

CHAPTER 4

CODE OF ETHICS¹

SECTION

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¹State statutes dictate many of the ethics provisions that apply to municipal officials and employees. For provisions relative to the following, see the Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) sections indicated:

Campaign finance: Tennessee Code Annotated, title 2, ch. 10.

Conflict of interests: Tennessee Code Annotated, §§ 6-54-107, 108; 12-4-101, 102.

Conflict of interests disclosure statements: Tennessee Code Annotated, § 8-50-501 and the following sections.

Consulting fee prohibition for elected municipal officials: Tennessee Code Annotated, §§ 2-10-122, 124.

Crimes involving public officials (bribery, soliciting unlawful compensation, buying and selling in regard to office): Tennessee Code Annotated § 39-16-101 and the following sections.

Crimes of official misconduct, official oppression, misuse of official information: Tennessee Code Annotated, § 39-16-401 and the following sections.

Ouster law: Tennessee Code Annotated, § 8-47-101 and the following sections.

1-401. Applicability. This chapter is the code of ethics for personnel of the City of Berry Hill. It applies to all full-time and part-time elected or appointed officials and employees, whether compensated or not, including those of any separate board, commission, committee, authority, corporation, or other instrumentality appointed or created by the City of Berry Hill. The words "municipal," "municipality," "city" and "City of Berry Hill" include these separate entities. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-402. Definition of "personal interest." (1) For purposes of §§ 1-403 and 1-404, "personal interest" means:

(a) Any financial, ownership, or employment interest in the subject of a vote by a municipal board not otherwise regulated by state statutes on conflicts of interests; or

(b) Any financial, ownership, or employment interest in a matter to be regulated or supervised; or

(c) Any such financial, ownership, or employment interest of the official's or employee's spouse, parent(s), stepparent(s), grandparent(s), sibling(s), child(ren), or stepchild(ren).

(2) The words "employment interest" include a situation in which an official or employee or a designated family member is negotiating possible employment with a person or organization that is the subject of the vote or that is to be regulated or supervised.

(3) In any situation in which a personal interest is also a conflict of interest under state law, the provisions of the state law take precedence over the provisions of this chapter. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-403. Disclosure of personal interest by official with vote. An official with the responsibility to vote on a measure shall disclose, during the meeting at which the vote takes place, before the vote and so it appears in the minutes, any personal interest that affects, or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects, the official's vote on the measure. In addition, the official may recuse himself/herself from voting on the measure. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-404. Disclosure of personal interest in non-voting matters. An official or employee who must exercise discretion relative to any matter, other than casting a vote, and who has a personal interest in the matter that affects, or that would lead a reasonable person to infer that it affects, the exercise of the discretion, shall disclose, before the exercise of the discretion when possible, the interest on a form provided by and filed with the recorder. In addition, the official or employee may, to the extent allowed by law, charter, ordinance, or policy, recuse himself/herself from the exercise of discretion in the matter. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-405. Acceptance of gratuities, etc. An official or employee may not accept, directly or indirectly, any money, gift, gratuity, or other consideration or favor of any kind from anyone other than the City of Berry Hill:

(1) For the performance of an act, or refraining from performance of an act, that he/she would be expected to perform, or refrain from performing, in the regular course of his/her duties; or

(2) That might reasonably be interpreted as an attempt to influence his/her action, or reward him/her for past action, in executing municipal business. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-406. Use of information. (1) An official or employee may not disclose any information obtained in his/her official capacity or position of employment that is made confidential under state or federal law except as authorized by law.

(2) An official or employee may not use or disclose information obtained in his/her official capacity or position of employment with the intent to result in financial gain for himself/herself or any other person or entity. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-407. Use of municipal time, facilities, etc. (1) An official or employee may not use or authorize the use of municipal time, facilities, equipment, or supplies for private gain or advantage to himself/herself.

(2) An official or employee may not use or authorize the use of municipal time, facilities, equipment, or supplies for private gain or advantage to any private person or entity, except as authorized by legitimate contract or lease that is determined by the board of commissioners to be in the best interests of the City of Berry Hill. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-408. Use of position or authority. (1) An official or employee may not make or attempt to make private purchases, for cash or otherwise, in the name of the City of Berry Hill.

(2) An official or employee may not use or attempt to use his/her position to secure any privilege or exemption for himself/herself or others that is not authorized by the city's charter or any ordinance or policy. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-409. Outside employment. An official or employee may not accept or continue any outside employment if the work unreasonably inhibits the performance of any affirmative duty of the municipal position or conflicts with any provision of the city's charter or any ordinance or policy. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-410. Ethics complaint. (1) The city attorney is designated as the ethics officer of the city. Upon the written request of an official or employee potentially affected by a provision of this chapter, the city attorney may render

an oral or written advisory ethics opinion based upon this chapter and other applicable law.

(2) (a) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the city attorney shall investigate any credible complaint against an appointed official or employee charging any violation of this chapter, or may undertake an investigation on his/her own initiative when he acquires information indicating a possible violation, and make recommendations for action to end or seek retribution for any activity that, in the attorney's judgment, constitutes a violation of this code of ethics.

(b) The city attorney may request that the board of commissioners hire another attorney, individual, or entity to act as ethics officer when he/she has or will have a conflict of interests in a particular matter.

(c) When a complaint of a violation of any provision of this chapter is lodged against a member of the City of Berry Hill Board of Commissioners, the board shall either determine that the complaint has merit, determine that the complaint does not have merit, or determine that the complaint has sufficient merit to warrant further investigation. If the board determines that a complaint warrants further investigation, it shall authorize an investigation by the city attorney or another individual or entity chosen by the board of commissioners.

(3) The interpretation that a reasonable person in the circumstances would apply shall be used in interpreting and enforcing this code of ethics.

(4) When a violation of this code of ethics also constitutes a violation of a personnel policy, rule, or regulation or a civil service policy, rule, or regulation, the violation shall be dealt with as a violation of the personnel or civil service provisions rather than as a violation of this code of ethics. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)

1-411. Violations. An elected official or appointed member of a separate municipal board, commission, committee, authority, corporation, or other instrumentality who violates any provision of this chapter is subject to punishment as provided by the city's charter or other applicable law, and in addition is subject to censure by the board of commissioners. An appointed official or an employee who violates any provision of this chapter is subject to disciplinary action. (as added by Ord. #2007-361, May 2007)