

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**Resolution No. 2012-70**

A RESOLUTION concerning

**CODE OF CIVILITY**

FOR the purpose of establishing a Code of Civility setting forth the manner in which members of the Board of County Commissioners and all boards, committees and commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners should treat one another, staff, constituents, and members of the public, and establishing regulations for those attending public hearings or forums in order to maintain proper order and decorum.

WHEREAS, Civility is synonymous with courtesy, politeness, graciousness, tolerance, consideration and respect; and

WHEREAS, Civility requires that all members comport themselves in a manner that permits honest efforts at understanding the views and reasoning of others; and

WHEREAS, Civility promotes a process that is fair and effective in both appearance and fact; and

WHEREAS, Civility is attained through polite action and expression and it promotes a positive collegial atmosphere wherein all County boards, committees and commissions may operate effectively for the benefit of the citizens of Charles County; and

WHEREAS, Civility leads to effective communication and allows the finding of common ground; and

WHEREAS, the presence of the public at all open meetings of the Board of County Commissioners and boards, committees and commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, is an integral part of a transparent government; and

WHEREAS, public participation in hearings and forums ensures that members have a full and complete sense of the views of their constituents; and

WHEREAS, public presence and participation must be adequately accommodated; and

WHEREAS, order and decorum must be maintained so that all members of the public may attend and observe the session without interference; and

WHEREAS, Section 10-507(b) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, requires that a public body shall adopt and enforce reasonable rules regarding the conduct of persons attending meetings of the public body and the videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording of such session; and

WHEREAS, Section 10-507 (c)(1) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, provides that if the presiding officer of a public body determines that the behavior of an individual is disrupting an open session, the individual may be removed; now therefore, pursuant to the above provisions, it is hereby

RESOLVED, that the members of the Board of County Commissioners of Charles County and all members of boards, committees, and commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners shall in all of their proceedings adhere to the "Code of Civility", a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of these regulations shall be posted at the entrance to all meeting rooms and on the County website and the presiding officer may read aloud all or any part of these regulations prior to the beginning of any hearing or forum

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each member of the Board of County Commissioners and members of boards, committees and commissions appointed by the Board of County Commissioners shall sign a copy of this "Code of Civility" indicating their willingness and commitment to act accordingly at all times.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

ADOPTED this 27<sup>th</sup> day of November 2012, by the County Commissioners of Charles County, Maryland.

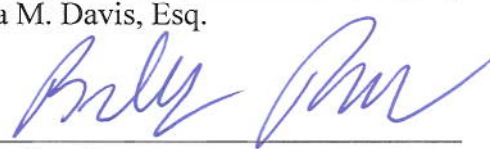
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

  
Candice Quinn Kelly, President

  
Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., Vice President

Ken Robinson

  
Debra M. Davis, Esq.

  
Bobby Rucci

ATTEST:

  
Denise Ferguson, Clerk



## *CODE OF CIVILITY*

### **A. Conduct of Public Body Members**

- Members shall act politely, calmly, and reasonably during all discussion and debate.
- There shall be no personal attacks, name calling or harassment of other members or members of the public.
- Members of the public body shall not engage in debate with speakers or members of the audience.
- While working toward the will of the majority, members shall respect the rights of the minority, and recognize the importance of achieving consensus.
- All staff shall be treated in a professional, courteous and dignified manner at all times by Board members and the public.
- If disagreement or differences of opinion arise, all members shall demonstrate esteem and deference to colleagues.
- Under no circumstance shall members engage in or threaten to engage in any physical attack on any other individual or make public accusations of impropriety.
- Members of the Board and the public shall not use abusive, obscene, or slanderous language, including the use of profanity, insults or other disparaging and inappropriate remarks or gestures.
- Members shall not exhibit conduct that disturbs the order of the public meeting or presents County government in a disfavorable light.
- It is the chair's responsibility to maintain order. Members of the Board and the public should honor the chair's role. Objections about the agenda or the chair's actions should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in the rules of procedure.

### **B. Conduct of General Public Attending Open Meetings**

- The general public may attend any open session of the Board of County Commissioners or of any board, committee or commission.
- Members of the public attending an open session may participate in the session only when the public body has invited public testimony, questions, comments or other forms of public participation.
- All remarks from audience members shall be respectful and courteous, free of name-calling and personal attacks. Profanity, combative and other inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- All statements in public hearings should relate to the subject matter of the hearing and the speaker shall wait until called upon to speak.
- Appropriate time limits may be established for speakers and enforced by the presiding officer of the public body in a respectful and judicious manner.
- Visual demonstrations or the impeding of members of the public while entering, attending or leaving a session are not permitted.
- The presiding officer of the public body may order any person who violates these regulations to be removed from the session and may request police assistance to remove the person and restore order.
- The presiding officer may recess the session while order is being restored.