

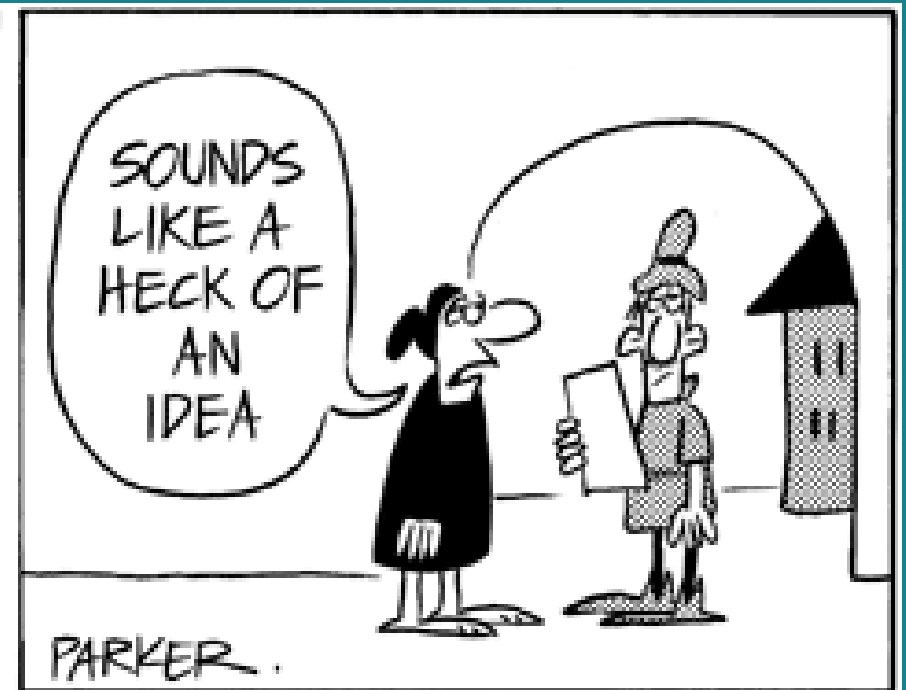
Pardon Me, Your Ethics are Showing

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TCMA Region 10 – Certified Ethics Trainers





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What percentage of Americans trust local government

- A. 78%
- B. 55%
- C. 39%
- D. 12%

What Is Ethics?

- Ethics... from the Greek “Ethos”
 - The disposition, *character*, or fundamental values peculiar to a specific person, people, culture, or movement
- It's about choices and our use of discretion
- Applying the appropriate public service values to achieve the right outcome in the right way



Why are ethics important?

- It defines who we are
- Character is important
- Foundation for good leadership
- Organizational culture
- Keeps us grounded
- We serve the public trust



Who Has Ethics Codes?

Government Employees

- Building Officials (BOAT)
- Human Resources (TMHRA)
- Lawyers (Texas Bar Assn.)
- Library Directors (TMLDA)
- Municipal Clerks (TMCA)
- Planners (APA)
- Engineers (NSPE)
- Finance Officers (GFOA)
- Police Chiefs (TPCA)
- Local Codes / Ordinances

City/County Managers

- Texas City Management Association (TCMA)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Local Codes / Ordinances

Councilmembers

- Local Codes / Ordinances

Mayors / Judges

- Local Codes / Ordinances

Texas Local Government Code Section 171

- Outlines the Conflict of Interest provisions
- The things that can send you to jail
- But what about the things that violate the public trust?

What are some of the most common ethical conflicts in government?

- Conflicts of Interest
- Failing to Financially Disclose
- Accepting Gifts
- Procurement Integrity
- Travel and Transportation
- Nepotism
- Misuse of Authority

Texas City Manager's Association Code of Ethics

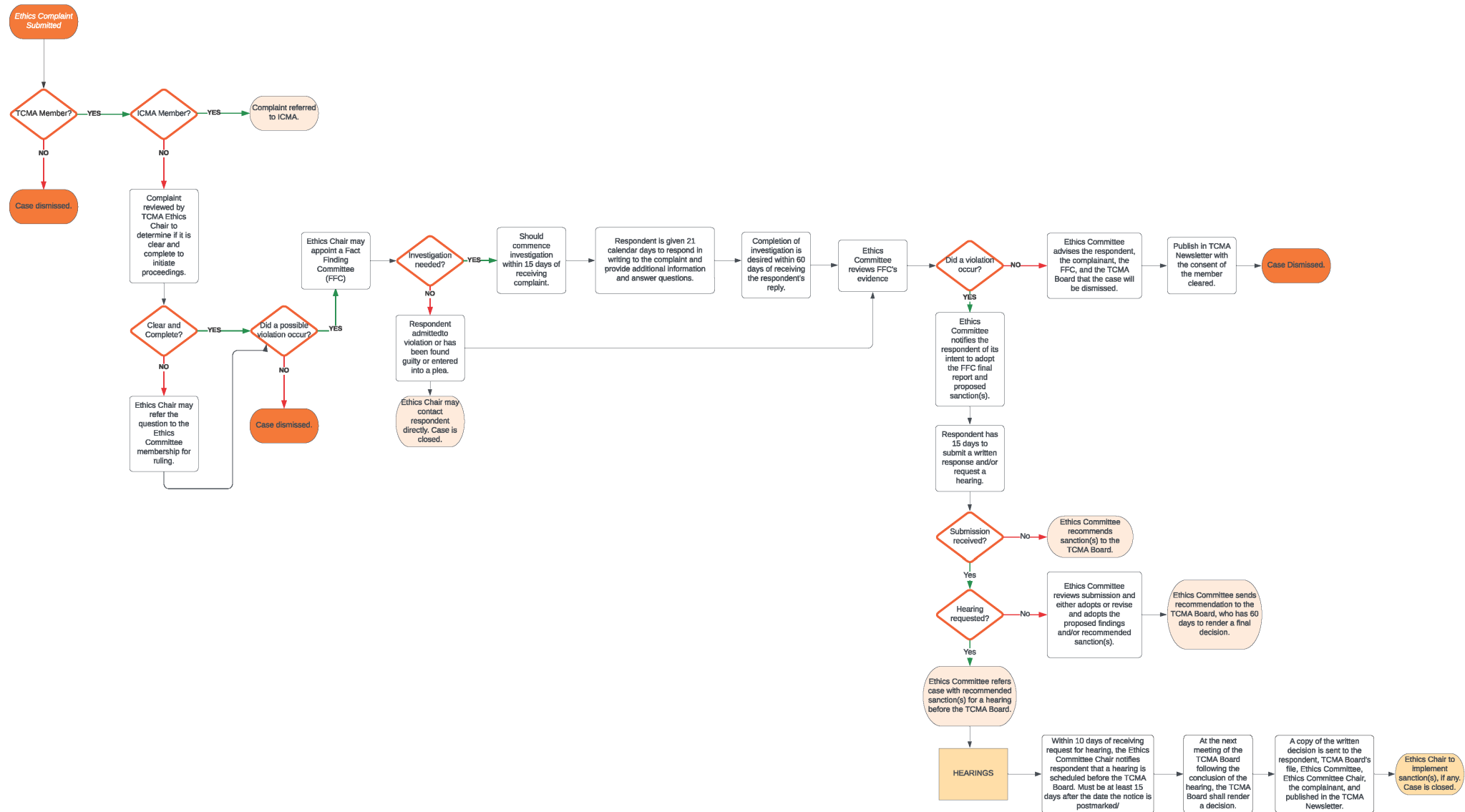
One of the more stringent codes of professional organizations

12 Tenets, 15 pages

Administered by a peer review board

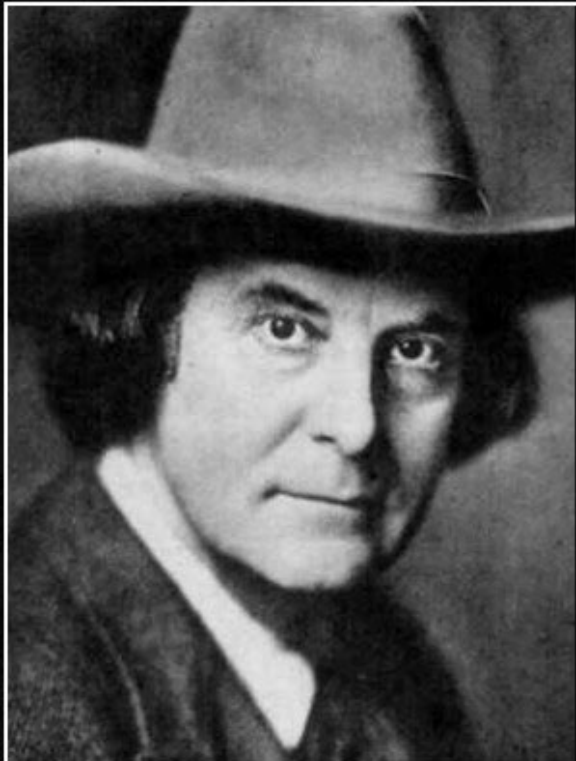
Penalties up to public censure and barring from membership

Ethics Complaint Process



How to Avoid Violating Ethics?

**DON'T BE
STUPID**



Genius may have its limitations, but
stupidity is not thus handicapped.

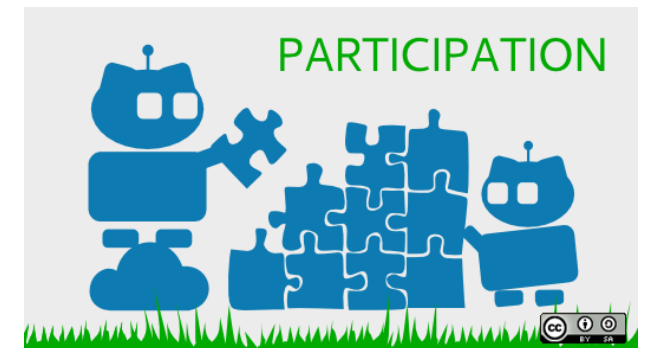
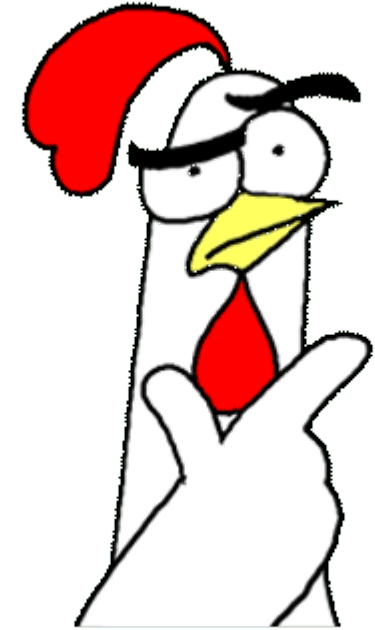
— *Elbert Hubbard* —

Scenarios – Real Life Cases

Now it's time to have some fun!

As the case is described be thinking about ethical guidance that may apply to the situation.

We're going to ask you to vote on the correct answer.



Ethics – Case #1

Alligators in the Water



McBee Mayor Glenn Odom and McBee Councilman James Linton admitted to a two-count violation of the state's ethics law via an April 17, 2025, consent order related to their conduct during a Feb. 11, 2023, town council

Do you?

- A. Start drinking only bottled water
- B. Thank the members for exposing the danger to the public water system
- C. Realize you should have disclosed the conflict
- D. Resign from your water company job

Ethics – Case #2

Oh that Zoom Link!

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS



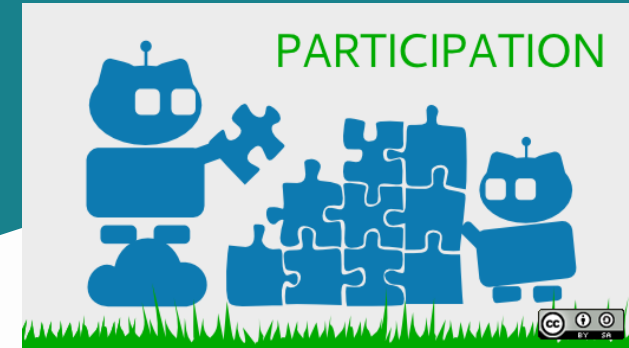
Anonymous ethics complaint submitted regarding Bozeman city manager

This follows a recently leaked video of City Manager, Jeff Mihelich

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

Mihelich out as Bozeman city manager, city leaders ready to 'move on'

al Work Session Tuesday, August 8, 2023



Do you?

- A. Immediately ban all zoom meetings
- B. Start wearing a string on your finger to remember when you are in a zoom meeting
- C. Hire this guy – he knows how to handle council relations
- D. Cringe

Ethics – Case #3

Your politics are showing

- The annual county Republican gala is an event that few in your small community miss.
- Every elected official regardless of party attends and it gets a pretty broad spectrum of people from the community.
- This year's speaker is a nationally known network commentator.
- The mayor invites you, the city manager and your spouse, to attend as her guest. The mayor notes that since you are new to the community, this will be a great opportunity for you to meet community leaders.

Do You?

- A. Tell the Mayor you are a member of the other political party
- B. Pretend to have a schedule conflict
- C. Explain to the Mayor the TCMA Code of Ethics
- D. Accept the invitation but pretend to be sick the night of the event

Ethics – Case #4

Friends in low places



- You've been friends with a local attorney in town since high school. That attorney is now running for District Attorney.
- Because you live on a highly visible thoroughfare she wants to put a large yard sign in your front yard.
- What do you do?

Do you?

- A. The friendship predates career – let her put the sign
- B. Ask your next door neighbor to put up her sign
- C. Decline to put up her sign and make new friends
- D. Decline to put up her sign and secretly campaign for her

Ethics – Case #5

Walking quorem



Do you?

- A. Move to Arizona
- B. Stop taking calls and emails from citizens
- C. Stop talking to other members of the Council
- D. Find a balance of discretion and timing

Ethics – Case #6

Walk the Dog



Do you?

- A. Make a donation to the local animal shelter
- B. Build a better fence
- C. Send your dog packing
- D. Apologize to the family and pay the fine

Ethics – Case #7

Do Not Reply



Do you?

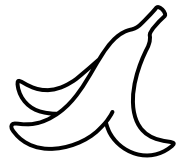
- A. Delete your email account
- B. Hire an assistant to reply to future emails
- C. Question the integrity of the complainant publicly
- D. Take the appropriate training and apologize to the family

Any more discussion or questions?

Remember, it is important to revisit the tenets often

When in doubt, talk it out with your City Attorney or other trusted counsel

TCMA website has the list of Train the Trainers for your region



Thank you

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