



COUNTY OF AMHERST

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Legal Structure of Amherst County

Amherst County is represented by and operates under the guidance of its five-member Board of Supervisors. Board members are elected by Amherst County citizens on a staggered basis such that not all Board members stand for election at one time. Each Board member represents one of five electoral districts.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Board of Supervisors is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as are this Office and the County's Constitutional Officers, the County's Service Authority (which administers County water and wastewater services), County Administration, and other public entities such as the County libraries and the Department of Social Services. The FOIA establishes requirements governing access by citizen both to County records and to meetings of the Board of Supervisors, the Amherst County Service Authority Board, the Amherst County Social Services Board, and all boards, commissions, and committees formed to assist the Board of Supervisors in performing the work of the County.

The County's Constitutional Officers are the designated FOIA Officers for their various offices (e.g., the County Treasurer is the FOIA Officer for the Treasurer's Office). The County Administration has designated its Public Information Officer as its designated FOIA Officer and has posted a *Statement of Rights and Responsibilities* as required by State law. The County Attorney has prepared a *Guide to Responding to FOIA Requests* to help Constitutional officers and County staff respond to FOIA requests.

Rules of Procedure and Code of Ethics

The Board of Supervisors organizes and manages its meetings (Board of Supervisors Agendas) through its *Rules of Procedure*, which the Board adopts annually at its initial meeting in January. Importantly, the *Rules of Procedure* provide specific guidance to the Board on the question of how to handle public meetings consistently with the requirements of the FOIA, including closed sessions (see pages 6-7 of the Board's *Rules of Procedure*). The Board of Supervisors also has chosen to be governed by a *Code of Ethics*, which it adopted on February 2, 2016. The *Code of Ethics* applies to each of the sitting Board members.

Operations

The Board of Supervisors accomplishes its work in the County by working directly through its County Attorney, County Administrator, and Public Utilities Director. In working through its Public Utilities Director, the members of the Board of Supervisors sit once a month (and in special meetings as necessary) as the Amherst County Service Authority Board to address issues connected to the operation of the Amherst County Service Authority.