

Sec. 117-45. - Standards of ethical conduct.

Sec. 117-45.1. Definitions.

(a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings defined below:

(1) *Tribal officials*. Any person who is:

- a. A Tribal officer as defined in Section 1 of the Charter and Governing Document;
- b. A member of the Cherokee School Board as defined in C.C. Section 115-8;
- c. Serving as a member of an authority, board, committee, or commission, appointed by Tribal Council, the Executive Committee or Principal Chief, and who is subject to removal by the appointing authority; or
- d. Appointed by Tribal Council or the Executive Committee or Principal Chief, and who is subject to removal by the appointing authority, to carry out actions, provide guidance, or assistance to the Tribal Council, the Executive Committee or to a member of the Executive Committee.

(2) *Tribal resources*. Refers to instruments belonging to, held by, or received by the EBCI utilized for the economic, social, and political development of the EBCI as a community; and the Tribal offices and programs of the EBCI. Such instruments may include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Land, physical property, and services owned, provided, distributed, administered or allocated by Tribal officials that have been paid for, subsidized, or otherwise acquired by the offices and agencies of the EBCI;
- b. Funds and other financial assets of the EBCI; and
- c. Other Tribal materials made available to Tribal officials while acting in an official capacity, which includes documentation, communications, and other records made available to a Tribal official.

(3) *Personal interest*. Means any interest in which there exists a likelihood for direct or indirect gain of any kind, including, but not limited to, employment contracts, benefits, salaries, funding, or ownership or investment held by a Tribal official, employee, or immediate family member of Tribal officials.

(4) *Conflict of interest*. A conflict of interest shall be deemed to arise when the elected or appointed official, or executive staff employee or any member of their immediate family, or an organization or firm which employs such official, executive staff employee or family member has a financial or other interest in the firm or person selected for the contract or grant award.

(5) *Immediate family* shall be defined as spouse, parent, child or brother or sister.

(6) *EBCI* refers to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Tribe.

Sec. 117-45.2. Purpose and applicability.

(a) It is the policy of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians that high moral and ethical standards among the elected officials, appointed officials, and executive staff employees are necessary in order to eliminate conflicts of interest in Tribal offices, improve standards of Tribal service, preserve the sacred public trust, and promote and strengthen the faith and confidence of the members of the EBCI in their government. This Code of Ethics is to provide a mechanism whereby the Tribe may hold such officials accountable for their conduct in performing the duties and responsibilities of their Tribal office.

Sec. 117-45.3. Code of Ethics.

- (a) No Tribal official of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians shall participate in the selection or in the award or administration of a contract or grant award, if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, shall be involved.
- (b) No Tribal official or any member of their immediate family shall solicit or accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors or subcontractors who are contracting to perform services or sell goods or property to the Tribe or a Tribal program.
- (c) No Tribal official, directly or through a business entity in which the Tribal official has a personal interest, shall enter into any contract for services or goods with any Tribal entity, enterprise, or program for the purpose of either receiving or providing services or goods. This provision shall not apply to such persons qualifying for housing benefits from the Qualla Housing Authority or for medical benefits from the Indian Health Service or other programs available to all Tribal members.
- (d) The following represents the very minimum standards of conduct on the part of Tribal officials important to ensure ethical behavior and maintenance of public trust:
 - (1) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall treat service to the EBCI as a sacred public trust with fiduciary responsibility to the EBCI, which requires upholding and acting in accordance with the laws of the EBCI and engaging in the proper governance of the EBCI in a manner, which is placed above personal and private gain.
 - (2) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall not allow financial interests to conflict with the conscientious performance of obligations inherent in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities associated with their respective offices.
 - (3) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall protect and conserve Tribal resources and ensure the appropriate use of Tribal resources falling under the scope of the office of the Tribal official.
 - (4) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall provide every enrolled member a time to be heard on a Tribal issue that falls under the scope of the Tribal official's duties. This paragraph shall not supersede C.C. Section 117-16.
 - (5) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall not use prestige of the office to advance personal interests of others or themselves.
 - (6) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall disclose instances when they believe there has been fraud, waste, abuse, corruption, or violations of this chapter to the Office of Internal Audit and Ethics.
 - (7) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall respect and honor the customs and traditions of the EBCI.
 - (8) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall abide by the laws of any sovereign jurisdiction in which they are present. Tribal officials of the EBCI shall disclose any misdemeanor or felony charges and/or convictions that occur in any jurisdiction while in office to the Office of Internal Audit.
 - (9) Any gift, donation, or contribution received or provided by a Tribal official, must be reported by the official who received or provided the gift, donation, or contribution to the Office of Internal Audit and Ethics in accordance with that office's rules of procedure.
 - (10) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall not act individually, jointly or through another, threaten, intimidate, or discipline any person as reprisal for any legitimate action taken by the person.
 - (11) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall not offer, solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of value if the gift could reasonably be expected to influence the vote, official actions, or judgment of, or for, the official or could reasonably be considered a reward for any official action or inaction.
 - (12) Tribal officials of the EBCI shall not withhold materials or information from the public pertaining to those

items discussed in closed session unless such materials or information disclosed in closed session are deemed private in accordance with Chapter 132 of the Cherokee Code.

- (13) No Tribal official of the EBCI shall take any official action or participate in a decision with respect to a matter if it will have a direct and predictable effect on the financial interest, personal interest, or present a conflict of interest for the official or employee or his or her immediate family member. Any official in such situation shall recuse himself or herself from participating in a discussion and/or vote on the matter giving rise to such conflict.
- (14) Tribal officials of the EBCI may participate in private, public, civic, and/or charitable activities provided such activities do not detract from the dignity of the office or interfere with the performance of official duties.
- (15) Tribal officials shall maintain or enhance the honesty and integrity of their respective offices; and safeguard the reputation of the EBCI as a whole.
- (16) Tribal officials shall protect and enhance the environmental and cultural resources, whether natural or man-made, of the EBCI to ensure the security and prosperity of future generations.

(Ord. No. 368, 10-19-2022)

Sec. 117-45.4. Violation consequences.

- (a) Failure to meet the minimum requirements described in this section may constitute a violation of this Code of Ethics as determined by the Office of Internal Audit and Ethics as outlined below, until such time as the Office of Government Ethics is established.
- (b) A violation of Section 117-45.3 as determined at the discretion of the Office of Internal Audit and Ethics is subject to an administrative fine not to exceed \$5,000.00.

(Ord. No. 507, 9-11-1995; Ord. No. 152, 7-28-2016; Ord. No. 301, 9-21-2021; Ord. No. 368, 10-19-2022)