

Ethics 101 – The Good, the Bad and the Unethical

Tom Younger-Town Administrator,
Belmont and Chair of the MMMA
Ethics Committee

MMMA Ethics

“The mission of MMMA is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management. To further this mission, certain principles, as enforced by the Rules of Procedure, shall govern the conduct of every member of MMMA, who shall:”

Concepts

“Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective”

Attitudes

“Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative and practical attitude toward local government affairs and a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant”

Guidelines-Attitudes

- Responding to inquiries from elected or appointed officials from other towns.
- Serving in either minor elected or appointed positions outside their employing towns.

Dedication

“Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other officials and employees and of the public.”

Guidelines-Dedication

- Public Confidence
- Impression of Influence
- Appointment Commitment
- Credentials
- Professional Respect
- Confidentiality
- Seeking Employment

Serving the Public

“Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people.”

Serving the Public-Guidelines

- Length of Service-Minimum of two years

Advising local officials

“Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts and advice of policy as a basis for making decisions and setting community goals; and uphold and implement local government policies adopted by elected officials.”

Advising local officials- Guidelines

- Conflicting roles

Policies

“Recognize that elected representatives of the people are entitled to the credit for the establishment of local government policies; responsibility for policy execution rests with the members.”

Political Activities

“Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body.”

Political Activities- Guidelines

- Elections of the Governing Body
- Elections of Elected Executives
- Running for Office
- Elections
- Elections in the Council-Manager Plan
- Presentation of Issues

Management Techniques

“Make it a duty continually to improve the member’s professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques.”

Management Techniques-Guidelines

- Self-Assessment
- Professional Development

Informing the Public

“Keep the community informed on local government affairs; encourage communication between the citizens and all local government officers; emphasize friendly and courteous service to the public and to seek to improve the quality and image of public service.”

Encroachment on professional responsibilities

“Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.”

Encroachment-Guidelines

- Information sharing

Merit and Fairness

“Handle all matters of personnel on the basis of merit so that fairness and impartiality govern a member’s decisions, pertaining to appointments, pay adjustments, promotions and discipline.”

Merit and Fairness-Guidelines

- Equal opportunity

Personal Gain

“Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest.”

Personal Gain-Guidelines

- Gifts
- Personal Relationships
- Private Employment
- Representation
- Endorsements

Interactive scenarios

- Are these following scenarios ethical violations? Why or why not?

Raffle Award

- Town Manager Smith drops her business card in a raffle bowl at the ICMA annual conference and trade show and is chosen to win a lap top computer. Is she allowed to keep it?

Golf club memberships

- The Town Mgr. is well known in the community, even though he was appointed a few months ago. To his surprise, the local country club manager, a casual friend, gives him an annual pass for greens fees. The Town issues a liquor license and other permits to the club annually. Can he take the pass?

Politically Involved Spouse

- The Town Manager's wife, a politically active individual, in sponsoring a fundraiser for a local State Representative candidate. Is this allowed?

Small Town EMTs

- A small town that has a volunteer fire department with just a paid chief asked the Town Manager if her husband, an EMT, to cover the day shift. The EMTs are paid per response. Can the husband serve as an EMT?


