

# GCAS Conflict of Interest Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect the Geauga County Agricultural Society's (hereinafter "Society") interests when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of The Great Geauga County Fair or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction or might jeopardize the tax exempt status of the Society in the eyes of the federal and state governments granting such status. This policy is intended to supplement by not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

## Definitions

### 1. Interested Person

Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest as defined below, is an interested person.

### 2. Financial Interest

A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

- a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Society has a transaction or arrangement,
- b. A compensation arrangement with the Society or The Great Geauga County Fair Foundation or any entity or individual with which the Society has a transaction or arrangement, or
- c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Society is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial (less than \$75.00).

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists as determined in #2. below.

## Procedures

### 1. Duty to Disclose:

In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

### 2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

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### Procedures cont'd:

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
  - a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
  - b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
  - c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Society can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
  - d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterest directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Society's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable.
  - e. Deliberations of the governing board or committee should be in Public Session except for specific exemptions, in accordance with the Sunshine Laws of the State of Ohio and the Policies of the Society.
  
4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
  - a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
  - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

### Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- b. The names of the persons who were present for discussion, and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and to record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

### Compensation

- a. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Society for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Society for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. Any voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, for the Society, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

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## Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

- a. Has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy,
- b. Has read and understands the policy,
- c. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
- d. Understands the Society is a nonprofit and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

## Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Society operates in a manner consistent with its nonprofit purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic review shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the results of arm's length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with the The Great Geauga County Fair Foundation conform to the written policies of the Society and are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment of payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

## Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as indicated above, the Geauga County Agricultural Society may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

In Witness whereof, the undersigned members of the Geauga County Agricultural Society have ratified the Conflict of Interest Policy, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

Doug Logan, President

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Wendy Anderson, Vice President

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