

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MEETING CONDUCT POLICY**

**Resolution 2018-7**

**I. Purpose:**

To establish procedures of conduct of Township Board Meetings

**II. Policy/Procedure:**

PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCT OF TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

**RULE 1. AUTHORITY:**

This policy is adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Charter Township of Van Buren pursuant to provisions of the Michigan Compiled Laws, 42.1 et seq. 1947, Act. 359 as amended, known as the Charter Township Act.

**RULE 2. MEETINGS:**

2.1 The Board of Trustees shall duly adopt an annual meeting schedule prior to the start of the next calendar year. The Board of Trustees will generally meet on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, unless otherwise noticed, at 7:00 p.m. Meetings of the Board will generally be held in the Board Room at Township Hall, 46425 Tyler Road, Van Buren Township, Michigan. Any change in meeting location will be duly noticed in accordance with state statute. Work Study Sessions will generally be held, unless otherwise noticed, at 4:00 p.m. on the Mondays prior to the first and third Tuesdays of each month in the Sheldon Room. Work Study Session will be only held for the following: 1) When there are agenda items to be presented such as contracts in which the Board may need extra time to review and request further information. 2) To gather information and exchange viewpoints on agenda topics before they become "action agenda items" at a Board meeting.

- (a) As a general rule, meetings shall not be held on legal holidays.
- (b) It may be necessary based on certain circumstances for the Board of Trustees to take official action (vote) at a Work Study Session. In such cases, all actions shall comply with Rule 7 Voting.
- (c) Actions, resolutions or other commitments on specific proposals shall be taken in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.261 et seq.

## 2.2 **SPECIAL MEETINGS:**

Special Meetings may be called by the Supervisor or any two members of the Board of Trustees. Notice shall be given to Board members at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and the Township Clerk shall cause to be posted notice of said meeting at least eighteen (18) hours in advance. The Clerk shall notice said special meeting including the time, place and purpose of the meeting, by posting said notice on public bulletin boards located within Township Hall and/or other prominent and conspicuous places reasonably accessible to the public, on the Township's governmental access television channel and the township's website.

## 2.3 **CLOSED MEETINGS:**

2.3.1 **Procedure.** The Board of Trustees may meet in closed session, a meeting closed to the public, upon the motion of any Board member, concurrence of that motion and an affirmative 2/3 roll call vote of the Board of Trustees members, serving on the Township Board. Closed sessions may only be held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

2.3.2 **Purposes.** The Township Board shall hold closed sessions only for the following purposes:

(1) To consider the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual, or to hear complaint or charges against such a person, but only when the object of the proposed action or charges requests the meeting to be closed.

(2) To consider negotiation strategy connected with negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement.

(3) To consider the purchase or lease of real property prior to the time that an option to lease or purchase such real property is secured.

(4) To consult with the Township attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with specific pending litigation, but only when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the township's litigating or settlement position.

(5) To review the specific contents of an application for employment to a Township office and the applicant requests that the application remain confidential. Whenever the board shall meet to interview an applicant, it shall be in open session.

(6) To consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute.

2.4 **EMERGENCY MEETINGS:**

An emergency meeting shall be held only upon the consent of two-thirds of the Board of Trustees members, and only if a delay in scheduling a special meeting would pose severe or imminent danger to the health, safety or welfare of the public, including but not limited to placing the Township in an adverse financial position and delay would be detrimental to efforts to lessen or respond to the threat. If possible, notice of the emergency meeting will be posted 18 hours prior to the meeting. However, if the 18 hours posted notice requirement is not met, the emergency meeting shall go forward in accordance with applicable State law including the requirement of notice to be made available at the meeting and the requirement of subsequent notice.

2.5 **MEETING MINUTES:**

The Clerk is responsible for the preparation and recordkeeping of all minutes of meetings of the Township Board. Minutes of closed meetings shall be maintained separately for a period of one year and one day after which time they shall be destroyed, and shall not be disclosed to the public except upon court order. It is expressly understood the purpose for preparing and maintaining meeting minutes is to properly record the official actions of the Township Board. Only those comments made during the Public Hearings or Non-Agenda portions of a Board meeting will be recorded in the meeting minutes and may be edited by the Clerk in the interest of brevity and conciseness. Copies of the meeting minutes prepared by the Clerk, but not approved by the Board, shall be available for public inspection not more than eight (8) business days after the meeting. Minutes approved by the Board shall be available within five (5) business days after the meeting in which they were approved. The Clerk shall publish and maintain said meeting minutes as legally required.

**RULE 3. PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

The Clerk shall provide proper notice for all meetings and meeting cancellations of the Township Board. All notices shall include the day, time and place of said meetings. Special and closed meeting notices shall also include the purpose for said meeting. Should a Board of Trustees meeting be cancelled, the reason for said cancellation shall be included in the notice. Notices shall be placed upon the public bulletin board located near the Clerk's Office at Township Hall and/or other prominent and conspicuous places reasonably accessible to the public, on the township's governmental access television channel and on the township's website [www.vanburen-](http://www.vanburen-)

mi.org. The Clerk shall, upon request, provide notice to the local media and upon request to other newspaper, radio or television media located in the State. Other interested individuals or parties may also be provided notice of meetings, changes in the meeting schedule or special meetings upon written request. No liability shall be incurred by the Township or any of its elected and appointed officials or employees as the result of the failure or delay in providing or receiving such notice.

**RULE 4. QUORUM:**

Four (4) members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at all meetings of the Township Board with the exception of the requirement for an affirmative 2/3 roll call vote of the Board of Trustees members, to vote in the affirmative to move into Closed Session. A Board member shall notify the Supervisor as soon as possible when the member is unable to attend a Board meeting.

**RULE 5. AGENDAS & MEETING MATERIALS**

The Supervisor shall review and approve all items to be placed upon the agenda of the Board of Trustees. Upon written request, any two or more Board members may also place items upon the agenda for Board consideration. The Clerk shall prepare the agendas for all meetings and shall distribute agendas and meeting materials. The following provisions govern the items to be included on a Township Board agenda:

- 5.1 Regular Meetings: all agenda items shall be submitted to the Supervisor by 12:00 noon on the Tuesday preceding the next regular meeting. This includes all items for which official Board action is sought, as well as, reports or other non-action Board information. If the Supervisor determines the item to be complete such that the Board has sufficient information with which to act upon the request, the Supervisor shall submit agenda items to the Clerk no later than 12 noon on the Wednesday prior to the Tuesday Board meeting. Items that are deemed incomplete will be returned to the appropriate party and will only be considered for inclusion on the agenda once they are complete.

The Clerk shall have the agenda prepared and ready for distribution no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Thursday prior to the Tuesday Board meeting. Reasonable accommodations may be made due to holidays or other unforeseen events that could occur.

Agenda packets for Board members shall be placed in their mailboxes at Township Hall and/or emailed to Board members. Agenda packets for department directors may be obtained at the Clerk's Office or at the Board Work Study Session. Media packets for the local media may be obtained at

the Clerk's Office or upon request, may be obtained after business hours at the Public Safety Department lobby. Any other arrangements for the distribution of agenda packets may be made with the concurrence of the Clerk.

- 5.2 Work Study Session: all agenda items shall be submitted to the Supervisor by 12:00 noon on the Tuesday prior to the Monday Work Study Session. the Township Supervisor shall submit the agenda items to the Clerk no later than 12 noon on Wednesday prior to the Monday Work Study Session. Agenda packets will be distributed to the Board members on Thursday prior to Work Study Session. If there are no agenda items meeting the criteria for the Work Study Session the Work Study Session will be cancelled.
- 5.3 Special Meetings and Emergency Meetings: all matters to be considered shall be stated in the notice of the meeting. No other matters will be considered. The Board will be provided written material as soon as possible prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- 5.4 Closed Session Meetings: all matters to be considered shall be stated in the meeting notice. No other matters will be considered. In general, written material will be disseminated to the Township Board at the Closed Session Meeting.
- 5.6 **ORDER OF BUSINESS (Board Meetings)**
  1. **Call to Order**
  2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
  3. **Roll Call**
  4. **Executive Summary of the Agenda**
  5. **Adoption of Agenda**
  6. **Adoption of Consent Agenda**
  7. **Public Hearings** (if necessary)
  8. **Correspondence, Announcements, and Presentations** (includes presentations of special awards, employee service awards, special recognitions.) Letters of correspondence must conform to the above listed categories of awards and recognitions and be delivered to the Supervisor 48 hours before the meeting. Letters will only be read by the Chair or his/her designee if deemed appropriate. **Announcements** (includes township activities or announcements by civic or non-profit organizations)
  9. **Public Comment** (on Unfinished Business or New Business)
  10. **Unfinished Business**
  11. **New Business**
  12. **Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items**
  13. **Board Comment – Non-Agenda Items**

14. **Closed Session** (may be inserted anywhere after adoption of the agenda as determined by the Board.)

15. **Adjournment**

(a) Board meeting's order of business subject to change based on Chair's discretion. Example: for special ceremonial proceedings.

(b) Removal of a Consent Agenda Items: In order to limit the number of items removed from the consent agenda, all Board members will make an effort to contact the Supervisor or his/her designee before the meeting to have questions answered.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS (Work Study Session)**

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Roll Call**

3. **Unfinished Business**

4. **New Business**

5. **Public Comment** (Rule 9 applies)

6. **Closed Session** (may be inserted anywhere after adoption of the agenda as determined by the Board.)

7. **Adjournment**

**RULE 6. CONDUCT OF MEETING:**

6.1 Chairperson. The Supervisor shall moderate and chair all meetings of the Township Board. In the absence of the Supervisor, the Clerk shall call the meeting to order and entertain a motion to appoint a Chairperson Pro-Tem for the meeting, by a majority vote. This individual may be any member of the Township Board. Hereafter mentioned, the Chairperson will be referred to as Chair.

The Chair shall introduce every item to be deliberated by the Township Board. Items may be presented by the Chair or other Board members as may be applicable, or by department directors. Items may also be presented by the party or entity seeking Board approval (For example, civic/non-profit organizations, residents, developers, potential parties to a contract, or other interested parties.).

6.2 Addressing the Chair. Board members wishing to speak shall first obtain the approval of the Chair and each person who speaks shall address the Chair. Other persons at the meeting shall not speak unless called on by the Chair.

- 6.3 Seating. The Supervisor, shall be seated in the center, flanked by the Clerk and Treasurer, with two Trustees to the outside of both the Clerk and Treasurer.

**RULE 7.** Voting. The Chair shall reiterate for clarity all motions made by the Board, listing the motion maker and motion supporter and the action outlined in the motion. The Chair will call for the vote and duly note the approval or denial represented by the majority vote of the Township Board. Any non-unanimous vote will trigger a roll call by the Clerk.

- 7.1 Whenever a question is put forth by the chair, every member present shall vote on all questions decided by the Township Board. No member present shall abstain from voting “yes” or “no” unless excused by the unanimous consent of other members present. Board members may only abstain from voting upon matters in which he/she has a financial interest other than the common public interest; upon any question concerning his/her own conduct; or upon a matter pursuant to the Township Ethics Policy.
- 7.2 Roll Call Votes. Upon demand by any Township Board member a roll call vote shall be taken.
- 7.3 Recording of Votes. All votes shall be entered upon the record by name except when the vote is unanimous.
- 7.4 Order of Voting. In the case of a roll call vote, the vote shall be taken in random order.

**RULE 8. Board Member Rules of Decorum:**

- 8.1 The maker of the motion shall be first to speak; The supporter of the motion shall speak second. During discussion, no member shall speak until recognized for that purpose by the Chair. No member shall be able to speak a second time, before another member is given an opportunity to speak a first time.
- 8.2 A member shall not speak more than two times on a given question, three (3) minutes the first time, three (3) minutes the second time; a member who has the floor shall indicate when he or she is finished speaking; a member may request an extension of debate for all members, with one opportunity to speak for a maximum of three (3) minutes. If an objection is made, the majority through a straw poll will make the determination.
- 8.3 When addressing other Board members, they should be addressed by title and/or last name but not by first name.

- 8.4 Remarks must be confined to the merits of the pending question. No members may comment adversely on any prior act of the Board of Trustees that is not pending.
- 8.5 A courteous tone must be maintained. Interjecting personal attacks is strictly prohibited. These include, but are not limited to derogatory, denigrating, repeated abusive or accusatory language that serves no legitimate public purpose and allegations of criminal or civil wrongdoing. Critiques shall be made in a respectful manner.
- 8.6 Any Board member may ask for a Point of Order, when another member's remarks are considered not relevant to the pending question or a personal attack. In such cases, the Chair shall make the determination (without discussion) to call another member out-of-order. An appeal may be made to the Board, with a majority vote required to overturn the Chair's ruling. If deemed out-of-order, the speaking member will forfeit his/her remaining time to comment on the pending question.
- 8.7 A member's repeated refusal to adhere to the Board meeting rules of decorum set forth, may be called out-of-order by the Chair. A vote of the majority of the Board will determine if the Rules of Decorum have been violated. If it is deemed the rules have been violated, the Board will decide whether to impose a formal reprimand at the following meeting.
- 8.8 A Board member shall not use their personal mobile devices to answer phone calls or send electronic communications, including text messages, while seated at the Board table. Board members who have to attend to personal business shall step away from the Board table to do so.
- (a) These Rules of Decorum shall be maintained throughout the entire meeting.
- 8.9 A call for adjournment shall be made after 2 and ½ hours (150 minutes) has elapsed in a Work Study or Board Meeting. An extension of the meeting time will be determined through a straw poll consensus.
- (a) In the case of an early adjournment, the pending motion on the table shall still be finalized and Public Comment will still be observed.

**RULE 9. Public Comment (Work Study & Board Meetings):**

- 9.1 Those wishing to speak shall first obtain the approval of the Chair to do so. Persons at the meeting shall not speak unless called on by the Chair. Once recognized, persons are asked to speak at the podium during a Board Meeting or designated area at the Work Study. Considerations will be made for persons with disabilities; persons will be asked, but not required to state



their name and address; persons will direct their comments to the Chair. Only one person shall be permitted to speak at a time.

- 9.2 Persons shall use civil language and make comments in a courteous, orderly and non-offensive manner when speaking at Work Study and Board Meetings. Material will be deemed to be offensive if it contains personal attacks on persons, officials, or employees, or if it contains profanity, is of a grossly indecent nature, or includes inflammatory expressions reasonable persons would deem to cause or incite public outrage or expressions of disgust. Comments should be framed to provide a point of view, to provide information or to express a concern. Heckling or calling out is not permitted.
- 9.3 Public comments shall be directed towards the Chair. The Board shall not engage in a back and forth debate with speakers. The Chair may answer questions or correct misinformation either immediately or following the Public Comment portion. Administration will make a diligent effort to answer questions and requests for information not immediately available, in a timely manner following the meeting.
- 9.4 Candidates running for elective office are permitted to introduce themselves during an election cycle. However, comments advocating for or campaigning on behalf of a candidate, and politicking in any form is discouraged at any Work Study or Board Meeting.
- 9.5 Each speaker may address the meeting for three (3) minutes. The Chair may grant an additional one and ½ minutes (90 seconds), if requested by the speaker, for good cause. Comment time shall not be “shared” or “loaned” to others.
- 9.6 If several members of an organization or group are in attendance to express the same concerns, they are encouraged to select one individual to serve as their spokesperson and he/she shall indicate who they are speaking on behalf of. The spokesperson will be permitted to speak for (5) minutes, with an additional one and ½ minutes (90 seconds) that may be granted by the Chair. Additional time may be granted per the Chair’s discretion.
- 9.7 Disorderly Conduct at Meetings: Respectful comment upon action, inaction, or performance of the Van Buren Board of Trustees, commissions, boards, employees and consultants is allowed. However, inappropriate, profane, vulgar or repeated abusive language and personal attacks that serves no legitimate public purpose will not be tolerated; the speaker will forfeit the remainder of his/her time to address the Board; the Chair will make this determination.

- 9.8 Members of the audience will refrain from being disruptive to the Board's proceeding in any manner. This behavior will include but is not limited to: speaking before being recognized by the Chair, carrying on personal conversations, whistling, clapping other than during special ceremonies, yelling or heckling and interrupting a speaker.
- 9.9 The presiding Chairperson shall be the Sergeant-at-Arms and shall call to order any persons failing to abide by the Board's Meeting Conduct Policy. If any person, after being called to order, continues to be disorderly and disruptive to the meeting, he/she shall be ordered to leave by the presiding Sergeant-at-Arms immediately. **This subsection shall be strictly enforced.**
- (a) A police officer may be present at meetings of the Board of Trustees. When present, the police officer shall serve as security at the direction of the presiding Sergeant-at-Arms of the Board of Trustees and shall have general charge and supervision of the Board Room, Trustee's office, staff offices and work areas and all connecting hallways and passages during Board meetings.
- 10.0 Repeated disorderly behavior by a member of the public may be referred to law enforcement or other authorities for appropriate action. A vote of the majority of the Board will make this determination.

### **III. Secretary to the Board:**

The Clerk shall appoint an individual to serve as Secretary to the Board. The Secretary to the Board shall be responsible for audiotaping all regular, special and emergency meetings of the Township Board and shall prepare or assist the Clerk in the written minutes of the proceedings of those regular, special, emergency and study session meetings of the Township Board. It is expressly understood the sole purpose for which the Secretary to the Board audiotapes meetings is to facilitate the written preparation of meeting minutes. Upon approval of the minutes at a subsequent Board meeting, the Secretary to the Board shall reuse the tapes, as practical, for use in accurately preparing future meeting minutes. At the direction of the Clerk, the Secretary to the Board may attend Closed Sessions of the Board and assist in the written recordings of those closed meetings. The Secretary to the Board may assist, as needed, in the roll call votes and recording of such votes in the absence of or at the direction of the Clerk. The Secretary to the Board may perform other duties as determined by the Clerk.

### **IV. Additional Notes for the Public:**

The public is encouraged to attend all public meetings of the Township Board, and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, upon advance notice, reasonable accommodations will be made to accommodate said persons. To make

themselves more informed about the items appearing on the agenda, it is suggested that individuals seek information from the appropriate department or through the Supervisor's Office on items of interest prior to the meeting. This provides an opportunity for information to be relayed and if needed, appropriate research to be conducted to provide a more thorough response. Often, Township staff can address a concern quickly or provide the Board with additional information in advance of their deliberations.

Members of the public will be permitted to display signs that are not offensive and do not disturb or create a visual obstruction for other audience members.

During Public Hearings, only the item for which the Public Hearing was convened may be discussed.

**Parliamentary Authority, Robert's Rules of Order, revised:** Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, shall govern all questions or procedures that are not otherwise provided by these rules or by state or federal law.

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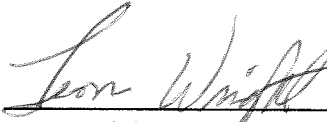
Yeas: MCNAMARA, BUDD, WRIGHT, FRAZIER, MARTIN AND MILLER

Nays: WHITE

Absent: NONE

Adopted from: Resolution: 2013-05 on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

I, Leon Wright, Clerk of Van Buren Charter Township, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the Board of Trustees Meeting Rules of Conduct Policy (Resolution 2018-7), as amended as adopted by the Van Buren Charter Township Board of Trustees at the regular meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May 2018.

  
Leon Wright, Clerk