

PROPOSED KENT COUNTY LEVY COURT POLICY P19-3 (*revised 11/15/19*)

INTRODUCED BY: Commissioner Allan F. Angel

ADOPTION DATE: 11/19/2019

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon adoption

§ TBD. Chain of Command.

This Policy addresses the governance of the County and supplements, but does not supplant other laws and rules that prescribe the legal responsibilities of County officials and employees. County staff is organized in a hierarchical structure, and work under the direction and control of several layers of supervision and management culminating with the County Administrator who reports directly to the Levy Court.

1. It is expected that all employees/officials will respond to and communicate their concerns and requests in a manner consistent with the chain of command. This shall be accomplished by adherence to the following rules:

A. Levy Court Commissioners are individually authorized to communicate and inquire about routine constituent and/or County-related issues with the County Administrator, any Row Officer, any Department/Office Director, any Levy Court appointed official serving on a County committee, board, and/or commission, or County employee, but recognizing that the County Administrator and/or responsible Department/Office Director or office holder is best positioned to provide the most accurate, complete information on a topic.

B. Officials appointed by Levy Court Commissioners to statutory or advisory committees, boards and/or commissions are individually authorized to communicate and inquire about routine advisory committee-related issues with the responsible Department/Office Director or assigned staff member. Any official or formal inquiry should be made at a regular meeting as prescribed in the respective bylaws.

C. The County Administrator or his/her designee is individually authorized to investigate, communicate, or inquire about routine and/or specific County-related issues with any Row Officer, any Department/Office Director, any Levy Court appointed official serving on a County committee, board, and /or commission, or County employee.

D. The County Administrator, Department Directors/Row Officers and in their absence Asst. Directors/Deputy Row Officers are ultimately responsible for compliance with County policies, rules, and procedures, and for directing, managing, and communicating with assigned staff. Each is expected to and responsible for carefully evaluating, prioritizing, and sharing important relevant in-

formation in a timely fashion with the County Administrator, Committee chair, and Levy Court Commissioners, and as necessary with assigned staff.

E. If an employee/official has any concern regarding the job performance, inappropriate behavior, unethical conduct, or other personnel-related matter by another County employee or official, he/she is to report the concern directly to his/her immediate supervisor or that individual's supervisor or a Levy Court Commissioner. If there is no person in the chain of command to report to, the employee/official should report the concern to the Personnel Director or County Administrator.

F. Employees speaking before other public bodies or to community organizations should always be cognizant that he/she is representing the County and is expected to professionally communicate accurate information authorized by the County without interjecting his/her own personal opinion or beliefs regarding its content. Employees are expected to promptly report non-routine contacts from the media or news outlets to the County Administrator and/or Public Information Officer. The County Administrator will communicate with Levy Court Commissioners and appropriate Department Directors to determine an appropriate spokesperson/response.

2. Direct contact or inquiry with a Levy Court appointed Attorney by any Row Officer, any Department/Office Director, any Levy Court appointed official serving on a County committee, board, and /or commission, or County employee for legal advice or legal opinion incurring a fee shall first be authorized by the County Administrator, except that routine, procedural, minor legal expense, or emergent legal inquiries may be delegated to Department/Office Directors and Row Officers, and specific responsible staff including the Personnel Director for confidential disciplinary matters, investigations, litigation, and labor relations. Credible threats of legal action or potential litigation shall be promptly reported to the County Administrator and Personnel Director.

3. Complaints alleging a violation of this policy shall be directed to the County Administrator or a Department Head. Upon receipt of a complaint, the County Administrator or Department Head shall determine the appropriate course of action to resolve the issue, and may initiate disciplinary action, if necessary or applicable, to prevent future incidents.