



## CODE OF RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

### 1 PREAMBLE

- 1.0 A Code of Conduct is a written document developed for the purpose of promoting responsible and ethical conduct of local government elected officials.
- 1.1 A Code of Conduct establishes shared standards and expectations with respect to the conduct, comportment, decorum and behavior of individual elected officials and the collective governing body.

### 2 FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Regional Districts are recognized under the *Local Government Act* of British Columbia as an independent, responsible and accountable order of government within their jurisdiction for the purpose of:
  - providing good government for its community;
  - providing the services and other things that the board considers are necessary or desirable for all or part of its community;
  - providing for stewardship of the public assets of its community, and
  - fostering the current and future economic, social and environmental well-being of its community.
- 2.2 As a Local Government Elected Official, Regional District Board Members have the legislated authority to make decisions that affect the daily lives of citizens, families, businesses and other community stakeholders. Regional District Board Members also have the authority to establish the long-term vision for the communities they serve based upon community and citizen engagement, collaboration and informed decision making.
- 2.3 Responsible conduct refers to how Regional District Board Members, in their role as Local Government Elected Officials, conduct and comport themselves, individually and collectively, through their interactions with elected colleagues, staff, citizens, other local government stakeholders, the media, and through social media as they exercise their vested authorities.
- 2.4 Responsible conduct is founded on 4 key principles:
  - Integrity
  - Respect
  - Accountability
  - Leadership and Collaboration

- 2.5 Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members, in their role as Local Government Elected Officials *must* also conduct and comport themselves in accordance with the law, including but not limited to the common law and the *Local Government Act, Community Charter, Workers' Compensation Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and Human Rights Code* of British Columbia and applicable federal legislation.

### 3 COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

- 3.1 As Local Government Elected Officials, the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors recognizes that responsible conduct is essential to providing good governance to the communities that we serve.
- 3.2 The Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors furthermore acknowledge that responsible conduct is based upon four foundational principles: **Integrity, Respect, Accountability, and Leadership and Collaboration** to which we individually and collectively subscribe.
- 3.3 Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members are individually and collectively committed to conducting themselves in a responsible and ethical manner, and are furthermore committed to upholding the law.
- 3.4 As set out in this *Code of Responsible Conduct for Elected Officials*, Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members commit to holding themselves up to the highest ethical standards individually and as a governing body as they exercise their authority, fulfill their obligations, discharge their duties, and in all of their dealings, with every person, including their elected colleagues, staff, citizens and other local government stakeholders.

### 4 APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION

- 4.1 This *Code of Responsible Conduct for Elected Officials* applies to every elected official of the Fraser Valley Regional District, including Alternate Directors.
- 4.2 It is the express responsibility and obligation of each Fraser Valley Regional District Board Member, or Alternate Director, to uphold both the letter and spirit of this *Code of Responsible Conduct for Elected Officials* in their dealings with each other, staff, citizens, and other local government stakeholders.
- 4.3 This *Code of Responsible Conduct for Elected Officials* is intended to be interpreted and applied by Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members in a manner that is consistent with the common law, all applicable Federal and Provincial Laws, as well as the bylaws and policies of the Fraser Valley Regional District, and along with any other legal obligations which apply to Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members individually and as a collective governing body.

### 5 FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

- 5.1 The Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors expressly acknowledges that the foundational principles of responsible conduct, as defined below, are intended to provide Fraser

Valley Regional District Board Members with a shared understanding of what responsible conduct is.

- 5.2 The Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors furthermore acknowledges that these foundational principles, as purposefully defined below, will set out expectations of how Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members, both individually and collectively, will conduct and comport themselves as Elected Officials.

### ***Integrity***

Integrity is conduct and behavior that upholds the public interest and promotes public confidence in local government. Integrity is based on honesty and the active demonstration of the highest ethical standards in all dealings by Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members.

### ***Respect***

Respect is conduct and behavior that creates an environment of trust by demonstrating due regard, deference and consideration for the perspectives, wishes, beliefs, traditions, values and rights of others.

### ***Accountability***

Accountability is conduct and behavior that demonstrates the willingness to accept responsibility for one's conduct, behaviours, actions and decisions.

### ***Leadership and Collaboration***

Leadership and Collaboration is conduct and behavior that demonstrates the ability to lead, guide, actively listen, mobilize and positively influence others, while encouraging people to come together to meet around a common goal or objective, or to resolve conflict through collective means and efforts.

## **6 VALUE STATEMENTS**

- 6.1 Reference Editorial Comments attached

## **7 STANDARDS OF RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT**

- 7.1 The Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors expects that all Board Members and Alternates will demonstrate and abide by the standards of responsible conduct set out below and as reflected in the stated foundational principles of responsible conduct set out in Section 5.

### ***Integrity***

Integrity is demonstrated by the following conduct and behavior:

- Board Members will be truthful, honest, and open in all matters and in all dealings with their elected colleagues, staff, citizens, other local government stakeholders, the media, and through social media in their role as an elected official
- Board Members will ensure that their actions are consistent with the shared principles and values collectively agreed to by the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors
- Board Members will follow through on their commitments in a timely manner
- Board Members will correct errors in a timely, transparent and reasonable manner
- Board Members will engage in respectful communication, dialogue and debate in all matters and in all dealings at all times
- Board Members will make informed and well-reasoned decisions by directing their minds to the merits of the matter before them for consideration, ensuring that they act on the basis of relevant information, legal implications, and in consideration of the consequences of their decisions
- Board Members will conduct and comport themselves in a manner that promotes and inspires public confidence and trust in local government and in all of their dealings as a local government official
- Board Members will conduct and comport themselves in a manner which avoids any perception of conflict of interest, improper use of office, or other unethical or illegal conduct
- Board Members will conduct and comport themselves in a manner which upholds the public interest by diligently serving citizens and communities within their sphere of influence in a manner which best serves the communities' interest and not their own, or the interests of a select few
- Board Members will conduct and comport themselves in a manner that is consistent, fair, non-prejudicial, non-discriminatory and unbiased in all their dealings as a local government official

## **Respect**

Respect is demonstrated by the following conduct and behavior:

- Board Members will treat every person with dignity, understanding, courtesy, politeness, civility and respect irrespective of differences of opinion, perspectives, beliefs, traditions or values
- Board Members will respect the role of the Chair or Presiding Official and will conduct and comport themselves accordingly during meetings, and will furthermore abide by the rules of procedure adopted by the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors

- Board Members will respect the distinct roles and responsibilities of local government staff and is committed to fostering a positive working relationship between the Board, staff, citizens, and other local government stakeholders.
- Board Members will call for, and expect that respect be shown to elected officials, staff, and members of the public by other citizens, community members and other local government stakeholders.
- Board Members will value the role of diverse perspectives and will show due consideration for every person's contributions by listening actively and respectfully to another person's perspective or point of view during discussion, debate, collaboration and decision making
- Board Members will demonstrate awareness of their own conduct and behavior and manage and adjust their conduct and behavior as circumstances warrant
- Board Members will create an environment of trust and will consider and be sensitive to how their words, language, conduct and behavior can be perceived by others as offensive, rude, derogatory, disrespectful, discriminatory, aggressive or combative, insulting, inflammatory or otherwise hurtful
- Board Members will not engage in conduct or behaviors that are deemed to be indecent, obscene, insulting, abusive or otherwise unbecoming to a local government elected official. This conduct or behavior includes, but is not limited to, unwanted physical or sexual contact or comments, and/or any form of aggressive or threatening conduct or behavior that may cause harm to any person, or which makes a person feel threatened or intimidated

### ***Accountability***

Accountability is demonstrated by the following conduct and behavior:

- Board Members will be responsible for, and will accept responsibility for decisions they make as an elected official
- Board Members will be accountable for their individual actions, and for the actions of the collective Board
- Board Members will be listen to and consider the opinions, viewpoints and needs of the community in all decision-making and will allow for meaningful and appropriate opportunities for citizen and community input, discourse and feedback
- Board Members will carry out their business, duties and responsibilities in an open and transparent manner ensuring that the public understands the process and rationale used to reach informed decisions and the reasons and justifications for taking certain actions
- Board Members will ensure that information is accessible to the extent possible under law, while also protecting privacy and confidentiality where appropriate or necessary

### ***Leadership and Collaboration***

Leadership and Collaboration is demonstrated by the following conduct and behavior:

- Board Members will proactively and routinely monitor and measure the Board's performance in order to ensure that the foundational principles with respect to responsible conduct are being followed by all Board Members and the collective governing body
- Board Members will behave in a manner that instills and builds public trust and confidence in local government
- Board Members will recognize that vigorous discourse and debate on a matter is integral to the democratic process and will encourage healthy, respectful and constructive debate around the Board table on all matters before the Board prior to taking a decision.
- Board Members will consider the issues before them and will make decisions as a collective governing body. As such, Board Members are expected to actively participate in debate about the merits of the matter before them, and to accept, respect and uphold the decision of the majority as part of the democratic process.
- Board Members will, as leaders of their communities, face challenges, obstacles, controversy and adversity calmly, respectfully, diplomatically, and with due consideration while endeavoring to find effective and appropriate solutions and provide direction to staff. Board Members will empower each other, and staff to face challenges, obstacles, controversy and adversity in the same manner.
- Board Members will recognize and value the distinct roles and responsibilities that others play in providing good governance and will commit to fostering a positive working relationship between Board Members, staff, citizens and other local government stakeholders.
- Board Members will recognize and respect the importance of the role of the Chair or Presiding Official at a meeting, and will treat that person with respect and deference at all times

## **8 OTHER PROVISIONS**

- 8.1 Reference Editorial Comments attached

## **9 POLICY PROVISIONS**

- 9.1 Reference Editorial Comments attached

## **10 ENFORCEMENT, SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES**

- 10.1 Reference Editorial Comments attached

## **11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND SIGN OFF**

- 11.1 Fraser Valley Regional District Board Members will be required to demonstrate their commitment to responsible and ethical conduct by signing an Oath of Office, set out as Schedule 1, which incorporates this *Code of Responsible Conduct for Elected Officials*.

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## ***Schedule 1***

### ***OATH OF OFFICE***

*Note: The existing Oath of Office will need to be revisited and revised for purposes of incorporating the FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct for Elected Officials.*

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