

**GENERAL POLICY MANUAL
FOR CHESTER TOWNSHIP
OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**Adopted By: The Chester Township Board
July 30, 2002**

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1. MISSION STATEMENT

Chester Township recognizes its responsibilities to each of its constituents and Township officials make this pledge as a statement of the Township's values and purpose as we conduct Township business.

- Chester Township will strive to serve its Township constituents with dependable and efficient service. The highest standards and lawfully executed service will be our goal.
- Chester Township will strive to be a place where employees are encouraged to expand their knowledge and fulfill their individual potentials. One of the Township's premier goals is to be considered an invaluable work place by each of our employees.
- Chester Township will strive to conduct its affairs in a socially responsible, lawful manner while maintaining a kind and courteous workplace.

We will always strive to utilize ethical practices and compassion for the needs of those around us and to reflect those ideals in our Township decisions.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY MANUAL

The policies and procedures contained in this Policy Manual were adopted by the Chester Township Board in an effort to clarify the various obligations and duties of elected Township Board members, Township employees, and other Township officials. The policies and procedures contained in this Policy Manual shall supplement Michigan law and Chester Township ordinances.

3. EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The Chester Township Board adopted the Chester Township Employee Handbook (“Employee Handbook”) on _____, 2002. It is intended that this Policy Manual will be complementary to and consistent with the Employee Handbook. Nevertheless, should a provision of the two handbooks expressly conflict, the provisions of the Employee Handbook shall govern.

4. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

4.1 Generally

Township Supervisor's Statutory Duties

- Moderates Township Board meetings
- Chief assessing officer (if certified)
- Secretary to the Board of Review
- Township's legal agent
- Must maintain records of Supervisor's office
- Responsible for tax allocation board budget (if applicable)
- Develops Township budget
- Appoints some commission members
- May call special meetings
- May appoint a deputy

Township Treasurer's Statutory Duties

- Collects real and personal property taxes
- Keeps an account of Township receipts (revenues) and expenditures
- Issues Township checks
- Deposits Township revenues in approved depositories
- Invests Township funds in approved investment vehicles
- Collects delinquent personal property tax
- Responsible for jeopardy assessments in collecting property tax
- Collects mobile home specific tax
- Must appoint a deputy
- Must post a surety bond

Township Clerk's Statutory Duties

- Maintains custody of all Township records
- Maintains general ledger
- Prepares warrants for Township checks
- Records and maintains Township meeting minutes
- Keeps the Township book of oaths
- Responsible for special meeting notices
- Keeps voter registration file and conducts elections
- Keeps Township ordinance book
- Prepares financial statements
- Delivers tax certificates to the Supervisor and county clerk by September
- Must appoint a deputy

- Must post a surety bond

Township Trustee's Statutory Duties

- Township legislators, required to vote on all issues (unless there's a conflict of interest)
- Co-responsible for the Township's fiduciary health
- Other duties as assigned by the Township Board

5. TOWNSHIP BOARD

5.1 Township Board Powers

The Township Board of Chester Township retains the power to determine the administrative policies and procedures for the Township, except where the laws of the state of Michigan have assigned such power to a specific elected Township official. The authority to adopt any administrative policy or determine appropriate procedures not provided for in this manual or provided for by state law shall be retained by the Township Board. The Township Board also reserves the right at any time to alter, modify, amend or repeal any or all provisions of this Policy Manual.

5.2 Authority Delegated from the Township Board

In the interest of promoting the efficient operation of the Township and pursuant to MCLA 41.96, as well as implied powers of the Township Board, the Township Board assigns to various Township elected and appointed officials the authority to exercise certain non-statutory administrative responsibilities, in accordance with the specific policies and procedures contained in this Policy Manual.

5.3 Authority to Interpret the Provisions of this Manual

The Township Board shall have the final authority to interpret ambiguous provisions of this Policy Manual.

5.4 Township Board Meeting Administration

(a) Posting Meetings

The Township Clerk shall be responsible for posting all regular and special meetings of the Township Board in conformance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act. The posting of all meetings of the various Township boards and commissions that are required to conform to the Open Meetings Act shall also be the responsibility of the Township Clerk.

(b) Meeting Agenda

The Township Supervisor shall prepare the agenda at least 4 days prior to every Township Board meeting. Any Township Board member who desires to have an item placed on the agenda must notify the Township Supervisor at least 7 days prior to the meeting. A copy of the proposed agenda shall be delivered or made available to every Township Board member, along with all supporting documentation and correspondence addressed to the Township Board, at least 2 days prior to the Township Board meeting.

Department heads or employees who desire to have any business placed on the agenda shall notify the Township Supervisor with a cover memo and supporting documentation at

least 7 days prior to the Township Board meeting. When a need to place an item on the agenda arises after this deadline, the business item may be added to the agenda by consent of the Township Board.

The proposed agenda shall be approved by majority vote following the roll call of Township Board members at each Township Board meeting. The agenda shall conform to the following format:

1. Call to order
 2. Pledge of Allegiance
 3. Public comment/citizen comments regarding items not on the agenda
 4. Approval of meeting agenda
 5. Approval of minutes
 6. Treasurer's report and approval of bills
 7. Ottawa County Board of Commissioners' report
 8. Township reports
 9. Old business
 10. New business
 11. Announcements and meetings
 12. Township Board comments
 13. Adjournment
- (c) The Chair. The Township Supervisor shall chair (*i.e.*, preside at) the meetings of the Township Board. If the Supervisor is absent or unable to chair a particular meeting of the Township Board, the Township Clerk shall do so. If both the Supervisor and Township Clerk are not present or are unable to chair a meeting of the Township Board, the person who has served on the Township Board the longest shall chair the particular meeting.
- (1) It shall be the duty of the Chair to preside at all meetings of the Township Board, to preserve order and to decide all questions of order and procedure subject to appeal to the Township Board.
 - (2) The Chair shall rule on all procedural issues which might arise at a Township Board meeting, subject to being overturned regarding any such ruling by a vote of a majority of the Township Board members present (including the Chair).
 - (3) Any of the rules and procedures contained herein may be waived for a given Township Board meeting or agenda item at a Township Board meeting by the vote of at least 3 members of the Township Board present at a meeting where a quorum is present.

- (d) Public Comments. The following shall apply to public comments at Township Board meetings:
- (1) Members of the public may comment only during the public comment portions of the meeting.
 - (2) Specific answers to a citizen's questions need not be given by the Chair or other Township officials at the time requested, but may, at the Township's discretion, be followed up later.
 - (3) At each Township Board meeting open to the public, there shall be a general public comment period. It shall be held at the beginning of the meeting. The general comment period shall be limited to 10 minutes in total. No citizen shall speak for more than 3 minutes unless either the Chair or the Township Board permits the citizen to speak for a longer period of time.
 - (4) In addition to the above-mentioned public comment period, the Chair or the Township Board may permit limited public comment for particular agenda items.
 - (5) All public comments shall be directed to and through the Chair – no member of the public shall directly address any other member of the public or any other Township official.
 - (6) All public comments shall be related to Township matters. Public comments must be relevant and germane to the business and functions of the Township.
 - (7) No citizen can "transfer," reserve or delegate any public comment time to any other person.
 - (8) The Chair has the authority to extend the comment period for citizens at the Chair's discretion.
 - (9) Any citizen desiring to make a public comment shall be requested to first state their name and address for the record.
 - (10) If a member of the public undertakes a personal attack on a Township official or employee regarding non-Township matters or on a private matter not related to Township business or activities, the Chair has the discretion to terminate the remaining allowable public comment time for any such person.

- (11) The Township Clerk shall be responsible for timing the length of public comments and informing the Chair when a citizen has 30 seconds remaining and when time has expired.
 - (12) No person shall be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter at the same meeting. Persons purporting to speak to the same general subject matter in his and her personal and representative capability shall be recognized only once.
- (e) Public Conduct.
- (1) Any person shall have the right to tape record, video tape or broadcast the proceedings of the Township Board, but they shall not utilize the electrical outlets of the Township without the prior permission of the Chair. Furthermore, any tape recorder, video camera, or other camera utilized by any such person shall be kept at least 10 feet away from all members of the Township Board and shall not be placed behind them.
 - (2) No person shall disrupt a meeting of the Township Board. No person shall commit a breach of the peace at any Township Board meeting. Any person who disrupts a meeting of the Township Board or commits a breach of the peace at a Township Board meeting may be ejected from the meeting. Refusal by a member of the public to stop speaking when the Chair has interpreted that such person's time has expired or if such person speaks when they have no right to do so, such actions shall be deemed a disruption of the Township Board meeting and a breach of the peace.
 - (3) Members of the public shall not talk among themselves during a meeting of the Township Board in a volume greater than a whisper, and upon being asked by the Chair to quiet down, shall do so.
 - (4) No person shall utilize any profane or obscene speech or gesture.
- (f) Procedural Rules. Meetings of the Township Board shall utilize generally accepted rules of order, unless otherwise provided for in this resolution. Unless overruled by a majority vote of the Township Board person present (including the Supervisor), the ruling of the Chair on procedural issues shall govern.
- (1) Questions shall be voted on by voice vote unless the Chair or any member of the Township Board shall call for a roll call vote or unless a roll call vote is required by law.

(2) Motions –

- (A) No motion shall be debated unless it has been seconded.
- (B) The initiator of a motion may withdraw any motion at any time before it has been adopted. However, if the motion has been seconded, the seconding party must also consent to withdrawal.
- (C) All motions, resolutions and amendments or substitutions thereto, and the vote thereon, shall be entered in the minutes unless withdrawn.
- (D) When an appeal is taken from a decision by the Chair, the member taking the appeal shall be allowed to state his or her reason for doing so. The question shall then be immediately put in the following (or substantially similar) form—“Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?”

(g) Township Board Correspondence

Each Township Board member shall receive with the Township Board agenda a copy of written correspondence addressed to the Township Board requesting Township Board action. A motion may be made to consider the correspondent’s request under new business. If no motion is made to consider the request, the correspondence will be received and filed.

Informational written correspondence that does not require Township Board action shall be summarized on the agenda, and copies shall be made available to Township Board members at the Township Board meeting.

(h) Township Board Consultants

The Township Board reserves to itself the authority to appoint the following consultants/professionals:

1. Attorney
2. Auditor
3. Engineer
4. Labor negotiator
5. Planner
6. Risk manager

(i) Litigation

The initiation of any lawsuit, litigation, claim for injunctive relief or writ of mandamus shall require a majority vote of the Township Board, except when there are extenuating circumstances, as defined below.

Extenuating circumstances are defined as an emergency situation or a situation in which a violation of any state, federal or local ordinance constitutes a public nuisance or otherwise endangers the public and in which the continued existence of such a condition, emergency or violation shall be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the Township.

Extenuating circumstances also include any case where the continued existence of any condition, emergency or violation may jeopardize the legal position of the Township in securing the intended remedy in any lawsuit, litigation or other proceeding.

The initiation of a lawsuit, litigation or other proceeding for extenuating circumstances shall be allowed only upon the written directive of 2 members of the Township Board. In the event that such action is taken, the matter shall be brought to the Township Board's attention at its next meeting. The Township Board may meet in closed session to discuss the litigation, including the reasons for initiating legal action without the full Township Board's prior review and approval.

(j) Direction and Control of Day-to-Day Administration

To promote efficient administration, the Township Board will provide day-to-day direction and control over all Township activities that are not assigned by state law to a specific official.

Township Board members should make all inquiries, requests or complaints directed at department heads or employees to the Township Board. Any directives, complaints or requests made by a member of the Township Board directly to a department head or employee, other than from an elected official with statutory authority over the department head or employee, shall be brought to the attention of the Township Board prior to initiating any response.

Any action of a township official hereunder may be reversed or modified at any Township Board meeting by the vote of at least 3 members of the Township Board.

6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

6.1 Accounts Payable

(a) Department Head Authorization

All requests for payments (i.e., invoices or expense vouchers), shall be processed in accordance with the procedures of this Policy Manual, and shall be approved by the department head responsible for the cost center to which the expense shall be posted. The department head shall indicate that the expense is authorized and correct by affixing the account number and his or her initials to the invoice. All approved bills must be submitted to the Township Clerk at least 7 days prior to the Board meeting at which claims will be audited.

(b) Warrant Reports

The Township Clerk shall prepare a warrant report to the Township Board showing the vendor name, nature of the expense, invoice number and warrant number or check number if the unsigned check represents the warrant. Any items paid prior to Township Board audit, as discussed below, shall be noted on the warrant report. The Township Clerk shall sign the warrant for all claims approved by the Township Board. A copy of the warrant shall be filed with the (invoice/statement/expense) claim in the Township Clerk's office.

6.2 Payroll

(a) Time Cards/Slips

All completed time cards/slips shall be submitted to the Township Clerk on the day following the end of each pay period. Time cards/slips must be signed by both the employee and the employee's department head.

(b) Deductions and Withholdings

The Township Clerk shall be notified at least 5 days prior to the end of the pay period of any changes in voluntary deductions or withholding allowances desired by an employee. All voluntary deductions shall be authorized in writing.

(c) Payroll Problems

Employees shall immediately notify the Township Clerk of any problems or errors on their paychecks. A written account of the problem and its resolution shall be created by the Township Clerk.

6.3 Cash Receipts

(a) Authorization to Receive Cash

The following employee positions are authorized to receive cash

Township Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Township Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer & Building Inspector

(b) Fiduciary Bonds

All employees authorized to receive cash shall be bonded to the following amounts:

\$10,000

(c) Receipts

A pre-numbered Township receipt shall be issued for all cash, including checks, received by a Township employee. The receipt shall include the amount received, name of the payor, and purpose. A single receipt may be issued for the aggregate of all such receipts received by mail for a given day. In addition, all remittance advices received shall be attached to the pre-numbered receipt form. Departments that receive cash shall daily turn over all cash and a copy of all issued receipts to the Township Treasurer. The Township Treasurer shall issue a receipt to the collecting department for all cash received. The Township Treasurer shall determine periodically that all pre-numbered receipts have been returned with cash, or have been otherwise disposed of.

(d) Deposits

Total cash collected shall be reconciled to the sum of the pre-numbered receipts and shall be deposited at least weekly in the appropriate Township bank account. The following positions are authorized to make bank deposits:

Township Treasurer, Township Clerk, Deputy Treasurer, Deputy Clerk & Utility Billing Clerk

(e) Bank Reconciliations

The cash balances of the various fund ledgers shall be reconciled to the bank statements monthly. The cash balances should be the result of the cash receipts and disbursement activities and shall be derived from the same accounting records used in preparing the financial reports discussed elsewhere in this Policy Manual.

6.4 Accounts Receivable

(a) Invoice Preparation

The following positions shall be responsible for preparing invoices or receipts for revenues due to the Township:

<u>Official</u>	<u>Revenue Source</u>
Building Inspector	Building Permits
Clerk	Cemetery lots and grave openings
Clerk	Freedom of Information Act requests, miscellaneous income
Clerk	Parks and recreation activities
Utility Billing Clerk	Utility bills
Zoning Administrator	Zoning-related activities: special use permits, land division, site plan reviews, re-zoning requests, variances

All invoices shall include a remittance advice to be returned to the Township with payment. The remittance advice shall include the name, amount invoiced and purpose.

(b) Posting and Distribution

A copy of all invoices or bills for monies owed to the Township shall be given to the Township Clerk, who shall record the receivables in the general ledger. The Township Clerk shall also maintain a detailed subsidiary record which shall be reconciled to the general ledger control on a quarterly basis.

(c) Method of Accounting

For all remittance advices received in accordance with Governmental Standards and Accounting Practices, the Township Clerk shall credit the receivable. A monthly listing of all amounts invoiced but not yet received shall be prepared and reconciled to the general ledger.

6.5 Financial Reporting

(a) Periodic Expenditure and Revenue Report

The Township Clerk shall prepare a quarterly financial report for the Township Board. The report will be current through the last day of the previous quarter, and shall be presented to the Township Board at its second meeting of each month. The financial report for each fund will show the following information for revenues and expenditures:

1. Account number

2. Description
3. Amended budget
4. Current period
5. Year to date
6. Budget balance

(b) Periodic Balance Sheet Report

The clerk shall prepare a monthly balance sheet showing the assets, liabilities and equities for each fund.

(c) Investment Performance Report

The Township Treasurer shall prepare a quarterly report of all interest bearing activities, including the name of the financial institution, type of investment, anticipated yield and date of maturity.

(d) Financial Reports Review

The clerk shall review the financial reports prior to the Township Board meeting, and shall recommend to the Township Board any necessary budget amendments or fund transfers.

6.6 Inventory of Fixed Assets

(a) Responsibility

The Township Clerk shall maintain an inventory of the Township's fixed assets that are tangible, have an expected useful life of at least 7 years and have a value of at least \$1000.00.

(b) Updating

The Township Clerk shall add or remove fixed assets from the inventory at the time of acquisition or disposal. The inventory shall include the following information on each asset:

1. Fund
2. Acquisition date
3. Name and address of vendor
4. Description
5. Location
6. Acquisition cost (if gift, estimated fair value at time of donation)
7. Fund or cost center (from which it was purchased)
8. How acquired (purchase, lease/purchase, construction, condemnation, tax foreclosure, gift)
9. Estimated life

- 10. Date and method of authorized disposition
- 11. Serial Number (if available)

(c) Inventory responsibility

Department heads shall annually inventory all assets assigned to their department and submit the inventory to the Township Clerk.

(d) Disposal of Fixed Assets

Department heads shall make note on the annual inventory, or shall notify the Township Clerk sooner if desired, of any equipment that would be appropriate for disposal. The Township Clerk shall prepare a list of all such equipment recommended for disposal and shall submit the recommended disposal of fixed assets list to the Board for approval. The Board shall determine the method of disposal, which may include sealed bids, auction, negotiated sale, gift or disposal. Township officials and employees are not eligible to purchase Township fixed assets by negotiated sale without the approval of the Township Board. An elected official shall refrain from voting on any negotiated sale involving the elected official.

6.7 Budgeting

(a) Designation of Budget Officer

The Township Clerk shall be the Township's budget officer and shall be responsible for the development and administration of the Township budget.

(b) Timetable

The proposed budget shall be developed according to the following schedule:

Date	Activity
January	Prepare department budgets, review contracts & salaries
February	Review budget projections, hold workshop meeting
March	Hold public hearing, make final budget revisions, prepare resolutions and Appropriations Act, adopt budget
July, October	Budget reviews & amendments

(c) Adoption

Unless noted in the General Appropriations Act, all Township funds are adopted on a cost center basis.

(d) Transfer Authority

The budget officer shall have authority to make transfers among the various line items within cost centers without prior Township Board approval, if the amount to be transferred does not exceed 10% of the appropriation item from which the transfer is to be made. The Township Board shall be notified at its next meeting of any such transfers made, and the Township Board may modify, amend or nullify any such transfers made. Under no circumstance may the total amount of appropriations be changed without prior Township Board approval.

6.8 Expenditure Control/Bidding

(a) Written Quotations and Sealed Bids

Any purchase for goods or services exceeding a contract cost of \$10,000.00 shall require the department head to obtain at least three (3) written quotes prior to being issued a purchase order.

Any purchase for goods or services (except professional services) exceeding an estimated contract cost of \$25,000.00 shall require the solicitation of sealed bids. The appropriate official, in consultation with the department head, shall develop bid specifications. Bid specifications for purchases that will exceed \$25,000.00 shall be approved by the Township Board. A department head may request permission from the Township Board to waive the bidding requirements when there is only one known supplier or there is some other compelling reason to waive the bid procedures.

The invitation to bid or request services shall be published at least once in the local newspaper and shall be sent to known vendors or other parties who have notified the Township of their interest in submitting bids on the goods or services being purchased. Sealed bids shall be opened at the office of the Township Clerk at a pre-announced date and time, and any interested party may be present for the bid opening. The Township Clerk or deputy clerk, along with the department head, shall be present for the bid opening.

The criteria for awarding bids shall be as follows:

1. Cost
2. Reliability
3. Cleanliness
4. Sufficiency of equipment
5. Insurance/Bond
6. References
7. Good communication

Any Township Board member or department head who has any ownership or other interest in a company submitting a bid shall disclose the conflict of interest to the Township Board, and that official shall not participate in awarding the bid.

The Township need not award a bid to the lowest bidder, if, in the discretion of the Township Official or body involved, the other criteria outweigh the cost consideration.

(b) Expenditure Authorization

The Township shall not be responsible for any obligations incurred by an official or employee that is contrary to law or to the provisions of this Policy Manual.

Department heads shall not consider appropriations contained in the budget as a mandate to expend Township funds, nor does the budget constitute authorization to commit the Township, as such authorization originates from the provisions of this Policy Manual and Township Board action. No obligations shall be incurred against, and no payment shall be made from, any appropriation account unless there is a sufficient unencumbered balance in the appropriation and sufficient funds are or will be available to meet the obligation.

Department heads shall obtain prior authorization from the Township Board prior to obligating the Township for expenditures of the following nature:

1. Seminars and conferences
2. Memberships
3. Out-of-state travel
4. Professional services
5. Other:

(c) Processing of Claims

Requests for payments to vendors shall be documented in writing by a vendor invoice or, in the few instances where no invoice is forthcoming, by a written request by the department head requesting payment. Except for rare exceptions, only original invoices shall be processed for payments, as statements or copies of invoices may result in duplicate payments.

Employee expense reimbursements shall be documented on an expense voucher prepared by the employee. The voucher shall include the following:

1. Vendor name
2. Purpose of payment request
3. Unit price and units delivered (if applicable)
4. Date goods delivered or services rendered
- 5.

Initialing the payment request shall indicate all of the following are true: the goods have been delivered or the services have been rendered to the Township; the expense complies with the procedures outlined in this Policy Manual; all prices and units agree with the purchase order, if applicable, or any differences have been reconciled; the payment request is mathematically correct, and the account number being charged is the appropriate budgetary allocation for this expense.

(d) Board Audit

All claims shall be approved by the Township Board prior to payment, except the following:

1. Payroll
2. Utility bills
3. Invoices with penalties that would be incurred if payment is not received prior to the Board meeting where claims will be approved

These claims shall be post-audited at the next Township Board meeting. The Supervisor may authorize emergency expenditures when deemed essential due to the imminent threat to the health, safety and welfare of the Township.

6.9 Expense Reimbursements

(a) Request Form

The Township shall reimburse all officials and employees for necessary expenses incurred in performing their duties. All requests for expense reimbursement shall be made on the proper expense reimbursement form.

(b) Reimbursement Rates

Travel shall be reimbursed at the rates currently allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

Reasonable meals and lodging expenses will be reimbursed with prior approval by the Township Board. Receipts of all expenses incurred shall be submitted within three business days after concluding the trip.

(c) Personal Expenses

Receipts shall accompany any reimbursement requests. Commuting from residence to the Township Hall or the employee's official work station shall not be eligible for reimbursement. Township Board and committee members shall not receive mileage to attend Township Board meetings that are a statutory duty of their office. Personal expenses that are unnecessary in conducting Township business, such as entertainment and alcohol consumed, shall not be eligible for reimbursement.

6.10 Investments

See Policy Insert at back of Manual

7. AUDITS

The Township Board will engage a certified public accountant to annually audit the financial systems of the Township. An audit contract may be for a period up to three years, but shall not exceed the current Township Board's term of office. The request for proposals for audits may require:

1. Proposal due date
2. Date award will be made
3. Date contract begins
4. Length of audit contract
5. Audit period covered
6. Earliest date that audit work may begin
7. Due date for audit report
8. Funds to be audited
9. Requirement of unqualified opinion or clear statement of reason for qualifications
10. Financial statements and other information to be provided by Township
11. Other services to be performed by auditor, if any
12. Procedures for determining adequacy of internal controls and accounting
13. Authorization to disclose any irregularities
14. Audit shall be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards set forth by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
15. Audit shall be reviewed with the Township Board
16. Number of copies that will be provided
17. Auditor's qualifications
18. References for firm and individuals performing the audit
19. Estimated hours required, current rates and total anticipated amount

8. PUBLIC CONTACT AND INFORMATION

8.1 Public Contact

(a) Courtesy

The primary goal of the Township is to serve the public. It is the policy of the Township that all officials and employees will respond to requests for Township information from members of the public with courtesy and efficiency. All officials and employees shall communicate with the public in such a way that the image of the Township government as friendly, courteous and efficient is fostered and maintained.

All visitors or phone callers to the Township Hall shall be greeted in a friendly, helpful manner.

Department heads shall make every effort to see visitors who need their assistance. When workload or other commitments do not allow for an immediate meeting, the visitor will be asked to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

(b) Complaints and Problems

If a citizen has a problem that is outside the jurisdiction or responsibility of the official or employee, the citizen will be directed to the appropriate office or official. A complaint form may be submitted as desired.

Complaints or other concerns received from a citizen shall be received with courtesy. The official or employee will make every effort to resolve a complaint or problem, within the official's or employee's scope of authority. Department heads will be notified of all complaints.

The Township Board shall also be notified of any citizen complaint arising from official or employee conduct or the administration of a department or Township Board policy or procedure. The notice shall include the name and address of the citizen, the nature of the complaint and how the complaint was resolved. The Township Board may make a subsequent inquiry with the citizen to ensure that the issue was resolved to the citizen's satisfaction.

8.2 Public Information Officer

Supervisor shall be the public information officer for the Township and shall be responsible for supervising the Township newsletter, preparing public service announcements and media releases on Township government events and responding to inquiries from the media or referring contact to other appropriate Township officials.

Township employees will notify the public information officer prior to making any statements to the news media. Department heads will notify the public information officer of all media contacts.

8.3 Public Notices

(a) Meeting Notices

The Township Clerk shall be responsible for posting all regular, special and rescheduled board and commission meetings in conformance with the Open Meetings Act and other state laws. The chairperson of each Township Board or commission will notify the clerk of all special and rescheduled meetings.

(b) Public Notices

The Township Clerk shall also be responsible for publishing and mailing all public notices required by state law, including:

1. Board of review meetings
2. Budget public hearings
3. Planning Commission hearings
4. Zoning board of appeals hearings
5. Special assessment district hearings
6. Election notices
7. Master plan adoption and amendments
8. Truth-in-Taxation notice

8.4 Freedom of Information Act (the “Act” or “FOIA”) Requests

See Policy Insert at back of Manual

8.5 Incoming Mail

The Township Clerk (or the person designated by the Township Clerk) shall receive all incoming mail, and shall open and date stamp the letter or cover sheet of all correspondence. Correspondence shall be sorted and distributed to the various Township offices. Mail addressed to the Township Board shall be forwarded to the Township Clerk, who shall provide a copy to each Township Board member. Correspondence addressed to the Township Board, but requiring action typically handled by a particular official, shall be immediately forwarded to that official as well.

8.6 Outgoing Mail

The Township Board shall approve the design of all department letterhead stationery. Statements made on Township stationery may be construed as the official position of

Chester Township, so all officials and employees should take every precaution that written statements are made within the scope of their authority. Township stationery shall only be used for official Township business.

Department heads shall provide the Township Board with a copy of all correspondence that addresses a citizen complaint or when the content may result in a lawsuit to the Township or in the Township Board reviewing or implementing a Township policy. Where a department head is unsure of the necessity to provide the Township Board with a copy of correspondence, department heads should err on the side of caution.

All department correspondence should be considered as a public document, unless the contents are specifically excluded from disclosure by state law. Copies of correspondence will be provided to any Township Board member on request.

8.7 Confidential Information

Township officials and employees shall not release any information which is confidential. Confidential information can include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Privileged information during litigation.
- (b) A privileged and confidential communication from the Township Attorney.
- (c) Employee information protected by law.

9. TOWNSHIP OFFICES AND PROPERTY

9.1 Hours of Business

The Township Hall shall be open to the public as noticed.

9.2 Building Access

The first person arriving each morning should make sure that the security system (if any) is deactivated, all public access doors are unlocked, the copier is turned on and coffee is made.

Prior to leaving, each employee will make his or her work station secure by checking that computers, typewriters, calculators and lights are turned off, filing cabinets and cash drawers are locked, and windows and doors are locked.

The last person to leave the Township Hall at night shall check to see that the copier, coffee maker and other office machines are turned off; all doors and common area windows are locked; all lights are turned off, except for designated security lights, and the security system (if any) is activated.

Persons working after hours are responsible for turning off the lights and office machines used and checking that all doors and windows are secure.

9.3 Security

(a) Keys

Keys to the main door of the Township Hall will be issued to those persons authorized by the Township Board.

If a key is lost, the Township Clerk shall be informed immediately. A replacement key shall be issued. If the Township Clerk has reason to believe that the missing key may be used for unauthorized entry, new locks will be installed. Upon termination of employment, the employee shall return his or her office keys to the Township Clerk. No person shall duplicate a key without authorization from the Township Clerk or make a key available to any unauthorized person.

Each department head shall determine who shall be issued a key to the department's door or any secured facilities, such as a safe, cash drawer or filing cabinet, within the department.

(b) Valuables

Employees shall not keep money or other valuables in their desks or at their work stations. The Township shall not be responsible for the loss of any employee's personal property.

9.4 Safety

No boxes, files and other items shall be stored in hallways, stairs and landings. Flammable liquids and power equipment shall not be stored in the Township Hall. Other flammable materials shall not be stored in the (utility/furnace) room.

In the event of a fire, all employees will immediately exit the building. All employees shall gather at the mailbox for a head count.

9.5 Use of Township Equipment, Labor or Premises

(a) Lost or Damaged Equipment

Any lost or damaged equipment shall be reported immediately to the employee's department head.

(b) Personal Use of Township Property

The personal use of the Township premises, equipment, machines, tools, supplies, postage or personal use of Township labor, shall be prohibited except as noted below:

(c) Phone Calls

Employees are permitted to make brief personal local phone calls and employees are permitted to make brief personal long distance phone calls but any charges must be billed to their own account.

(d) Copier

Employees may use the Township copier for personal business, but shall reimburse the Township at the rate established by the Board.

(e) Bulletin Boards

Employees who wish to post notices on Township bulletin boards must have the prior approval of clerk.

(f) Vehicles

Employees may be directed by a department head to take a Township vehicle to their residence due to the nature of their work, such as responding to emergency calls. Department heads may also authorize a Township vehicle to be driven to and from work because of the lack of a secure place to store the vehicle during hours the office is closed. The use of a Township vehicle is not an employee fringe benefit, and personal use is prohibited. Employees may use the vehicle for personal errands, such as making a stop on

the way to and from work, so long as no additional mileage or other cost is incurred to the Township.

9.6 Public Use of Township Facilities

(a) Availability

Township facilities are available for use at no charge by nonprofit organizations for events which the public may attend.

(b) Reservations

Rental agreements shall be made available at the Township Office.

The deputy clerk shall record each reservation on a facility calendar, on a first-come, first-paid basis.

(c) Fees

For fee amounts, see current contract.

The fee shall be paid at the time the reservation is made. In the case of a cancellation, the fee shall be returned with 5 days prior notice of cancellation.

Chairs and other equipment must be returned to their place of storage by the renter. Floors must be swept and any trash deposited in the dumpster. Failure to reasonably clean the facility after use shall result in forfeiture of a portion of the damage deposit to pay for cleaning expenses.

(d) Denial of Facilities

The Township Board reserves the right to refuse use of the facilities for cause.

(e) Alcoholic Beverages

Alcoholic beverages will not be permitted.

(f) Damages

Damages to Township property shall be responsibility of the renting party.

(g) Special Events

1. All special events shall be approved by the Township Board beforehand and shall be in full compliance with all applicable Township ordinances, including the Township Zoning Ordinance.

2. Any special event sponsored by any person(s) that involves the use of Township streets, parking lots, parks, or rights-of-way shall be conducted in accordance with a written agreement between the Township and the event's sponsor.
3. The written agreement shall state the date(s) of the event and the specific hours during which public property will be occupied.
4. The promoter shall agree to provide liability insurance in an amount acceptable to the Township Board and furnish proof of such, to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Township, its officials, agents and employees.
5. The promoter shall agree that there shall be no excessive noise or disturbances emanating from the event(s), and that the promoter will take adequate steps to prevent such occurrence.
6. The promoter shall provide adequate security and sanitary facilities in conjunction with the event(s).
7. The promoter shall clean and maintain the area in a manner satisfactory to the Township Board.
8. The promoter shall insure that all laws, ordinances, rules and regulations are followed.
9. The written agreement shall be temporary and revocable at the will of the Township, without prior notice or cause. Furthermore, the Township may limit the activities taking place at their discretion.
10. The promoter shall pay a fee in an amount necessary to reimburse the Township for reasonable expenses incurred in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public or persons attending the special event, which shall be determined by the Township Board and which is subject to change.
11. The Township Board representative is hereby authorized to sign an agreement between the Township and the promoter, provided such an agreement satisfies the conditions of this Township Policy.

(h) Park Regulations

See current adopted regulations.

9.7 Routine Maintenance

(a) Responsibility

The Township Clerk shall be responsible for monitoring the need for repairs and improvements to Township property.

(b) Emergency Repairs

A Township Board official is authorized to contract for emergency repairs up to a cost of \$1000.00 without prior Township Board approval, when a delay in initiating a repair will have a significant impact on Township operations or finances.

9.8 Smoking in Township Buildings

PURPOSE: In the interest of providing to all customers, visitors and employees a safe and healthy environment, and to reduce the incidents of involuntary contact with second-hand smoke, the following policy is hereby adopted in accordance with the mandates of the Michigan Clean Air Act. P.A. of 1986.

SMOKING IS PROHIBITED BY ANY PERSON IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- Inside all Township owned and operated buildings.
- Outside of all Township owned and operated buildings near areas that present a fire or other safety hazard, such as in close proximity to a gas tank or pump, or open hazardous waste materials.
- In any area where smoking is prohibited by the Township Fire Department or other applicable laws.
- In Township vehicles.

ENFORCEMENT:

The success of this policy will depend upon the thoughtfulness, consideration and cooperation of smokers and nonsmokers. All Township officials and employees share in the responsibility for adhering to and enforcing the policy.

Conflicts should be brought to the attention of the appropriate supervisory personnel, and, if necessary, referred to the Township Board for a final decision. The right of a nonsmoker to protect his or her health and comfort should prevail over an employee's desire to smoke.

Employees who are found smoking in nonsmoking areas will be considered in violation of Township policy and will be subject to discipline in the same manner and magnitude as violations of other Township policy.

10. MISCELLANEOUS PERSONNEL MATTERS

10.1 Personnel Officer

To provide for efficient and uniform administration of personnel matters, the Township Board appoints the Township Clerk as the Township personnel officer.

10.2 Employee Recordkeeping

(a) Personnel Records

The Township Clerk shall maintain a permanent personnel record of each Township employee. Each employee's personnel file may contain the following:

1. Personal data, including full name, Social Security number, current address, resume or application submitted and physical examination (if required)
2. Performance evaluations
3. Use of authorized leaves
4. Commendations and/or disciplinary actions
5. Tax withholding information
6. Beneficiary information
7. Record of positions held
8. Insurance and pension records

(b) Confidentiality of Personnel Files

The contents of the employee personnel files shall be considered confidential. Any employee may examine the contents of his or her personnel file under the direct supervision of the Township Clerk. Township Board members and the personnel officer shall be provided viewing of any personnel file. The contents of an employee's personnel file shall not be removed by anyone. Confidential information contained in a personnel file shall be released to others only with the written authorization of the employee. Personnel files will be kept for at least five (5) years following an employee's termination.

(c) Freedom of Information Act Requests for Personnel Files

Requests for copies of documents contained in the personnel files that are made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act will be released only after confidential information that may be contained on the document is deleted. The Township Clerk may contact the Township Attorney for advice in responding to a Freedom of Information Act request involving personnel records. Pursuant to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, the Township Clerk, after consulting with the Township Attorney, shall notify in writing any party requesting confidential information that the request is denied.

10.3 Classification and Compensation

The Township Board shall establish an equitable compensation system for Township employees. The Township Board shall determine a pay range for all Township positions.

10.4 Authorized Work Force

The Township Board shall determine the number of employees assigned to the various Township offices. At its discretion, the Board may declare a moratorium on filling any vacancies.

10.5 Ethical Standards

All elected and appointed officials, employees and volunteers shall fulfill their duties with the utmost attention to serving the best interests of the Township citizens, and no official, employee or volunteer shall participate in a decision or transaction on behalf of the Township that would result in a direct financial benefit to the Township official, employee or volunteer.

Any official, employee or volunteer who believes that he or she may be placed in a potential conflict of interest shall immediately notify the Township Board, and any subsequent action shall be in conformance with state law.

No employee shall accept employment that conflicts with performing his or her Township duties. The Township Board shall approve all outside employment.

No officer or employee shall accept any gift or consideration from a person or company providing goods or services to the Township, or who is soliciting Township business.

11. POVERTY GUIDELINES

The adoption of guidelines for poverty exemptions is within the purview of the Township Board. The homestead of persons who, in the judgement of the Township Supervisor and Township Board of Review, by reason of poverty, are unable to contribute to the public charges is eligible for exemption in whole or part from taxation under Public Act 390, 1994(MCL 211.7u). Pursuant to PA 390, 1994 Chester Township, Ottawa County adopts the following guidelines for the Supervisor and Board of Review to implement. The guidelines shall include but not be limited to the specific income and asset levels of the claimant and all persons residing in the household, including any property tax credit returns, filed in the current or immediately preceding year.

To be eligible for a poverty exemption, a person shall or must do all of the following on an annual basis:

1. Be an owner of and occupy as a homestead the property for which an exemption is requested.
2. File a claim with the Supervisor or Board of Review, accompanied by federal and state income tax returns for all persons residing in the homestead, including any property tax credit returns filed in the immediately preceding year or in the current year.
3. Produce a valid drivers' license or other form of identification if requested.
4. Produce a deed, land contract, or other evidence of ownership of the property for which an exemption is requested if requested.
5. Meet the federal poverty income standards as defined and determined annually by the United States Office of Management and Budget.
6. The application for an exemption shall be filed after January 1, but before the day prior to the last day of board of review.
7. Any additional eligibility requirements as determined by the Township Boards.

The Board of Review shall follow the above stated policy and federal guidelines in granting or denying an exemption, unless the Board of Review determines there are substantial and compelling reasons why there should be a deviation from the policy and federal guidelines and these are communicated in writing to the claimant.

12. INDEMNIFICATION OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

Public Act 170 of 1964, as amended, authorizes indemnification of public officers and employees while acting on behalf of the Township and within the scope of their authority.

- (a) Whenever a claim is made or a civil action is commenced against an officer or employee of Chester Township for injuries to persons or property allegedly caused by the officer or employee while acting within the scope of his or her authority, Chester Township shall pay for, engage, or furnish the services of an attorney to advise the officer or employee as to the claim and to appear for and represent the officer or employee in the action. The Township Board may compromise, settle, and pay the claim before or after the commencement of a civil action. Whenever a judgment for damages is awarded against an officer or employee of the Township as a result of a civil action for personal injuries or property damage caused by the officer or employee while in the course of employment and while acting within the scope of his or her authority, the Township shall indemnify the officer or employee or pay, settle, or compromise the judgment.
- (b) When a criminal action is commenced against an officer or employee of the Township based upon the conduct of the officer or employee in the course of employment, if the employee or officer had a reasonable basis for believing that he or she was acting within the scope of his or her authority at the time of the alleged conduct, the Township of Chester shall pay for, engage, or furnish the services of an attorney to advise the officer or employee as to the action, and to appear for and represent the officer or employee in the action.
- (c) This policy shall not impose any liability upon Chester Township other than that herein set forth.

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