



# **Chelan County Advisory Boards Membership Handbook**

March 2023

# COUNTY Administrator

Cathy Muhall

## COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

District 1

Kevin Overbay

District 2

Shon Smith

District 3

Tiffany Gering

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## **ROLE OF BOARDS**

Chelan County advisory boards (commissions, councils, and committees) contribute to the success of government and the quality of life enjoyed by our families and communities. Your willingness to serve is greatly appreciated. Advisory boards are created by county ordinance. Members are appointed by the County Commissioners subject to confirmation by the County Commissioners. You cannot begin your term until County Council has confirmed the appointment. You are limited to up to two full consecutive 4-year terms. A partial term served prior to two consecutive terms does not count as a full term.

Each board has a set of by-laws or governing procedures. Robert's Rules of Order is the standard parliamentary procedure manual for board meetings. A copy of your board's authorizing ordinance and bylaws will be provided to you.

## **BOARD AND MEMBERSHIP FUNCTIONS**

### **3.1 Expectations of Boards**

Advisory boards study policy options and make recommendations. They do not create or administer

policies, programs, or services. County administrative staff furnish general assistance, such as preparation of agenda materials and meeting minutes.

### **3.2 About Policy Recommendations**

When considering recommendations, they should be presented in writing with clear and concise language that includes the justification for recommendations. The recommendations may be made through proper coordination via the responsible department director to the County Council and/or the Executive. These recommendations should be based on matters within the board's scope of responsibility and to promote increased public participation in determining county policies.

### **3.3 Board Member Best Practices**

- » Attend meetings & inform staff of expected absences;
- » Examine available evidence before making a judgment;
- » Communicate and participate in group discussions; »
- Are aware that authority is granted to the board, not to individual members;
- » Exhibit a willingness to work with the group in making recommendations;
- » Recognize that compromise may be necessary to reach consensus;

» Do not let personal feelings toward other members or staff interfere with judgment.

**3.4 Resignations.** If you resign, please notify administrative staff and submit a resignation letter to the Commissioners indicating the effective date of your resignation and your willingness to serve until a replacement is named.

## **OBLIGATIONS**

### **4.1 Restrictions and Requirements (RCW 42.52.130, 140, 150 and 42.18.230)**

Board members must comply with their board's authorizing ordinance, by-laws and county code, as well as state laws. You are prohibited from accepting or soliciting anything of economic value as a gift, gratuity or favor if it is given only because you hold a responsible position with the county.

### **4.2 Public Disclosure and Open Public Meetings (RCW 42.56, RCW 42.30)**

Records relating to the conduct of board business are subject to disclosure even if they are on a personal computer. The Open Public Meetings Act applies to all

boards. All members must take the State's [Open Meeting Training](#) within 90 days of confirmation. Provide copy of certificate to staff.

(<https://www.atg.wa.gov/opengovernmenttraining.aspx>)

The Act requires all meetings to be open to the public. In addition, the public must be notified of such meetings and hearings in a timely manner. Voting by secret ballot is prohibited by the Open Public Meetings Act. Meetings and hearings subject to the Open Public Meetings Act are to be held in facilities which are wheelchair accessible. In addition to the Open Public Meetings Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) sets criteria for accessibility and accommodation. Under the ADA, people who have disabilities have a right to an equal opportunity for effective participation in the activities of boards, whether as appointed members or as members of the public.

#### **4.3 Ethics and the Appearance of Fairness (PCC 3.12)**

Board members must avoid conflicts of interest or even the appearance of conflicts of interest. Using a public position for private gain is illegal. Similarly, actions benefiting close relatives, including family, are subject to sanctions.

Examples of conflicts of interest include but are not limited to:

- » Directing county contracts to a business or individual in which you have a financial interest; »
- Accepting gifts or favors in exchange for certain regulatory rulings or contractual recommendations;
- » Obtaining personal favors from employees; »
- Accepting favors for disclosure of confidential information;
- » Engaging in outside employment which assists nongovernmental entities in their quest for county business;
- » Influencing or attempting to influence political decisions from which benefit is derived;
- » Receiving a benefit from securing positions with county government.

## **BOARD OPERATIONS**

### **5.1 Quorum (RCW 42.30.060)**

A quorum is a majority of board member positions. A quorum must be present to conduct official business. If a quorum is not present, board actions are void. At meetings where a quorum is not present, the only actions that may be legally taken are to fix a time for adjournment, adjourn,



recess or take measures to obtain a quorum such as contacting absent members.

## **5.2 Records (RCW 42.32.030, RCW 36.32.140, RCW 42.30.035)**

County staff will maintain minutes for all meetings.

## **5.3 Meetings (RCW 36.32.080, RCW 36.32.090, RCW 42.30.075)**

All meetings are governed by the State's Open Public Meetings RCW, and generally occur whenever a quorum of a governing body meets together and deals with the business of that body. Although the public can attend public meetings, public participation is not required by state law.

## **5.4 Hearings**

A public hearing is primarily intended to obtain public testimony or comment on matters being considered by the board. A public hearing occurs as part of a regular or special public meeting.

## **5.5 Testifying at Commissioner Meetings**

Board members often have an opportunity to testify at hearings conducted by the County Commissioners, local government or community committees. When providing

testimony on behalf of the board, members should refrain from expressing personal opinions.

**Effective Testimony.** To provide effective testimony, members can refer to the following best practices: » Testimony should be brief (3 minutes), concise and truthful.

» Avoid reading lengthy written testimony; instead, orally highlight important points in the written report.

» If others are offering similar testimony, avoid repetition.

» Make sure that the committee understands that you are not speaking for the board, but for yourself. » Written testimony may be submitted prior to the hearing.

## **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS**

All board members have the right to respond to media representatives but must clearly distinguish between personal and board positions. Board members may also direct media questions to the County's Public Information Officer:

Chelan County Public Information Officer  
Ms. Jill FitzSimmons  
400 Douglas St. Suite 201  
Wenatchee, WA 98801  
[JillM.Fitzsimmons@co.chelan.wa.us](mailto:JillM.Fitzsimmons@co.chelan.wa.us)

(509) 667-6545

## **RESOURCES**

Municipal Research and Services Center –  
<http://mrsc.org/Home.aspx>