

# BUFFALO ERIE NIAGARA LAND IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

## Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

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This Code of Ethics shall apply to all directors, officers, and employees of the Corporation. These policies shall serve as a guide for official conduct and are intended to enhance the ethical and professional performance of the Corporation's directors and employees and to preserve public confidence in the Corporation's mission.

### **Responsibility of Directors and Employees**

1. Directors, officers, and employees shall perform their duties with transparency, without favor and refrain from engaging in outside matters of financial or personal interest, including other employment, that could impair the independence of judgment, or prevent the proper exercise of one's official duties.
2. Directors, officers, and employees shall not directly or indirectly, make, advise, or assist any person to make any financial investment based upon information available through the director's or employee's official position that could create any conflict between their public duties and interests and their private interests.
3. Directors, officers and employees shall not accept or receive any gift or gratuities where the circumstances would permit the inference that: (a) the gift is intended to influence the individual in the performance of official business or (b) the gift constitutes a tip, reward, or sign of appreciation for any official act by the individual. This prohibition extends to any form of financial payments, services, loans, travel reimbursement, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise from any entity doing business with or before the Corporation.
4. Directors, officers, and employees shall not use or attempt to use their official position with the Corporation to secure unwarranted privileges for themselves, members of their family or others, including employment with the Corporation or contracts for materials or services with the Corporation.
5. Directors, officers, and employees must conduct themselves at all times in a manner that avoids any appearance that they can be improperly or unduly influenced, that they could be affected by the position of or relationship with any other party, or that they are acting in violation of their public trust.
6. Directors, officers, and employees may not engage in any official transaction with an outside entity in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest that may reasonably conflict with the proper discharge of their official duties.
7. Directors, officers, and employees shall manage all matters within the scope of the Corporation's mission independent of any other affiliations or employment. Directors, including ex officio board members, and employees employed by more than one government shall strive to fulfill their professional responsibility to the Corporation without bias and shall support the Corporation's mission to the fullest.
8. Directors, officers, and employees shall not use Corporation property, including equipment, telephones, vehicles, computers, or other resources, or disclose information acquired in the course of their official duties in a manner inconsistent with State or local law or policy and the Corporation's mission and goals.
9. Directors, officers, and employees are prohibited from appearing or practicing before the Corporation for two (2) years following employment with the Corporation, consistent with the provisions of Public Officers Law.

10. No director, officer or employee of the Corporation shall acquire any interest, direct or indirect, in real property of the Corporation, in any real property to be acquired by the Corporation or in any real property to be acquired from the Corporation. No director, officer or employee of the Corporation shall have any interest, direct or indirect, in any contract or proposed contract for materials or services to be furnished or used by the Corporation. The board may adopt supplemental rules and regulations addressing potential conflicts of interest and ethical guidelines for directors, officers, and employees. [LBA § 1614]

11. Each director, officer or employee who is a municipal officer or employee shall promptly make a written disclosure of his or her position in the Corporation to his or her municipal supervisor and governing body in accordance with Section 803 of the General Municipal Law.

12. Each director shall, upon appointment, sign an acknowledgment of fiduciary duty in the form promulgated by the New York State Authorities Budget Office.

13. Each director, officer, and key employee as indicated by the Chairman shall annually file with the Chairman a statement disclosing real estate in Erie County in which he or she or a member of his or her household or a close relative (not including relatives more remote than first cousins) has a financial interest, and any other interest requiring transactional disclosure and recusal under paragraph 14 below.

14. Transactional disclosure and recusal. A Corporation officer or employee shall not use his or her official position or office, or take or fail to take any action, in a manner which he or she knows or has reason to know may result in a personal financial benefit for any of the following persons:

- (a) the Corporation officer or employee;
- (b) his or her outside employer or business;
- (c) a member of his or household;
- (d) a customer or client;
- (e) a close relative (not including relatives more remote than first cousins);
- (f) a person from whom the officer or employee has received election campaign contributions of more than \$1000 in the aggregate during the past twelve months.

A director, officer or employee shall promptly recuse himself or herself from acting on a matter before the municipality when acting on the matter, or failing to act on the matter, may financially benefit any of the persons listed above.

Whenever a director, officer or employee is required to recuse himself or herself under this code of ethics, he or she

- (i) shall promptly inform his or her superior, if any,
- (ii) shall promptly file with the Chairman a signed statement disclosing the nature and extent of the prohibited action or, if a director shall state that information upon the minutes of the board, and
- (iii) shall immediately refrain from participating further in the matter.

15. Exclusions. A director, officer or employee of the Corporation who is a municipal officer or employee shall not be deemed to have a prohibited interest or be required to recuse him or herself from any transaction by reason of any interest of his or her municipality in a contract or transaction with the Corporation. Nor shall recusal be required as a result of an action specifically authorized by statute, rule, or regulation of the State of New York or of the United States or a ministerial act.

## **Implementation of Code of Ethics**

This Code of Ethics shall be provided to all directors, officers, and employees upon commencement of employment or appointment and shall be reviewed annually by the Audit Committee.

The board may designate an Ethics Officer, who shall report to the board and shall have the following duties:

- Counsel in confidence Corporation directors, officers, and employees who seek advice about ethical behavior.
- Receive and investigate complaints about possible ethics violations.
- Dismiss complaints found to be without substance.
- Prepare an investigative report of their findings for action by the Executive Director or the board.
- Record the receipt of gifts or gratuities of any kind received by a director or employee, who shall notify the Ethics Officer within 48 hours of receipt of such gifts and gratuities.

## **Penalties**

In addition to any penalty contained in any other provision of law, a Corporation director, officer or employee who knowingly and intentionally violates any of the provisions of this code may be removed in the manner provided for in law, rules or regulations.

## **Reporting Unethical Behavior**

Employees, officers, and directors are required to report possible unethical behavior by a director, officer or employee of the Corporation to the Ethics Officer. Employees, officers, and directors may file ethics complaints anonymously and are protected from retaliation by the policies adopted by the Corporation.

## **Voidability of Contracts and Transactions**

No contract or other transaction between the Corporation and any other entity shall be void or voidable by reason of any conflict of interest or breach of this Code of Ethics except as provided by Section 715 of the Not-for-profit Corporation Law.

I have read this policy and agree to its contents

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_