WHEN IN DOUBT
TRUST YOUR
INNER CHILD
DO UNTO OTHERS...
WHAT WOULD YOUR
MOTHER SAY?
SEE NO EVIL
HEAR NO EVIL
SPEAK NO EVIL
LIVE BY THE
GOLDEN RULE
ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE
What you’ll find inside...

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METROPOLITAN MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

ETHICS OFFICE MISSION

Metropolitan is committed to the fulfillment of its mission in an ethical fashion. Ethical practice includes two levels: a level of compliance in which Directors, officers, and employees follow relevant laws, rules, regulations and policies, and a level of ethically ideal behavior in which Directors, officers, and employees strive to incorporate Metropolitan’s core values in their daily work life.

The Ethics Office provides leadership through enforcement of ethics-related laws, rules, and policies; education for Directors, officers, and employees about how ethics apply to their work; and enhancement of the ethical culture of Metropolitan.
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is made up of 26 member agencies, serving nearly 19 million people.
LEADERSHIP

We value leaders and leadership skills. We encourage employees to be role models who inspire and motivate others. To foster an environment that develops skilled and satisfied leaders we need to:

- Be positive role models
- Walk the talk
- Encourage and reward leadership
- Support innovation/remove barriers

DIVERSITY

We value the differences that are derived from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures of the communities we serve, and we commit to actively seek and integrate that diversity into all levels of our workforce to ensure that our activities are based on creative and responsive viewpoints.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

We will communicate in an open, timely, candid, and shared manner, recognizing the value of diverse points of view. We will strive for continual improvement of all communication processes to inform, empower, build trust, create shared experiences, and enable personal growth.
TEAMWORK  
We value teamwork as a core philosophy in all our activities. Teamwork requires:
- Mutual respect and trust
- Participation of all individuals
- Sharing knowledge and information
- Support for one another

We will be successful as a team when we are successful as individuals and we will be successful as individuals when we succeed as a team.

STEWARDSHIP  
We will be responsible for our actions and are accountable to the public and each other for providing service and value by demonstrating stewardship of:
- The public’s health and safety
- The public’s funds
- Our natural environment
- Our workforce resources
- Our region’s water resources

INTEGRITY  
We will conduct ourselves in an honest, fair, considerate, and trustworthy manner to demonstrate professionalism and ethical business practices.
LEADERSHIP

We value leaders and leadership skills at all levels at Metropolitan. Our Directors serve in the most visible leadership role. Employees as well as members of the public look to the Board for demonstration of our core values. Here are some ways that Directors demonstrate leadership:

* Be positive role models
* Walk the talk
* Encourage and reward leadership
* Support innovation/remove barriers
* Foster teamwork
* Set clear goals, objectives and expectations
* Encourage open, honest, and timely feedback
THE ROLE OF A
METROPOLITAN DIRECTOR

Being a Director for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is important, satisfying, and complicated.

Sometimes the glass seems to be half empty—other times the reverse. But, either way, someone is sure to ask where the water came from, where it is going, why it costs so much, and how to ensure there will be more tomorrow. Directors have to be ready with answers. Staff, contractors, and members of the public look to see how Directors display Metropolitan core values. Directors should expect no more of staff than they expect of themselves. An ethical culture is set at the top.

All Directors have responsibility both to their respective member agencies and to the full constituency of the Metropolitan service area. Sometimes fulfilling one’s role as a Director for Metropolitan fits neatly with member agency responsibilities. Sometimes it does not. But, as one Director points out, “We are representing our agencies, but always doing the work of Metropolitan.” Directors demonstrate leadership by carefully balancing the needs of their local citizens with the needs of Metropolitan as a whole.
Metropolitan Directors do more than balance current water needs in a challenging economy. They also confront tough choices in balancing water needs for today with those of tomorrow. Ethical process requires conducting business in a transparent, honest, and fair manner while making resource decisions that avoid harm and promote good. The end result are decisions that earn the public trust and avoid causing harm to individuals, the community, and the environment.

“Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.”

–PETER F. DRUCKER

• The proper operation of Metropolitan requires decisions and policy to be made in the proper channels of governmental structure, that public office not be used for personal gain, and that all individuals associated with Metropolitan remain impartial and responsible towards the public. *(Admin. Code § 7101)*

• Directors shall maintain the highest standard of personal honesty, ethics, and fairness in carrying out their duties. *(Admin. Code § 7101)*

• Directors shall comply with applicable laws regulating their conduct, including conflict of interests and financial disclosure laws. *(Admin. Code § 7102)*

• Directors shall not grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any person or group beyond which is available to every other person or group in the same circumstances. *(Admin. Code § 7103)*

• Directors shall receive at least two hours of ethics training every two years in general ethics principles and specific ethics laws relevant to their public service. *(Cal. Code, regs., tit. 2 Sec. 18371)*
DIVERSITY

We value the differences that are derived from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and cultures of our Directors, officers, employees, and of the communities we serve. We commit to actively seek and integrate that diversity into all levels of our workforce to ensure that our choices are based on sharing creative and responsive viewpoints. No voice is silenced. No perspective is ignored.
Metropolitan Directors are entrusted with the power and authority to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. Directors maintain this trust by understanding both the commonality and distinctions among the individual interests that make up our community.

Directors bring a variety of professional experiences and constituent interests to their work, along with their own differences in race, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, gender, and sexual orientation. The public meetings, committee structure, and Board processes encourage all voices to be heard and respected. Diversity at Metropolitan is encouraged.

Ethical Directors know the boundary between setting policy and interfering in the day-to-day management of Metropolitan.

Directors shall be cautious to avoid placing undue pressure on staff, even in support of legitimate interests. All requests for work from staff should be processed through the Chief Administrative Officer or the appropriate Department Head. Directors shall refrain from asking staff to give special consideration to their families, friends, or professional colleagues. Directors do not grant special consideration, treatment, or advantage if the same benefits are not available to everyone. No Director should use his or her position for personal gain.

The diversity of roles that makes Metropolitan work well reflects the diversity of voices that make public service in a democracy an exciting and fulfilling endeavor. The transparency of open government should ensure that Directors represent and speak for a broad range of interests.

Metropolitan Directors have power and privileges associated with their office. When they actively exercise their power within the limits of that office, Metropolitan’s customers are served.
• Directors shall not ask Metropolitan employees to perform services for the personal convenience or profit of said Board member. *(Admin. Code § 7104)*

• Directors are prohibited from offering inducements to a potential vendor, contractor, or other party in hopes of obtaining reciprocal favors. *(Admin. Code § 7105)*

• Metropolitan shall not contract for services of any Director during the Director’s term of office, or for a period of one year thereafter. Contracting with a Director within one year of leaving office may be allowed by a 2/3 vote of the Board. *(Admin. Code § 7105)*

• Except for statements on the record in a scheduled public meeting, Directors shall not directly or indirectly communicate with the General Manager, General Counsel, General Auditor, Ethics Officer, (or their staffs) regarding the selection of vendors, contractors, consultants, or other business entities for a specific procurement of goods or services. *(Admin. Code § 7106)*

• Board members shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual preference, medical condition, or disability, and they shall cooperate in achieving the equal opportunity and affirmative action goals and objectives of Metropolitan. *(Admin. Code § 7111)*
OPEN COMMUNICATION

We will communicate in an open, timely, candid, and shared manner recognizing the value of diverse points of view. We will strive for continual improvement of all communication processes to inform, empower, build trust, create shared experiences, and enable personal growth. We recognize words as a powerful tool that can empower or silence others.
BEING AN AGENT OF THE PUBLIC

Public officials have the unique responsibility of acting on behalf of people who typically remain faceless and voiceless.

Constituents trust that officials will keep their needs in mind. Officials affirm this trust with each decision that they make. Open communication maintains the public trust by making the process of decision making accessible to all.

Public disclosure, along with avoidance of situations that are likely to create conflicts, are two ways that Metropolitan Directors demonstrate that they take their commitment to public service seriously.

Conflicts of commitment describe times when other responsibilities might get in the way of serving the public interest. Conflicts of interest describe times when one’s own personal or financial interests might take priority over serving the public interest. Thoughtful Directors notice when they are subject to both types of conflicts, and respond in ways to protect the public trust.
Sometimes, Metropolitan Directors find themselves on different sides of a question from their respective member agencies, general manager, or governing body. At times it is reasonable for a Director to do as asked; other times, acting out of conscience is the ethical choice. But, regardless of Director choice in specific situations, it is important to recognize and communicate the reality of these conflicts.

In addition to meeting legal requirements relating to conflicts, Directors are encouraged to refrain from voting in situations that simply appear to put them in conflict. Sometimes people think what they want to regardless of the facts. But, the key question is whether an observant, objective constituent could be shown that a decision serves the public interest even if it appears to be tied to a special interest or one of the Director’s own.

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

– GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
• Directors shall represent Metropolitan without gaining personal profit and without personal bias.  
  (Admin. Code §§ 7120 & 7121)

• Directors shall abstain from voting on contracts between Metropolitan and their appointing member public agency if that Director is on the governing body of that member public agency.  
  (Metropolitan Act § 56)

• Directors shall publicly identify financial conflicts of interest with sufficient detail to make the nature of the conflict clear.  
  (Gov. Code § 87105; Political Reform Act (PRA); Gov. Code § 81000, et. seq.; Admin. Code § 7120)

• In instances of a financial conflict of interest, Directors shall recuse themselves and leave the room during voting unless the conflicts of interest regard items on the consent calendar, in which case simple abstention of voting is sufficient.  
  (PRA; Gov. Code § 87105; Admin. Code § 7120)

• In cases where financial conflicts of interest occur, Directors shall address the Board only as a member of the general public representing that Director’s private concerns.  
  (PRA; Gov. Code § 87105; Admin. Code § 7120)

• Directors are prohibited from being financially interested in any contract made with Metropolitan, except where the interest is “remote” as defined by statute, and is appropriately described, or where the Legislature has determined by statute that no financial interest exists.  
  (Gov. Code § 1090 et. seq)
We value teamwork as a core philosophy in all our activities. Teamwork requires:

* Mutual respect and trust
* Participation of all individuals
* Sharing knowledge and information
* Support for one another

We will be successful as a TEAM when we are successful as individuals, and we will be successful as individuals when we SUCCEED as a TEAM.
Directors model collaborative decision-making for staff, contractors, and members of the public.

The framework for making decisions supports an open, honest, and fair environment for everyone doing business with the agency. The Metropolitan team includes Directors, officers and staff, contractors and vendors. Each contributes an essential element to the efficient and ethical fulfillment of Metropolitan’s mission.

Directors shall avoid the perception of giving others unfair advantage. They should not accept gifts or offers that give the appearance that Metropolitan awards or renews contracts on a 'pay-for-play' basis.

It is important to keep the intent and perception of any offer in mind. It is acceptable under Fair Political Practices Commission rules to accept gifts under a certain value, but not worth a dollar more. Does a specific number constitute a bribe or a payment for influence? Of course not. Regardless of monetary value, Metropolitan Directors do not accept gifts if the intent is to buy influence or gain unfair advantage.
Directors also must avoid cultivating special treatment for projects of personal interest. There is a system in place to guide decisions on the awarding of Metropolitan grants and contracts. The system includes an established set of criteria that forms the basis for a grant award or contract. Decisions are subject to many layers of review. This practice levels the playing field and provides opportunities for both large and small businesses to work with Metropolitan.

“Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a civilization work.”

—Vince Lombardi

**RELEVANT RULES & REGULATIONS**

- Directors may not enjoy personal gain from their position as Director. *(Admin. Code §§ 7120 & 7121)*

- Directors are subject to rules and regulations regarding the receipt of gifts set forth in the PRA and by FPPC. *(Gov. Code § 89503; Admin. Code § 7130)*

- Directors shall not receive or agree to receive any compensation, reward, or gift for any action related to the conduct of Metropolitan’s business. *(Admin. Code § 7130)*

- Directors shall not receive or agree to receive, directly or indirectly, honoraria as set forth in the PRA and by FPPC. *(Admin. Code § 7131)*
STEWARDSHIP

We will be responsible for our actions and are accountable to the public and each other for providing service and value by demonstrating stewardship of:

* The public’s health and safety
* The public’s funds
* Our natural environment
* Our workplace resources
* Our region’s water resources
Directors inherit a tradition of almost a century of water resource management along with a future of challenges and opportunities. Maintaining tradition while preparing for the future requires a complex support team and infrastructure that most people never get a chance to observe firsthand. When Directors take community decision makers behind the scenes on inspection trips to Metropolitan facilities, they showcase the hard work and smart management that go into delivering glass after glass of high quality water.

The objective of Director-sponsored inspection trips is to provide education to diverse representatives from the service area. It is appropriate to invite opinion leaders, public officials, media representatives, environmental and water industry officials, educators, as well as managers from business and industry on inspection trips for which the purpose and interest is to educate.

Inspection trips also offer Directors the opportunity to showcase Metropolitan’s environmental stewardship and prudent management of public funds by highlighting projects and programs along the route.

As with all official Metropolitan activities, inspection trips are open to public scrutiny. The actions of Directors and their guests reflect directly on the reputation and public perception of Metropolitan. Accounting for expenses with care and deliberation promotes public confidence that resources are wisely spent.

Feedback from more than 5,000 inspection trip participants underlines the importance of the Directors’ ambassador duties. In the words of one participant, “I will never again take for granted the water that makes living in the desert of Los Angeles possible.” Seeing a bit of the infrastructure behind water collection, storage, and delivery makes the availability of water to nearly 19 million people seem educational and enlightening.
• Directors’ expenses are reimbursed when incurred on behalf of Metropolitan. (*Admin. Code § 6320*)

• Common expenses include business telephone calls, business meals, common carrier fares, rental of automobiles, parking fees, and use of personal automobiles. (*Admin. Code § 6326*)

• Directors incurring expenses on behalf of Metropolitan prepare expense claim forms to document the purposes and costs of such activities, even if reimbursement is not requested. (*Admin. Code §§ 6320 & 6331*)

• Metropolitan staff and trip managers shall not purchase or serve alcoholic beverages on Metropolitan trips to inspect Metropolitan and related facilities. (*Admin. Code § 2615*)
INTEGRITY

We will conduct ourselves in an:

* Honest
* Forthright
* Fair
* Considerate
* and Trustworthy

manner so as to demonstrate professionalism and ethical business practices. Integrity is a choice to follow the right path based on one’s heart, mind, and gut. Integrity does not waiver in the face of external factors.
LETTING ONE’S COMMITMENT SHOW

We complete our analysis of core values by saving for last the value that serves as the foundation for all—integrity.

No rule or policy or guideline can substitute for the individual choice to put constituency interest ahead of one’s own. Integrity acknowledges the various commitments that each Metropolitan Director has, and the care that all Directors take to ensure that no one is confused about where their loyalties lie at any particular time.

All Metropolitan Directors represent their member agencies as well as Metropolitan, and have professional, business, and personal interests independent of Metropolitan’s mission.

It is essential that all involved know when Directors are acting on behalf of Metropolitan and when they are not. Therefore, Directors know when to take off their Metropolitan hats. They know not to use Metropolitan identification, such as stationery, stamps, seals, or logos when they are not acting on behalf of Metropolitan. When speaking in public venues, Directors make it clear if they are speaking on behalf of Metropolitan, another professional association, or representing their own personal beliefs.

Yet, Directors recognize that even when they are not wearing their Metropolitan hats, they still carry the designation of a Metropolitan Board member. They conduct themselves in their daily lives in a way that respects their covenant with Metropolitan and its mission.
“Character, not circumstances, make the person.”

– BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

RELEVANT RULES & REGULATIONS

• Metropolitan stationery, trademark, seal, and other identifying materials may not be used in any solicitation for political contributions contrary to state or federal law. (Admin. Code § 7108)

• Directors are prohibited from soliciting political funds or contributions at Metropolitan facilities. (Admin. Code § 7108)

• Directors shall not represent for compensation non-governmental entities before Metropolitan for one year after leaving office. (Admin. Code § 7122)

• Except as specifically authorized, using Metropolitan assets for personal convenience or profit is forbidden. Directors, officers, and employees shall safeguard Metropolitan property, equipment, moneys, and assets against unauthorized use or removal, as well as from loss due to criminal act or breach of trust. (Admin. Code § 7104)
BETOND SLOGANS

THE GREATEST GOOD FOR THE GREATEST NUMBER

BE ALL THAT YOU CAN BE
Making decisions in the public’s interest is challenging, rewarding, and sometimes complex. Directors’ decisions have ethical considerations because their words and decisions have the power to empower others or to cause harm. Directors have responsibilities to their member agencies and to the constituency of Metropolitan as a whole. Both stewards of public funds and stewards of a vital natural resource, Directors have obligations to other species and natural systems as well as to the nearly 19 million people who depend on the water we supply.
THE FOLLOWING LIST OF ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLY TO ALL DECISIONS:

1. **Review Relevant Laws.**

   Laws serve as the minimal standard from which to work. Our legal system reflects public values as a framework for maintaining social order. Ethics fleshes out that framework when we choose how to act within the legal structure. Law answers the important question, “What must I do?” After consideration of the legally permitted alternatives, ethics answers “How can I best meet my responsibilities and cause the least amount of harm?”

2. **Clarify Who’s Involved.**

   An effective solution will acknowledge the needs of all parties involved in the situation, but will first serve the needs of constituents. Constituents for Metropolitan number nearly 19 million people in six Southern California counties within a natural environment including land and sea, forest and desert, and a multitude of flora and fauna. The best solution is most often the one that produces the aggregate good – the good for the human and natural community as a whole.

3. **Avoid Either-Or Thinking.**

   Careful decision makers avoid thinking, “We can either make this choice or do the opposite.” Considering alternatives uncovers less extreme solutions and allows for the possibility of finding a solution that is completely outside of the box.

4. **Reflect Core Values.**

   Directors consider how their choices reflect Metropolitan’s core values of leadership, integrity, diversity, open communication, stewardship, and teamwork.

5. **Look for Ethical Expertise.**

   Directors often seek the advice or input of experts and professionals in defining technical issues and deciding a course of action. Ethical judgment is no different from any other kind of professional judgment. Those with ethical expertise, or who have confronted similar questions, can help by clarifying the problem and potential outcomes.

6. **Take the Historian Test.**

   Every Metropolitan decision is made in public. However, the reasons that Directors have for favoring one position over another may be less transparent, even to those who are careful observers of Board process. Every Board member makes history. Imagining how one’s choice will be documented in the historical record will help to make decisions more clear today.
When the Ethics Officer concludes, after investigation by the Inquiry & Review Committee with the advice of General Counsel, that substantial evidence exists that indicates that a member of the Board is in noncompliance with state law, the matter will be referred to the Fair Political Practices Commission, State Attorney General, or District Attorney, as applicable, with prompt notice of the referral provided to the Board, Director and the appointing member agency.

When the Ethics Officer concludes, after investigation by the Inquiry & Review Committee, with the advice of General Counsel, that substantial evidence exists that indicates that a member of the Board is in noncompliance with the Ethics Policy or Administrative Code, the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee, with prompt notice to the Director, with a recommendation for appropriate action, which can include, but is not limited to:

1. Notification of finding of noncompliance
2. Letter of reprimand
3. Letter of reprimand with copy to the appointing agency
4. Request to the appointing agency for replacement of the Board member

A Director, who is the subject of a complaint, will have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Inquiry & Review Committee and with the Ethics Officer prior to referral to the Executive Committee.

A Director, who is the subject of noncompliance with Metropolitan’s Administrative Code or Ethics Policy, at the time of matter is referred to the Executive Committee shall have the opportunity to present any relevant information, data, or facts in his or her own defense prior to the Executive Committee determination.

Any Director who is dissatisfied with a determination by the Ethics Officer, after investigation by the Inquiry & Review Committee, that no violation or noncompliance occurred may appeal the determination to the Executive Committee for review.

For relevant rules and regulations, please refer to Admin. Code § 7140.
WHAT’S A DIRECTOR TO DO?

DO YOUR DUTY

FOLLOW YOUR GUT

DO THE RIGHT THINGS RIGHT

DO UNTO OTHERS...
It may be hard to envision the ethical issues that Directors encounter. Here are some scenarios compiled from our files and those of peer agencies.

1. A potential vendor let the Metropolitan Director who lived next door to her know that she was responding to an RFP. “Put in a good word for me,” she said.

The Director should not help out his neighbor. In fact, the Metropolitan Administrative Code prohibits Directors from communicating with Metropolitan staff regarding the selection of vendors, contractors, consultants, or other business entities for specific procurements. Metropolitan contracting procedures are created to ensure fairness and equal consideration for all who respond to our requests for proposals or qualifications. Any reference in the application to the Director will be ignored by Metropolitan staff, as well as any suggestion from the Director that she be given special consideration. When it comes to contracting at Metropolitan, what matters is not who you know.

2. A Director heard rumors about another Director having financial interest in an upcoming contract. In addition, the Director had previously worked as a consultant for the firm being awarded the contract and wondered if this could be a problem.

The Director shall contact Metropolitan’s Legal Department about her concerns. Metropolitan cannot enter into any contract in which a Metropolitan Board member has a financial interest as that intent is defined by state law. Directors cannot participate in discussions or vote on contracts in which they have personal interests. Potential contractors are also asked to disclose any relationship that they have with current or past Metropolitan Board members or employees. The potential damage of an undisclosed conflict of interest is great, so that it is important that Directors be sure that their actions are in compliance with state law.
3. Following a staff presentation at a Board subcommittee, a Director asked the presenter for further information. The presenter did not have what was requested, leading the Director to loudly speculate to his fellow committee members, “Once again, staff is keeping us in the dark.”

**Committee members (and other Directors) should work closely with the committee chair to clarify committee needs and staff responsibility for meeting those needs in a timely fashion.** Each committee chair shall have a close working relationship with the member of Executive Team who reports to that committee. That manager has responsibility for directing and approving staff work for the committee. It is appropriate for a Board member to ask staff for follow-up, but the best process for that is to request follow up from the Committee Chair. All involved show respect for others by assuming that we all are doing the best that we can to achieve the same goal. Expressions of frustration in public meetings unnecessarily humiliate staff members and circumvent Board-Management process.

4. A Director found herself holding a minority view on a topic of importance to the Board and the Legislature. Never one to hide her well-reasoned opinions, the Director argued her case to a state senator and an assembly member, both of whom were her close friends. She also shared her view with a local reporter. Some Directors thought that she acted unethically by speaking out publicly against the Board’s majority view.

**The beauty of open government is that every voice is heard and every opinion is available for public consideration.** Board members have free speech rights as well as the responsibility to share their views and reasoning with the public. Indeed, the only Director communication that is problematic is when Directors attempt to influence one another’s position through private discussion. If the private discussions involve a quorum of the Board or Board Committee either through a single discussion or through a series of individual-to-individual discussions, such communication is a violation of the Brown Act.

5. A Metropolitan contractor has given a Metropolitan Director, who is running for reelection in her municipality, a campaign contribution. May the Metropolitan Director accept it? May the Metropolitan Director solicit donations from other Directors?

**If the amount of the campaign contribution from a contractor is $250 or less, then the Director can accept the contribution and can vote on a matter involving that contractor.** If the amount of the contribution is more than $250, then the Director cannot accept the contribution while the matter is pending before the Board, and for 90 days following the final decision of the matter. Also, if a Director has received a contribution of more than $250 from the contractor during the 12 months preceding the decision, the Director is disqualified from participating or voting on any matter concerning this contractor. In addition, Directors may not solicit political contributions at Metropolitan’s facilities, or use Metropolitan mailing lists or e-mail to solicit funds or distribute invitations for fundraisers.
6. A Director argued persuasively for some construction to be moved a few hundred feet so as not to impact local businesses on a street in his agency’s area. The owner of a wine shop gave the Director a case of wine as a thank you gift. What should the Director do?

Directors should be cautious about accepting gifts from strangers or acquaintances who live within or who do business within the Metropolitan service area. The Metropolitan Administrative Code specifies that Directors must represent Metropolitan without gaining personal profit and must publicly identify conflicts of interest. Board members may not receive gifts for any action related to the conduct of Metropolitan business. Although this gift is clearly disallowed by Metropolitan policy, in most cases, gifts amounting to $50 or more from the wine shop owner would need to be reported on the Director’s Statement of Economic Interest form. In addition, the Fair Political Practices Commission sets a maximum amount that a Director can receive in gifts from a single source during a calendar year.

7. A Director received a call from another Director who wished to discuss a matter that was coming up for a vote. The Director wondered if participating in the conversation was a violation of the Brown Act.

If this is part of a series of conversations that added up to a quorum of the Board or committee, it is a “meeting” as defined by the Brown Act. Participation in such a meeting is a violation of the Brown Act. However, it would not violate the Brown Act if the discussion was just limited to less than a quorum—as for example, if the two Directors were from the same agency.

8. Board members personify what it means to be active in a participatory democracy. They work, serve on their own member agency boards, belong to professional associations, and serve in other leadership positions. Yet, Directors are prohibited from holding two offices where the function of the offices are inherently inconsistent. Directors may be unclear about other activities that may cause conflict with commitments to Metropolitan.

Directors may not hold incompatible offices, but membership on the governing body of a member agency board has been exempted from Gov. Code Section 1099. In addition, membership on a non-profit organization’s board or in a leadership capacity of that board may cause conflict if Metropolitan provides funds or oversight of the organization. Generally speaking, there is no incompatibility with Directors conducting their own businesses and professional lives. The breadth of experience that our Directors bring to the Board contributes to the diversity of perspectives. But, when in doubt regarding real or perceived conflict or service on a non-profit board, Directors should check with Metropolitan’s Legal Department or Ethics Office.
I certify that I have received the Ethics Manual and agree to abide by its principles.

SIGNATURE

PRINTED NAME

MEMBER AGENCY

DATE

Acknowledgment Card

Please complete this card and return to the address listed on the reverse side.

Deena Ghaly, Ethics Officer
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The Network
888-228-7794

The Network is an independent hotline that accepts concerns about Metropolitan Directors, staff and contractors. Anonymous calls are accepted.
In our pursuit of Excellence we are committed to the following principles:

Leadership
Diversity
Integrity
Stewardship
Open Communication
Teamwork

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