

## 7.0 Public Information

### 7.1 Public Information Officer

The Township Supervisor shall be the public information officer for the Township.

The public information officer shall be responsible for supervising the content disseminated as approved by the Township Board through the Township's newsletter, website, public service announcements, social media, and press releases on Township government events, and responding to inquiries from the media or referring contact to other appropriate Township officials. The public information officer shall review content of the following, but not limited to:

- Campaign Finance Act Violations
- Promotion of private interests
- Representation of Township Board actions or policy
- Statements that could expose the Township to legal liability
- Profanity, hate speech, discriminatory speech, or other unprotected speech

The public information officer is authorized to determine in his or her sole discretion, whether such content will be removed, edited or redacted, or submitted to the Township legal counsel for a further opinion, directed to the Township Board for a final determination, or returned to the author for revision.

The public information officer shall advise Township Board members and other appropriate staff of all press releases and other media contacts at the time of release.

Township officials and employees will notify the public information officer of all media contacts made in their Township capacity.

Township officials and department heads will notify the public information officer of all media contacts made in their Township capacity. Other Township employees and volunteers will notify the public information officer prior to making any statements to the news media in their Township capacity.

### 7.2 Public Notice

The Clerk shall be responsible for giving public notice of all meetings of all public bodies of the Township in conformance with the Open Meetings Act and other state laws.

The Chair of each public body shall notify the Township Clerk of that body's regular meeting schedule within 7 days after it is adopted, and of any special or rescheduled meeting at least 18 hours (at a minimum) prior to that meeting.

The Clerk shall be responsible for publishing and mailing all public notices required by state law. The Chair shall notify the Clerk when a public notice is required to be mailed or published with sufficient lead time for the notice to be provided in compliance with applicable laws.

### **7.3 Incoming Mail**

The Clerk's office shall receive all incoming mail and shall open and date-stamp the letter or cover letter of all correspondence. Correspondence shall be sorted and distributed immediately to the various Township offices. Mail addressed to the Township Board shall be forwarded to the Clerk, who shall provide a copy to each Board member.

Correspondence addressed to the Board, but requiring action typically handled by a particular official (such as a Freedom of Information Act request or subpoena), shall be immediately forwarded to that official, as well.

### **7.4 Township Letterhead Stationery**

The Township Board shall approve the design of all letterhead stationery. Statements made on Township stationery may be construed as the official position of the Township, so all officials, appointees and employees shall make written statements representing the Township only within the scope of their authority when using Township stationery.

### **7.5 Outgoing Correspondence**

All correspondence should be considered a public document, unless the contents are specifically excluded from disclosure by state law. Copies of correspondence will be provided to any Board member or the public on request.

Department heads shall provide the Township Board, via the Clerk with a copy of all correspondence that addresses a citizen complaint or when the content may result in a lawsuit against the Township. Where a department head is unsure of the necessity to provide the Board with a copy of correspondence, department heads should err on the side of caution.

### **7.6 Public Contacts**

#### **7.7 Courtesy and Customer Service**

The primary goal of the Township is to serve the public. All officials and employees will respond to requests for Township information from members of the public with courtesy and efficiency.

All officials and employees shall communicate with the public in such a way as to portray the image of the Township government as friendly, courteous and efficient.

All visitors to the Township shall be greeted in a friendly, helpful manner. Under the day-to-day supervision of the Supervisor, Clerk of Treasurer, the receptionist shall assist the public by directing them to the appropriate official, employee or department.

Phone calls to the Township shall be answered:

- "Torch Lake Township, how may I direct your call?" or
- "Torch Lake Township, \_\_\_\_\_ Department, how may I help you?"

Township officials and employees shall make every effort to see visitors who need their assistance. When workload or other commitments do not allow for an immediate meeting, the visitor will be asked to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Board members and other key officials shall post office hours or contact information to arrange appointments.

## **7.8 Complaints and Problems**

If an official or employee receives a citizen complaint that is outside their authority or responsibility, the official or employee shall direct the citizen to the appropriate official, employee or department.

Complaints or other concerns received from a citizen shall be received with courtesy. The official or employee will make every effort to resolve a complaint or problem, within the official's or employee's scope of authority. Department heads will be notified of all complaints.

The Township Board, Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer shall also be notified in writing of any citizen complaint arising from official or employee conduct or the administration of a department or Township Board policy or procedure. The notice shall include the name and address of the citizen, the nature of the complaint and how the complaint was resolved. The Township Board, Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer may make a subsequent inquiry with the citizen to determine whether the issue was resolved and whether any additional action is required.

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_  
Torch Lake Township  
Board of Trustees