy and conducting Township operations. All decisions shall consider the greater good of the entire community. The needs and concerns of the public, Township officials and staff shall all be monitored and considered in deliberations and decisions.

### **Section 23 – Community Decisions**

Township officials, employees, officers and appointees shall demonstrate effective approaches to solving problems. Township officials, employees, officers and appointees shall utilize their public forum to demonstrate how individuals with differing points of view can find common ground and seek compromises that benefit the community as a whole.

### **Section 24 – Community Role Models**

Township officials and Township appointees, officers, officials, boards and commissions, employees and volunteers shall conduct themselves as role models for residents, property owners, business people and other stakeholders involved in public debate. Township Board members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive workplace environment for Township employees, and for citizens and businesses dealing with the Township. Township officials and officers shall recognize their special role in dealings with Township employees and shall in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

### **Section 25 – Quality of Life**

Township decisions and actions shall be directed to improve the quality of life in the community and shall consider the unique needs of the less fortunate.

### **Section 26 – Community Commitment**

The Township's care for and commitment to its community members shall be conveyed through Township decisions and actions.

### **Section 27 – Development of Public Policy**

Policy decisions of Township Board officials and other officers and appointees will be based on the merits of the issues, will consider diversity of opinions and, whenever possible, shall reflect the consensus of participants.

### **Section 28 – Transparency**

Where appropriate, Township Board officials and Township officers and appointees shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Township Board or other Township boards and commissions, which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process to provide the utmost transparency.

### **Section 29 – Avoiding Undue Influence on Other Township Boards and Commissions**

Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, commissions and committees to the public decision-making process, members of the Township Board shall refrain from using their position to unduly influence the deliberations, outcomes or recommendations of board, commissions and committee proceedings.

### **Section 30 – Participation in Decision-Making**

Participants to policy decisions shall listen carefully to other participants and shall ask questions to gain a greater understanding of the positions, views and opinions of others.

### **Section 31 – Meaningful Participation**

Township Board members and appointees shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by their respective board or commission while governing



the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the Township Board.

**Section 32 – Meeting Inclusion**

Relevant staff shall be included in all meetings that affect their respective departments.

**Section 33 – Public Input**

Decisions made in an open public meeting shall be accompanied by reasonable opportunities for public input as stated in policy and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

**Section 34 – Public Involvement**

Expanded opportunities for public involvement in developing and evaluating Township programs and services shall be actively considered by all boards, commissions and committees.

**Section 35 – Public Interactions**

Interactions by the public with Township processes shall be made as stress-free as reasonably possible.

**Section 36 – Representation of Township Interests**

When representing the Township on a regional or multijurisdictional board or commission and confronted with an issue that pits the Township's interests against the greater interests of the broader jurisdiction, the Township Board shall be consulted for direction and guidance. When such guidance cannot be sought, representatives of the Township must consider the broader regional or statewide implications of that body's decision and issues.

**Section 37 – Interactions with Others**

Interactions with others shall demonstrate fairness, respect, impartiality and equitable treatment.

**Section 38 – Prohibited Discrimination**

To provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, including discrimination or harassment that is based on any legally protected status, Township officials and officers and Township appointees, employees, and volunteers shall not engage in any form of harassment as defined by Township policy. Any form of discrimination or harassment that violates policy will not be tolerated. This policy forbids any unreasonable conduct that is based on an individual's age, race, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or association with anyone who has, or is perceived to have, any protected characteristic, or any other basis protected by state, federal or local law.

#### **Section 39 – No Preferential Treatment**

Improper preferential consideration of a request or petition of any individual citizen or groups of citizens shall not be given. Unless authorized by law, no person shall receive special advantages, consideration or treatment beyond those that are available to any other citizen under similar circumstances.

#### **Section 40 – Responsibility of Actions**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers will take responsibility for their own actions and decisions.

#### **Section 41 – Promises**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall not make promises that one would reasonably consider as unrealistic or for which there are no intentions to ultimately honor the commitment.

#### **Section 42 – Commitments**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteer commitments shall be followed through, they will keep others informed, and requests for information shall be promptly responded to.

#### **Section 43 – Credit**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers will give proper credit to those who contribute to the Township's successes and accomplishments.

#### **Section 44 – Discussions**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers' discussions shall focus on the merits of positions, and shall not make or pursue attacks on the motives, character or personality of others.

#### **Section 45 – Discussions**

The professional and personal conduct of Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers should be above reproach and shall avoid the appearance of impropriety. While recognizing First Amendment rights, all persons should refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or unfounded verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Township Board, other Township boards, commissions and committees, employees and volunteers.

#### **Section 46 – Communication of Township Positions**

Individuals authorized to do so will, to the best of their abilities, accurately communicate official positions of the Township. Personal opinions will not be misrepresented as the official position of the Township.

#### **Section 47 – Communication of Township Positions**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall represent the official policies or positions of the Township Board, or other Township boards, commissions or committees, to the best of their ability when designated as delegates or agents for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, it should be explicitly stated that they do not represent or speak for the Township Board, commission or committee or the Township, nor will it be inferred that they do.

#### **Section 48 – Meeting Attendance**

Unless unusual circumstances occur, Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall come to meetings on time and be prepared to deliberate and make decisions.

#### **Section 49 – Meeting Attendance—Decorum in Debate**

Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers shall practice civility and decorum in discussions and debate. Difficult questions, tough challenges to a particular point of view, and criticism of the ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. Township officials, officers, appointees, employees and volunteers will be respectful of diverse opinions.

#### **Section 50 – Specific Conduct by Members of the Township Board**

Members of the Township Board shall:

- (a) Attend as many Township Board meetings as possible and become informed concerning issues to be discussed, and shall inform the Township Supervisor of any impending absences from a Township Board meeting.
- (b) Exercise his or her obligation to vote upon the question unless a conflict of interest is present.
- (c) Adopt policy only after full discussion of the issues at a public Township Board meeting or meetings.
- (d) Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Township Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Township Board and the community.

- (e) Work with other Township Board members to establish effective policy and to lawfully delegate authority for the administration of the Township.
- (f) Communicate to other Township Board members in order to manage public reaction to Township Board policy and Township programs.
- (g) Become informed about current Township government issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by the Michigan Townships Association.
- (h) Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as Township staff and insist on a regular impartial evaluation of all staff.
- (i) Avoid being placed in a position of a conflict of interest and refrain from using the Township Board position for personal or partisan gain.
- (j) Take no action that will compromise the Township, Township Board or Township staff and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law.

The vote to adopt this Resolution was as follows:

YEAS: DAILY, LITTLE, JOHNSON, McCracken, Baker-Marek

NAYS:

ABSENT/ABSTAIN:

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

### CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Township Board for Crystal Township at the time, date and place specified above pursuant to Michigan law.

Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Patti Baker-Marek  
Crystal Township Clerk  
(989) 235-4170