

# Yolo County Board of Supervisors Governance Manual

Revisions Adopted: August 30, 2022

The Yolo County Board of Supervisors Governance Manual was developed in 2014-2015 and is a living document that is regularly reviewed, and as needed, revised by the Board.

This manual outlines practices that build and sustain positive Board relationships and define a culture of quality, equity and respect.

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# Change Log:

The following change log describes the page number, section, and description of changes that were made to the governance manual. The change log is intended to assist the user to understand changes from the last version of the manual approved on January 15, 2019.

Page Number	Section	Description of Change
1	Definition	Introductory language added to identify Board of Supervisors as governing body and the purpose of the manual.
2	Effective Governance	Sections on four fundamental characteristics of effective board members updated by governance consultant to reflect governance mindset.
6	Primary Role of CAO	Expand description of the role of the CAO to implement board direction and policy in effective and equitable manner and maintain positive organizational culture and ensure long-term success.
7	Model Behavior	Duplicate use of "SPIRIT" removed and bullets added regarding modelling of behavior. "SPIRIT" is still captured on Unity of Purpose on Pg. 9.
7	Provide Support to County	Added that board members work closely and collaboratively with the CAO
9	Strategic Plan	Updated to reflect the goals from the current 2020-2025 strategic plan from the prior 2016-2019 plan.
15	Board Assignments	Notes board assignments should consider workload and may rotate periodically to allow opportunities for value creation. Also includes text on effective assignment transitions.
16	Board Assignment Rotation	Adds a new protocol that the board acknowledges board rotation can at times add value and that the board will discuss possible rotation as part of discussion of annual board assignments.
25	Advocacy	Adds additional information as to process for legislative funding requests that staff will gather from supervisors as part of legislative platform and obtain approval from full Board.

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# Governance Begins with the Board

## Definition

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The Yolo County Board of Supervisors is the governing body for the County of Yolo. This Board Governance Manual describes the form and structure of the governance system.

Governance is the act of transforming the needs and desires of the community into policies that direct the organization. As the governance team fulfills the responsibility of setting direction related to policy, budget and finance, human resources, collective bargaining, facilities and advocacy, the way in which governance team members perform the governance role is critical.

Whether in Board Chambers, out in the community or at home, Board members are always stewards of the County, a regional government that provides: countywide services to all residents; municipal services to residents in the unincorporated areas; and State and Federal services as a political subdivision of the State. The integrity of the County is dependent upon the responsible and professional manner in which each Board member, and the Board collectively, fulfills governance roles and responsibilities. The demeanor of governance team members sends an important message to employees and the public.

Utilizing effective governance practices, private citizens, once elected to the Board of Supervisors, work with the County Administrator to keep the organization's efforts focused on its mission, values and strategic goals. The community elects Board members to set and monitor the direction of the County with the County Administrator, who translates this direction into action. It is therefore vital that the Board and County Administrator have a respectful and productive working relationship based on trust and open communication.

Effective governance tenets encompass the basic characteristics and behaviors that enable governance team members to effectively create a climate for excellence in the organization. Working as a group, Board members and the County Administrator leverage the efforts of the professional staff by:

- Setting direction for the organization reflective of the community's wishes;
- Creating a supportive framework for action in the organization;
- Holding the organization accountable through mutually agreed upon mechanisms;
- Providing support to staff through behaviors and actions; and
- Demonstrating community leadership on behalf of residents

When done effectively, the opportunity to create a climate for excellence increases dramatically.

## Effective Governance

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**Effective Supervisors-** Perhaps the most important characteristic of an effective supervisor is the development of a governance mindset. Knowing how to think about governance, and always applying that knowledge and understanding during Board operations, is an essential characteristic of a Board member. Governance mindfulness is understanding the role and responsibilities of the governing board and how individual members can enhance their positive, value-added impact.

The Characteristics of a Governance Mindset are:

### 1. System Thinking

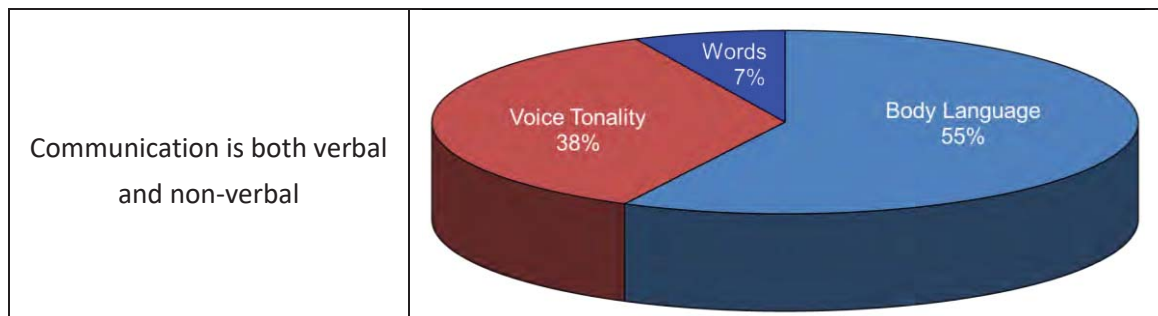
**Governance is a systems job.** Effective supervisors understand that they are not on the Board to administer the County, but rather to govern it. They understand that governance requires a broad, systemic view of the County, and they approach all their Board responsibilities with a clear sense of focus on achieving the strategic outcomes they have set and how to effect policy change as a team rather than an individual.

### 2. Strategic Focus

**Effective governance is a strategic job.** Effective supervisors always maintain a strategic focus in their Board work. Supervisors approach all their responsibilities with a clear focus on serving all people of Yolo County and achieving the strategic outcomes they have collectively set.

### 3. Manner

**Effective Supervisors are always respectful of other Supervisor's opinions.** They understand that how they govern is often more important than what they say or do. Working toward a common goal with other independently elected individuals in a collaborative setting requires patience, understanding, respect and most importantly, common courtesy. They model the civic behavior they expect the employees of the County to exhibit.



#### **4. Preparation and Learning**

**Mindful Board members are always prepared.** They do their preparation work. They are committed to doing the hard work of being a Board member and leading on behalf of the community they serve. They are committed to making decisions after obtaining and understanding quality information, evidence, and data.

**Effective Board of Supervisors** - High performing Boards have four essential characteristics that are the building blocks of effective governance:

##### **1. Maintaining a Unity of Purpose**

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, overarching goals, the values and beliefs governance team members share in common about the organization and the residents they serve that help them transcend their individual difference to fulfill a greater purpose.

##### **2. Governing within the role as a Board**

Effective teams value and respect their essential roles, reach mutual agreement on the roles of the Board and the County Administrator and strive to operate within them.

##### **3. Creating a positive governance culture**

Culture is the tone created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave with each other and with others. These behavioral ground rules (norms) enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture, or shift a negative one.

##### **4. Structuring the work for effective governance**

Effective teams discuss and agree on the formal structure and processes used by the Board and the County Administrator in their functioning as a team; how they operate and do business.

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## **Unity of Purpose**

Unity of Purpose is a common focus, mission, values and goals Board members share. A unity of purpose is a clear and unambiguous sense of purpose that becomes the inspiration for all Board efforts and the lens through which those efforts are viewed.

Having a unity of purpose demonstrates that governance team members care most of all about what is best for all residents and understand that they must identify common ground in order to provide focused leadership and direction to the County. They have a commitment to a common County vision

and goals, and to principle-centered County policies. A defined unity of purpose focuses Board members on desired end results and supports their ability to display a singular focus on achieving those results.

In all relationships, dealings and transactions, Board members act with integrity, openness, respect and honesty. Through these values, the governance team strives to earn and convey trust. The team retains public trust through efficient and cost-effectiveness stewardship of resources.

Governance teams work most effectively when they have a rational and purposeful framework to focus and guide their work. A unity of purpose helps team members transcend their differences to fulfill a greater purpose.

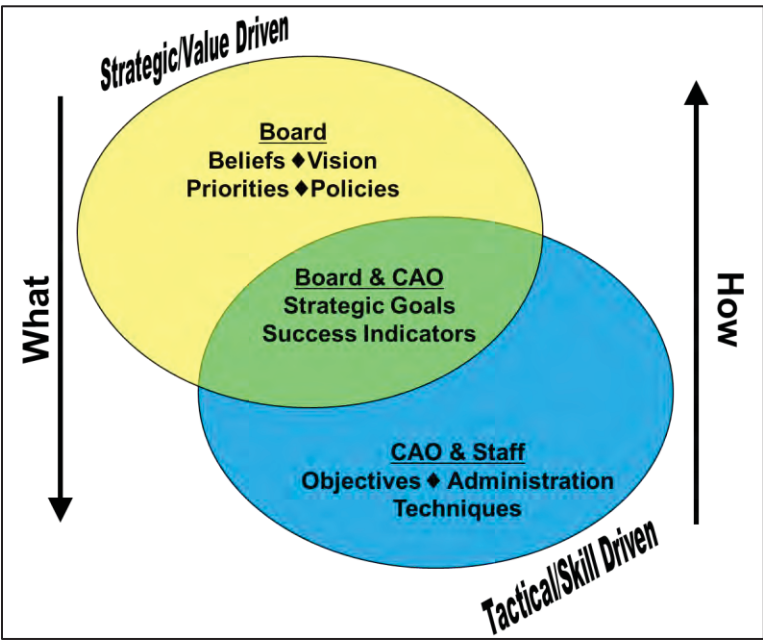


# Roles & Responsibilities

One of the most important characteristics of an effective Board is their understanding and agreement on roles and responsibilities. Generally, governance is about setting policy by defining the “what” of the organization, and administration is focused on the “how” policy gets implemented. If the discussion is focused on long-term outcomes, it tends to be strategic; if it is about short-term objectives or incremental steps, it tends to be administrative. Since the line between policy and administration can vary from topic to topic or issue to issue, it is essential that the County Administrator and the Board have a clear, mutually agreed upon understanding of how their roles and responsibilities will be defined.

## Board Roles

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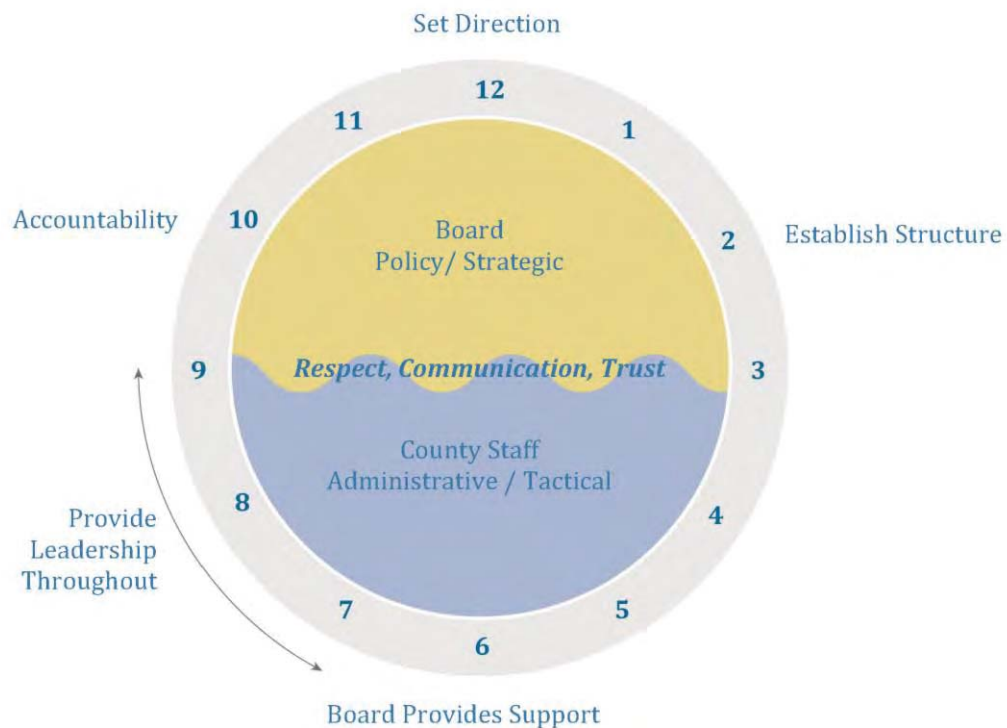
Source: California School Boards Association

The **primary role of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors** is to collectively set the direction and policy for the organization as representatives of the people which:

- Ensures fiscal sustainability
- Identifies countywide issues (and district issues with countywide impact) and puts strategies and coalitions in place to address them
- Defines and supports the objectives of the Strategic Plan

The **primary role of the County Administrator** is to support and implement the direction, policy and strategic goals adopted by the Board, supervise department heads (with the exception of elected officials and the County Counsel), promote collaboration across the organization, and administer the county in an effective and equitable way. Establishing and maintaining a positive organizational culture is a primary responsibility of the CAO and ensures the long-term successful implementation of county programs and policies.

## Board Responsibilities



Source: California School Boards Association

The above graphic depicts the five main responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors as a series of important functions that build upon one another. Although the responsibilities in practice are not always performed in a sequential manner, the depiction above reflects conceptually how they relate. The Board sets the direction, establishes a structure to implement that direction (hires a County Administrator, adopts a budget, adopts a strategic plan etc.), supports the staff as they implement that plan, holds the system accountable for implementation and educates the public on the goals established by the Board. Notice that the Board’s policy oriented strategic role is in yellow, separate from the staff’s administrative/tactical role in blue. The line separating these critical functions is wavy on purpose. It reflects the reality that in the real world of governance and administration, the line between

policy and administration is often blurred depending upon the issue and subject to a shared understanding and agreement between the County Administrator and the Board.

The **primary responsibilities of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors** are to:

**Model behavior**

- Exhibit patience, understanding, respect, and common courtesy

**Set the strategic direction for the County**

- Ensure the long term vision is established for the County
- Identify strategic priorities and goals

**Establish the governance structure for the County**

- Appoint the County Administrator and County Counsel
- Adopt the County Budget
- Adopt ordinances and policies
- Attend and advise numerous boards, commissions and committees
- Work with affiliated elected officials

**Provide support to the County**

- Provide clear and consistent direction
- Work closely and collaboratively with the County Administrative Officer
- Support/advocate programs and policies adopted by the Board
- Provide policy direction that supports programs and approves resources to achieve the strategic goals
- Support staff carrying out the Board's direction
- Hold the Board accountable for high quality governance and adherence to protocols and policies

**Ensure accountability**

- Hold the County Administrator accountable for achieving the goals set by the Board
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of policies and programs approved by the Board
- Monitor the fiscal health of the County

**Demonstrate community leadership**

- Engage and involve county residents and other community partners in appropriate and meaningful ways in setting the goals, objectives and major programs of the County
- Communicate clear information about County policies, the fiscal condition and progress on goals

- Identify cross cutting issues through ongoing interaction with a wide variety of stakeholders
- Become and remain immersed in the needs and concerns of residents
- Represent the needs of individual districts as well as the needs of the county as a whole
- Be visible and accessible

# Unity of Purpose

## Mission and Values

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### **Mission** (adopted 2015):

Making a difference by enhancing the quality of life in our community

### **Core Values** (adopted in 2007):

Service – Performance – Integrity – Respect – Innovation – Teamwork

### **Values Statement** (adopted in 2012):

As Yolo County residents and elected officials, we recognize Yolo County is a great place to live and work. We are committed to doing right by others through public service and maintaining the trust of our residents and peers. Together, we will continue to foster a healthy, supportive and professional environment, striving always for excellence.

## Strategic Goals

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**2020-2025 Strategic Goals** (Originally adopted in 2015 and supported by the principles of Operational Excellence)

- Thriving Residents
- Safe Communities
- Sustainable Environment
- Flourishing Agriculture
- Robust Economy

# Governance Principles

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The Yolo County Board of Supervisors will:

## **Govern as a team, strategically focused and mission driven**

- Board members strategically aligned with one another and the organization
- Agreement reached with staff on a strategy and staff championed in their related efforts
- Thinking and acting strategically with
  - Shared focus and purpose
  - Respect for shared constituency
- Staff engaged, vigorously and thoughtfully, in discussing strategic proposals and policies
- Long-term view on strategy and performance, focusing on sustainable success

## **Align goals and resources**

- Strong connection between goal discussions and resources discussions which include:
  - Process for prioritization
  - Emphasis on resiliency
  - Ability to adapt and recalibrate
- Goals are calibrated with resources; staff are not asked to deliver without resources
- Reserves and contingencies are in place

## **Establish and govern within a culture of inquiry**

- With roles and relationships defined, inquiry is encouraged and welcomed
- Requires a culture of trust which includes communicating the value of this principle to staff
- Supports independent mindedness

## **Govern in an accessible manner, committed to openness and transparency**

- Governs in a transparent, open and accessible manner
- Transparency is taken to the next level of “compliance with integrity”

## **Govern in a collaborative manner with the community, staff and within the Board**

- Collaborative environment respecting the roles of staff and Board
- All Board members govern together as a team with a common focus and purpose
- Supports collective accomplishments; discourages competition
- Demonstrates team leadership
- Unified support of the organization
- Board-staff partnership

**Commit to continuous learning and improvement**

- On-going, personal development of leadership skills and capacity to govern in a variety of arenas
- Seek leadership positions at regional, state and national levels
- Continuous learning about County programs and services
- Data savvy
- High quality policy decisions based upon evidence and data

**Be accountable to each other for the highest standards of Board performance and effectiveness**

- Regular feedback loop for Board based on identified protocols and practices
- Assessment of Board's effectiveness and adherence to adopted protocols

# Norms for Positive Governance Culture

## Definition

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Culture is the positive or negative atmosphere created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) and written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave with each other and others. These behavioral ground rules (norms) enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture or shift a negative one.

An excellent governance culture is characterized by a Board that operates in an environment of trust, respect and professional demeanor at all times. The Board sets the tone for the entire County in how it carries out its governance responsibilities.

**The Yolo County Board of Supervisors collectively and individually wishes to be perceived by the public as follows:**

<b>Cohesive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective Governance Team:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ with a collaborative spirit</li> <li>○ consistent with the Yolo County Strategic Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Strategic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtful, objective and data-driven in how we make decisions</li> <li>• Engaged in strategically-focused discussion and decision-making, providing policy direction consistent with the Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Recognized for leadership and innovation</li> <li>• Knowledgeable about countywide issues</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open to consideration of every view</li> <li>• Collaborative and responsive in addressing constituent needs</li> </ul>
<b>Accessible &amp; Equitable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible and responsive</li> <li>• Responsive to individual needs</li> <li>• Treats the public and staff with respect and dignity at all times</li> </ul>
<b>Community Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable leaders, nimble in addressing issues on the continuum of district-specific to countywide matters</li> <li>• Able to educate the public on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ roles, responsibilities and authority of the Board</li> <li>○ process for addressing community issues and concerns</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Providing guidance for community input and engagement</li> </ul>



## Norms

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Norms within which we agree to work:

- We will treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- We will attend Board meetings fully prepared, on time and focused.
- We will support working together toward the common vision and strategic goals even if our approach differs.
- We will focus on effective governance and will support the County Administrator in managing the County.
- We will show respect for the issues in each other's districts.
- We will work together individually and in group settings (discussion meetings) to resolve issues, assist one another and seek help when needed.
- We will focus on building and maintaining trust through actions which speak louder than words.
- We will refrain from being judgmental and will give each other the benefit of the doubt.
- We will focus on our successes not our difficulties.

# Protocols to Facilitate Governance Leadership

## Definition

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Effective Boards operate with formally adopted protocols that provide an operational framework for how Board members will work together. Protocols are descriptions of the “way we do things here” and are important as guides for what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Protocols exist whether they are identified or not. When they are not overtly stated, they become the habits by which groups perpetuate behaviors, some of which can become detrimental to the effective operation of the Board.

## Unity of Purpose – Setting Direction

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### Strategic Planning

The County’s Strategic Plan is a multi-year plan that presents a meaningful vision of the future and long term strategic goals indicating where resources are to be concentrated to accomplish strategic outcomes. Recommendations concerning the Strategic Plan come from the County Administrator and leadership following an environmental scan and SWOT analysis, input from departments and employees, outside partners and stakeholders, and residents.

Following Board adoption of the Strategic Plan’s goals and high-level objectives, departments develop operational plans, in concert with the County Administrator, to support the Strategic Plan goals, which are in turn, aligned with the County budget. Similarly, the County’s Strategic Plan is shared with advisory bodies to facilitate alignment of their focus and efforts.

Topic	Protocol
<b>Role of the Board of Supervisors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Strategic Plan is meant to be adaptive and thus, an annual process is in place to recalibrate the plan as needed.</li> <li>• Discussions are held by the Board prior to each strategic plan cycle. The Board and County Administrator agree on a framework and process for development of the Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Every three years, a new 3-Year Strategic Plan (goals and high-level initiatives) is submitted to the Board for review and adoption.</li> <li>• Annually, progress reports on implementation of the Strategic Plan are presented to the Board providing an opportunity for recalibration and alignment with the County budget.</li> </ul>

**Board Assignments**

Yolo County, the broader region, state and nation have a number of important committees, commissions and advisory groups that advise and/or direct the Board of Supervisors as well as regional, state and national leaders. The types of bodies include:

- Advisory Body Liaison – Board liaison to County advisory bodies
- Standing Board Subcommittee – subject to the Brown Act due to continuing subject matter jurisdiction or fixed meeting schedule
- Ad Hoc Board Subcommittee – temporary advisory committee composed of less than a quorum of the Board that serves a limited or single purpose, is not perpetual and will be dissolved once the specific task is completed
- 2x2 (2 representatives from 2 legislative bodies)
- Local Governing Body
- Regional Workgroup/Governing Body
- State/Federal Workgroup/Governing Body

Supervisors are appointed to serve as the Board’s liaison or representative on these bodies though a process intended to foster positive interaction between members and address workload balance. Workload balance includes consideration of each Board member’s capacity to handle an existing or contemplated range of assignments, with significant attention to ensuring regular attendance and informed participation. Board assignments:

- Provide representation of countywide policies and issues addressed by the various groups
- Advance Yolo’s leadership in the region, state and nation
- Support Board mastery through diverse experience across subject lines
- Capitalize on subject matter expertise
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Topic	Protocol
<p><b>Board Assignment Process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The incoming Board Chair consults with colleagues at a year-end discussion session to determine desired assignments.</li> <li>• Board assignments are adopted by the full Board during a subsequent regular meeting.</li> <li>• Board ad hoc subcommittees may be appointed throughout the year on an as needed basis.</li> <li>• Members regularly provide updates on assignments to the full Board during the Board matters section of the Board meeting.</li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<b>Board Assignment Rotation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board acknowledges value may be derived from occasional rotation of board assignments, including at defined intervals or upon the request of an interested board member.</li> <li>• The board annually shall discuss assignments that may be desired for rotation as part of the following year board assignments. Board members rotating into new assignments shall take appropriate steps (which may vary by assignment) to ensure an effective transition into their new roles.</li> <li>• An assigned member may request deferral of a planned rotation for good cause (e.g., pursuit of a leadership position), including if deferral will result in added value to Yolo County.</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Board Sub-Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to their creation, an ad hoc or standing subcommittee of the Board should have a clear charge and nexus to policy objectives, a finite timeframe (for ad hoc subcommittees) and a focus on setting high-level direction and policy.</li> <li>• Annually, the County Administrator and appropriate staff provide guidance on the creation, charge and dissolution of Board ad hoc subcommittees.</li> <li>• The rotating Chair and Vice-Chair advise on budget and the evaluation of the County Administrator and County Counsel.</li> </ul>
<b>Role with Advisory Bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the understanding that Board members will have a disproportionate influence in meetings of an advisory body, Board members should serve primarily as liaison and support to the body, with staff and the advisory body chair responsible for setting the agenda and conducting the meeting.</li> <li>• Board members can play a role in relaying the County’s Strategic Plan goals and focus areas to assist advisory bodies in aligning their focus and efforts.</li> <li>• Advisory bodies are encouraged to provide an annual written or verbal update to the Board.</li> </ul>

**Board Member Expertise**

Supervisors bring a wide variety of backgrounds, expertise and interests to their governance work on the Board and the Board wishes to capitalize on the informed experience of individual Supervisors. Additionally, leadership development and the pursuit of opportunities for leadership positions throughout the County and state are encouraged of both Supervisors and staff. It is important that the Board have the benefit of those varied interests and expertise in governing Yolo County. However, it is equally important that individual Supervisors understand the application of that expertise must occur within the agreed upon governance role of the Supervisor and the Board (see page 5). It is important

that Supervisors avoid substituting professional or personal expertise for the expertise of the staff. For example, a Supervisor might be an attorney or have a background in human resources. That expertise should inform the Supervisor and not take the place or be imposed upon legal or human resources staff of the county.

Topic	Protocol
<b>Ways to Capitalize on Board Member Expertise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board will provide the opportunity to inventory Supervisor interests and personal goals via the annual Board Assignments discussion meeting.</li> <li>• Board members will come to the annual Board Assignments discussion meeting prepared to share personal goals.</li> <li>• The application of Board member expertise shall be within the context of staff/Supervisor roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

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### **Interaction with County Staff and Consultants**

One of the most important relationships that exists is that between the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator and staff. It is essential that the ongoing governance relationships be clearly defined, collaborative and based upon mutual trust and respect. Such a relationship ensures the best governance results. It should provide clear direction, in an open and transparent manner.

The Board agrees to govern individually and as a Board with the following principles:

- Within a culture of inquiry, in a collaborative manner with staff
- Honor, affirm and celebrate the value of those who work for Yolo County
- Support staff, avoiding unduly influencing staff
- Operate within Board policy (Note: requests outside Board policy and/or action with significant staff resources should ultimately return to the full Board for consideration)
- Department Head and County Administrator are the primary contacts on initial and significant interactions with staff and contractors to ensure transparency and the best result
- Department Head and County Administrator are in the loop following initial contact with staff and consultants

It is especially important for the Board to establish and maintain a strong communication relationship with the County Administrator. It is important for that relationship to be clearly defined in the area of human resources. Supervisors have frequent contact with department directors, and thus, processes

should be in place for Supervisors to provide confidential feedback to the County Administrator regarding department head performance.

Protocols related to interactions with County staff also extend to contractors.

Topic	Protocol
<b>Individual Supervisor Requests for Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Supervisor requests will be only for information which does not require more than an incidental expenditure of staff resources. Every effort must be made to ensure questions are not considered direction for action and to understand the difference between commenting, suggesting and imposing.</li> <li>• Outside Board meetings, the initial request for information is made to the County Administrator or appropriate department head, thereby allowing department head or County Administrator to delegate response as appropriate to ensure the best outcome.</li> <li>• Following the initial request, the County Administrator and appropriate department head are kept in the loop to further ensure the best outcome.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Supervisor Requests Requiring Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests requiring resources, small or large, should be made through the department head and County Administrator to ensure the best outcome.</li> <li>• Requests for specific district-related issues and/or action should be made through the County Administrator and department head.</li> <li>• District issues with countywide impact should come to the full Board when an incidental threshold has been surpassed, leading to a countywide policy or change in Board direction.</li> <li>• Requests that require more than incidental staff time should be made during Board meetings under Board matters, Long Range Planning Calendar or Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Requests should have a nexus to the Strategic Plan, necessary resources should be identified and should be considered in the context of other priorities already identified and which may have to be deferred or eliminated.</li> <li>• Requests should focus on the specific appeal and not include directions on the actions required to carry out the request.</li> </ul>
<b>Requests for Information Requiring Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests for information requiring resources should have a nexus to the Strategic Plan. Necessary resources should be identified and should be considered in context of other priorities already identified, and which may have to be deferred or eliminated.</li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<b>Feedback to County Administrator on Department Head Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County Administrator is responsible for department head performance and performance evaluation.</li> <li>• The evaluation of the County Administrator provides the opportunity for Board feedback on department head performance.</li> <li>• Individual concerns about department head performance, along with other employees or consultants, will be brought directly to the County Administrator.</li> <li>• Supervisors will avoid public criticisms of department heads and all employees.</li> </ul>

## **Board Operations**

The governance principles adopted by the Board of Supervisors require the Board operate as a unified, cohesive team working together in an ethical and transparent manner. Individual policy and philosophical differences, representative of views of the community, will lead to vibrant and dynamic dialogue and discussions. It is important that the work of the Board be conducted in a highly effective and efficient governance framework or structure.

Perhaps nothing is as important as welcoming new Supervisors to the Board. The early impressions of newly elected Supervisors often set the tone and style of governance for many years. Every time a new Supervisor is elected, a new Board is created. Processes and procedures to “onboard” the new Supervisor by both the Board and County Administrator need to be established and maintained. The unique role of the County Supervisor and Board, norms and protocols of the Board, as well as technical information need to be provided in an open, welcoming and transparent way.



Topic	Protocol
<p><b>Role of the Board Chair</b></p>	<p>The Chair of the Board of Supervisors rotates annually by district, with the next in line serving as Vice-Chair. The Chair (Vice-Chair in the absence of the Chair) directs the efficient and transparent operation of the Board and plays a lead role in minding the climate of the Board, ensuring Board accountability, and ensuring the well-being of the Board, as well as the County. The Chair of the Board also serves in the following capacities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes the Board meeting calendar.</li> <li>• Following consultation with colleagues through a Board Governance discussion session, proposes Board assignments.</li> <li>• With the Vice-Chair, advises on the budget and evaluation of the County Administrator and County Counsel.</li> <li>• In consultation with the County Administrator, develops and approves Board meeting agendas.</li> <li>• As part of the agenda review process, seeks opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the good works of County staff.</li> <li>• With agreed upon procedures, conducts Board meetings consistent with the law and the principle of transparency, ensuring the Board, staff and public understand the process and actions to be taken, and that adequate and equitable public input is received prior to Board discussion and deliberation.</li> <li>• Facilitates Board Governance discussion sessions.</li> <li>• Serves as a sounding board for the County Administrator on matters of significant concern.</li> <li>• With the ability to communicate the position of the Board, generally serves as spokesperson for the County in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Press releases and media events</li> <li>○ Public events</li> <li>○ Correspondence</li> <li>○ Exceptions: District-specific events or areas of expertise</li> <li>○ Note: For complex and significant topics, talking points are provided to all Board members</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<b>Role of Individual Supervisors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governs within the Board adopted Governance Principles.</li> <li>• Fully prepares for Board meetings, i.e. materials read; as much as possible questions asked in advance of the meeting; and on time and engaged in the meeting.</li> <li>• Honors and respects colleagues, staff and public.</li> <li>• Engaged during public comment (caveat: responses to general public comment limited to providing an access point for further discussion).</li> <li>• Seeks first to understand, asking questions of staff in a manner that is engaging and supportive vs. accusatory.</li> <li>• Keeps colleagues informed of activities, especially related to Board assignments, via the Board matters section of the Board meeting.</li> <li>• Governs in an accessible manner, responding in a timely manner to phone calls, e-mails, etc.</li> <li>• Exhibits an on-going commitment to the organization.</li> <li>• Able to articulate Board actions and policies, and when discussing Board actions in public, clarifies when speaking on behalf of the Board vs. own opinion.</li> <li>• Generally addresses issues in their own district, but listens to the concerns of all, especially on countywide policy issues.</li> <li>• Informs appropriate Supervisor when assisting constituents outside their district.</li> <li>• Informs the entire Board through the Board meeting process of constituent issues and concerns they are involved with that have a countywide impact.</li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<p><b>New Board Member Orientation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first 100 days are a critical time and learning period for newly elected Supervisors and the development of a cohesive governance team.</li> <li>• The Board recognizes the importance of welcoming and helping transition newly-elected Board members into the public experience, and thus, current Supervisors are encouraged to send welcome letters and reach out to new Supervisors.</li> <li>• The County Administrator and County Counsel will prepare orientation materials for new Supervisors and schedule an initial meeting with Supervisors-elect to establish early and direct communication, and select orientation options based on past experience.</li> <li>• Department Heads, or their designees, will offer orientation to newly-elected Board members regarding the departments' key responsibilities and functions.</li> <li>• The Board will provide opportunities for new Supervisors to spend time with veteran Supervisors, visit districts and share information about Board assignments.</li> <li>• The Board will schedule a governance discussion meeting to provide an opportunity to share personal aspirations and to review, discuss and re-confirm the adopted governance protocols as documented in the Yolo County Board of Supervisors Governance Manual.</li> <li>• In December or January, new Board members will be offered a variety of assignments based on interests and opportunities to collaborate with veteran Supervisors.</li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<b>Board Meeting Agenda Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board agenda built with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department requests, recommendations and updates</li> <li>○ Requests from Board members (during Board matters and Long Range Planning Calendar agenda items discussion)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Agenda finalized by County Administrator’s office in concert with the Board Chair.</li> <li>• After giving due consideration to the adopted governance principles set forth in this manual, initiatives brought forward by individual Board members for Board consideration should first be heard under Board matters, and then as necessary (resolution requires Board direction), the item will be scheduled for a subsequent agenda in consultation with the County Administrator and with assistance from the Clerk of the Board’s office.</li> </ul>
<b>Board Reports &amp; Directed Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members regularly provide updates on their activities (especially those related to Board assignments) to the full Board during the Board matters section of the Board meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Agenda Item- Related Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Board members are encouraged to ask questions concerning items on the agenda prior to the meeting through their agenda review with the County Administrator and/or by contacting department head in advance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acquire the information they are seeking.</li> <li>○ Assist staff in being prepared to answer the question in a Board meeting for the benefit of other members and/or the public.</li> <li>○ Identify agenda items that should be moved from the Consent portion of the agenda to the Regular section.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• During Board meetings, members may pull items off the Consent agenda. Items easily addressed will be addressed at the time. Items requiring some research or staff not present in Board Chambers are held until later in the meeting.</li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<p><b>Advocacy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative proposals with a nexus to the County’s legislative platform (approved annually by the full Board) are considered by the Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Subcommittee. In the event the subcommittee is divided on a position, the proposal is brought to the full Board for consideration.</li> <li>• Legislative funding proposals (i.e., earmark requests) with a nexus to County service responsibilities shall be gathered as part of development of the County’s legislative platform and approved annually by the full Board prior to submission to state or federal officials. In addition, as funding needs or opportunities arise outside of this process, Board members will provide feedback and otherwise collaborate with staff to ensure County advocacy efforts are effective, well-informed, and timely.</li> <li>• After giving due consideration to the adopted governance principles set forth in this manual, under Board matters, any Board member may raise for consideration legislative, ballot measure, judicial system (including amicus participation) or other proposals of statewide, national and international interest that are beyond the scope of the County’s legislative platform. The item will be scheduled for a subsequent agenda with the following staff analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local and organizational impacts</li> <li>○ Description of whether action by Yolo County will have an impact</li> <li>○ Next steps concerning outreach (i.e. County’s position stated in a letter to state/national/international officials, on the website, via a press release)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: The Board of Supervisors may only educate and inform related to ballot measures, as opposed to advocating. Individual Supervisors, on their own time, may advocate.</p>

Topic	Protocol
<p><b>Response to Grand Jury Reports</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grand jury reports document the findings and recommendations it reaches following an investigation. The grand jury handbook states: “although all the findings are based upon evidence, they are the product of the Grand Jury’s independent judgment; some findings are the opinion of the Grand Jury rather than indisputable statements of fact.”</li> <li>• The grand jury is required to provide its reports to affected agencies two working days prior to their release. Agencies may provide comments regarding the reports to the grand jury and the supervising judge during the review period, but may not disclose the contents of reports prior to public release.</li> <li>• Historically, the County has responded collectively to grand jury reports within the required 90-day timeframe (or 60 days, for reports directed to elected department heads) via a letter drafted by staff and approved by the Board of Supervisors during a scheduled Board meeting. This process, however, does not allow for timely response to inaccuracies or controversial matters requiring a prompt response.</li> <li>• To correct the public record in a timely manner and address any controversial matters deemed to require a prompt response, as needed, the County Administrator or the director of the department(s) identified as a respondent in the report (if the County Administrator is not authorized to review the report) shall develop a draft response to grand jury reports containing inaccuracies. Coordination with the Office of the County Counsel is encouraged, subject to conflict of interest limitations if the Office advised the Grand Jury in developing a report.</li> <li>• The Chair and Vice-Chair shall review and approve the draft response, if appropriate, and authorize the County Administrator or other appropriate person to make it public simultaneous to (or as near in time as is feasible) the public release of the grand jury report. The response shall expressly state that it is a preliminary County response, and that a formal response will follow within the timeframes established by law.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Comment in Board Meetings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board will especially be engaged during public comment.</li> <li>• Responses to general public comment is limited to providing an access point for further discussion and/or responding briefly to statements made by commenters.</li> </ul>

Topic	Protocol
<p><b>Public Expression</b></p>	<p>The Board of Supervisors values and encourages public attendance and participation at its meetings. Public participation shall be orderly and fair to all. For that reason, attendees are asked to observe the following rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speakers are encouraged, but not required, to complete a comment card (available outside and inside the Chambers) and submit it to the Clerk of the Board.</li> <li>• Each speaker’s public comment is limited to three minutes per agenda item, unless otherwise advised by the Chair. The three-minute limit includes all comments by an individual, including any comments offered in a representative capacity for others (whether in attendance or not). Additional comments and comments from those unable to attend may be submitted in writing, ideally prior to the Board meeting, by e-mailing: <a href="mailto:clerkoftheboard@yolocounty.org">clerkoftheboard@yolocounty.org</a> or through the Clerk of the Board’s office, located at 625 Court Street, Room 204, Woodland, CA 95695.</li> <li>• Speakers may not yield time to other speakers or attempt to speak a second time, in a representative capacity or otherwise, on a single item.</li> <li>• Comments should be directed to the Board, not to the audience or staff.</li> <li>• Comments should be clear and brief, and maintain a courteous and polite demeanor.</li> <li>• Personal attacks, abusive language and other disruptive behavior must be avoided, including applause, the display of signs or other non-verbal measures that may discourage full public participation. Everyone has the right to be heard without fear of jeers or other forms of intimidation.</li> </ul> <p>These rules are taken seriously. Disruptive or unruly behavior may result in a speaker’s removal from the Board meeting.</p>
<p><b>Self-Monitoring of Board Effectiveness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a governance self-evaluation demonstrates accountability to the community and the interest of the governance team to strengthen and improve governance practices.</li> <li>• Board Governance sessions are an opportunity to discuss Board effectiveness and measure adherence to adopted protocols. Year-end discussion sessions are utilized for this purpose.</li> <li>• Following the evaluation, the Board may develop strategies for strengthening Board performance and shall establish priorities for the next year’s evaluation.</li> </ul>

## Board Staff

Supervisor’s deputies play an important role as a conduit between Board members, staff and constituents. They perform varied and complex administrative, research, public liaison, organizational and support duties for members of the Board of Supervisors. While they do not have the same authority as an elected County Supervisor, Board staff are often viewed as an extension of the Board member, and as such, must operate in their specific role and follow some of the same protocols as the Board of Supervisors, especially those related to communication.

Topic	Protocol
<b>Role of Supervisor’s Deputies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board deputies shall follow the same protocols the Board has adopted related to requests for information and requests requiring resources, with the exception of routine constituent issues, i.e., requesting assistance with public benefits directly from eligibility staff.</li><li>• In all communication with other Board members and Board staff, Board deputies shall endeavor to adhere to the Brown Act.</li></ul>



## Conflicts of Interest

The Board of Supervisors is committed to governing in an ethical manner and adhering to all requirements of the Political Reform Act, Government Code § 1090 (relating to financial interests in contracts) and related state ethics laws. Board members recognize that complying with State ethics laws is an individual responsibility and, as such, each member understands that potential ethical issues require careful attention. The following protocol offers a general framework for identifying and handling such issues in an appropriate manner:

Topic	Protocol
<b>Conflicts of Interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When a Board member becomes aware of a potential ethical issue, he or she should promptly seek advice from the Office of the County Counsel, the FPPC or a private attorney prior to taking any action that could violate ethics laws.</li><li>• Ethical issues that arise for the first time in a public meeting or similar setting should be brought to the attention of the Office of the County Counsel as discreetly as possible. This may include requesting a meeting recess or a continuance, if feasible, to afford the affected member an opportunity to obtain accurate, confidential advice from the County Counsel or other appropriate advisor.</li><li>• If a Board member is advised that recusal is legally required, prior to Board consideration of a relevant item, the Supervisor will briefly announce the nature of the conflict of interest. With the exception of consent agenda items, the Supervisor will leave the room during Board consideration of the item. If these actions are not taken by a Supervisor, to preserve the validity of a pending Board action, the County Counsel may advise the Board of its opinion that recusal (or other action) is legally required and request appropriate action by the affected Supervisor.</li><li>• If a Supervisor disagrees with the County Counsel’s advice on an ethical issue, he or she will take reasonable steps to resolve the disagreement. This could include seeking advice from the FPPC or a private attorney, either independently or in coordination with the County Counsel’s office. The Supervisor should recuse himself or herself from Board items implicating the conflict (if such items cannot reasonably be continued) until further advice is obtained.</li></ul>

## Board of Supervisors in the Community

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The Board of Supervisors, as elected community leaders, has the responsibility to engage and educate the community, promote partnerships and collaboration, and advocate for community support. At all times, Supervisors must be mindful of, and work within, their specific roles while encouraging and soliciting community engagement, collaboration and inclusiveness. While individual supervisors will work closely with the community, authority to take formal action rests exclusively with the Board as a whole.

One of the governing principles of the Board of Supervisors is to govern in an open and transparent fashion, with a commitment to a culture of inquiry. The Board is committed to being responsive and respectful of constituent concerns and issues. When conducting the public’s business in public, the Board will ensure that its attention and focus is directed to the business at hand and will generally confine its use of electronic devices to accessing and reviewing meeting materials.

E-mails, social media and other forms of electronic communications present a range of practical and legal issues. For instance, electronic communications that concern public business may be subject to the California Public Records Act and, in some cases, may also implicate the due process rights of participants in a public hearing. Electronic communications, including social media, that involve the Board quorum could also constitute a “serial meeting” under the Brown Act.

Topic	Protocol
<b>Handling Complaints from the Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board members are encouraged to engage in constituent concerns in an appropriate manner by being as responsive as possible, returning phone calls and e-mail inquiries in a timely manner and as feasibly possible, meeting with residents, partners and stakeholders upon request</li><li>• Easily resolved complaints are directed to the appropriate department via department head with a copy to the County Administrator.</li><li>• Complaints requiring complex solutions and/or policy changes are directed to County Administrator.</li></ul>

Topic	Protocol
<b>Electronic Communication Outside Board Meetings (including Social Media)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors are encouraged to refrain from interaction with each other on social media regarding items before the Board.</li> <li>• With electronic communications, including social media posts, Board members will use the same level of professionalism and good judgment employed in public meetings.</li> <li>• Confidential or sensitive County information (i.e., closed session discussions) will not be disclosed in any circumstances, including via electronic communication.</li> <li>• As appointments to local boards, commissions and committees are subject to the Maddy Act (which requires the posting of vacancies for at least 10 days prior to appointment decisions), Board members will avoid social media commentary regarding prospective appointees before or during the posting period.</li> </ul>
<b>Electronic Communication During Board Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During Board meetings, Supervisors will not receive individual electronic communication on topics before the Board. Board meeting agendas will include a statement to this effect to ensure the public is aware that electronic communications will not be reviewed or considered.</li> <li>• During Board meetings, in the interest of transparency and to minimize distractions, Board members are encouraged not to use electronic devices to communicate with Board members or any other person on items before the Board.</li> <li>• Prior to quasi-judicial hearings, such as land use appeals, the Board chair will review procedural guidelines provided by the Office of the County Counsel.</li> <li>• To ensure that such matters are decided based on evidence made available publicly before and during the hearing, Board members will not consider information received electronically during such public hearings.</li> <li>• Other uses of electronic devices during meetings should be limited to instances where a family or business situation makes the communication necessary, at the discretion of the Board member. Posting to social media should not occur during a Board meeting.</li> </ul>