

CHAPTER 2

CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISORS

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Introduction

The governing body of a conservation district consists of a five-member board of supervisors, who are elected at the conservation district annual meeting in January or February. They serve three-year terms and are elected in staggered terms to provide continuity on the board and maintain operational consistency. A conservation district board may appoint a person to fill a vacant board position between elections. Supervisors are public officials serving as grassroots representatives of landowners and the general public, providing leadership and direction of volunteer cooperation in natural resource conservation programs. The programs are implemented with the assistance of conservation district staff and cooperating partners. Supervisors receive no compensation for services, but are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.

Eligibility Requirements

The Conservation Districts Law describes the eligibility requirement of a conservation district supervisor as being a qualified elector residing within the district (K.S.A. 2-1907). Accordingly, a conservation district supervisor is required to be:

1. A citizen of the United States.
2. 18 years of age or older.
3. A resident within the district (lives in the county).

Note: Any qualified elector residing in the district is eligible to serve as a district supervisor. Urban residents and non-agricultural producers should be considered to maximize diversity of opinions and provide equitable representation to all citizens of the county.

Statutory Powers

As a governmental subdivision of the State of Kansas and a public body (corporate and politic), conservation districts exercise public powers. Following is a summary of the specific legal powers given to conservation districts and their supervisors by the Conservation Districts Law. Please refer to Appendix 1-D: Conservation Districts Law in Chapter 1 for the complete statute.

1. May be entitled to expenses, including traveling expenses, necessarily incurred in the discharge of duties. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
2. May employ necessary secretarial, technical assistance, and other employees. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
3. May call upon the county attorney or the attorney general for legal services. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
4. May delegate to their chairperson, to one or more supervisors, or to one or more agents, or employees such powers and duties as they may deem proper. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
5. May invite the municipal or county legislative body to designate a representative to advise and consult with the supervisors on questions of program and policy which may affect the property, water supply, or other interests of such municipality or county. (K.S.A. 2-1907)

6. Conduct surveys, investigations, and research on erosion, flood damage and the preventive and control measures. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
7. Conduct demonstrational projects on conservation methods and measures. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
8. Carry out erosion prevention and control measures on lands owned or controlled by the state or on private lands upon obtaining consent. (K.S.A. 2-1902 and 2-1908)
9. Cooperate with, and to furnish financial or other aid to land occupiers within the district. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
10. Acquire, manage for income, and/or sell real or personal property. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
11. Make available agricultural and engineering machinery, equipment fertilizer, seeds, etc. to land occupiers within the district for conservation purposes. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
12. Develop comprehensive conservation plans, publish, and to bring them to the attention of land occupiers within the district. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
13. Own or manage soil and/or water conservation or related projects within the district or act as agent for other governmental agencies in acquiring such projects. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
14. Accept donations, gifts, and contributions, and to use in carrying on its operations. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
15. To sue and be sued in the name of the district. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
16. Make and execute contracts. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
17. Develop, amend and repeal rules and regulations. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
18. Require monetary or in-kind contributions as a condition for extending benefits under the Conservation Districts Law or the performance of work upon the lands and district. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
19. No provisions with respect to the acquisition, operation or disposition of property by other public bodies shall be applicable to a district unless the legislature shall specifically state. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
20. Shall not contract debts or obligations in the name of the district beyond current appropriations. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
21. To accept and expend funds donated to the district for purposes of providing at least 20% cost-share for the purchase of an eligible water right from the holder of the water right under the provisions of K.S.A. 2-1915, and amendments thereto. (K.S.A. 2-1908)
22. May cooperate with another district in the exercise of any and all powers listed within this section. (K.S.A. 2-1913)

Statutory Duties

Conservation district supervisors, as elected or appointed officials of a local government, have an obligation to uphold the law and fulfill the public trust. In addition to the conservation district and supervisor powers previously listed, the Conservation Districts Law delineates the following duties. Please refer to Appendix 1-D: Conservation Districts Law in Chapter 1 for the complete statute.

1. Hold an annual meeting in January or February. Publish notice in official county paper twice. At such meeting, make full report of activities and financial affairs since the last annual meeting and conduct an election by secret ballot for the election of supervisors whose terms have expired. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
2. Whenever a vacancy occurs on the board, the remaining supervisors shall appoint a qualified elector of the district to fill the office for the unexpired term. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
3. Designate a chairperson and may from time to time change such designation. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
4. Determine qualifications, duties, and compensation of their employees. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
5. Delegate to supervisors, agents (board advisors or representatives) and employee's appropriate powers and duties. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
6. Furnish the DOC requested documents and other information concerning conservation district activities as the DOC may require. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
7. Provide a surety (fidelity) bond for all employees and district officials who are entrusted with district funds or property. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
8. Provide for keeping of a full and accurate record (minutes) of all proceedings, resolutions, regulations, and orders issued or adopted. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
9. Provide for an annual audit of the accounts and receipts and disbursements. (K.S.A. 2-1907)
10. Request funds from the board of county commissioners. (K.S.A. 2-1907b)
11. County and state funds shall be used to carry out the activities and functions of the district. (K.S.A. 2-1907b)
12. Submit to the DOC a certification of the amount of money to be furnished by the county commissioners on or before September 1 of each year. (K.S.A. 2-1907c)
13. Municipal accounting procedures shall be used in the distribution of and in the expenditure of all funds. (K.S.A. 2-1907c)
14. Implement the program developed by the DOC for protection of riparian and wetland areas. (K.S.A. 2-1915 (b))
15. Prepare district programs to address resource management concerns of water quality, erosion and sediment control and wildlife habitat as part of the conservation district long-range and annual

work plans. Preparation and implementation of conservation district programs shall be accomplished with assistance from appropriate state and federal agencies involved in resource management. (K.S.A. 2-1915 (b))

Administrative Responsibilities

The conservation district board manages the affairs of the conservation district and has the full power to conduct all business of the conservation district subject to the laws of the State of Kansas. The Kansas legislature has given the conservation district supervisors broad powers to develop and carry out natural resource conservation programs. How well the supervisors do these things will be reflected in the accomplishments of the district. The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has available on their website (www.nacdnet.org) a *Conservation District Evaluation Guide* that can be used to rate the district's effectiveness in accomplishing its objectives within the community. Evaluation is crucial to ensure your district's operations are running as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In order to effectively exercise the powers and duties stated in the Conservation Districts Law, listed below are some customary responsibilities of the conservation district board of supervisors.

- Ensure compliance with the Conservation Districts Law and other laws applicable to political subdivisions / municipalities of state government.
- Hold board meetings regularly (monthly recommended) to conduct conservation district business efficiently.
- Make well informed decisions which only benefit the public and are in the best interest of the conservation district.
- Take the lead in identifying, assessing, and prioritizing local natural resource issues.
- Develop and effectively implement conservation district programs and activities, including the state cost-share program.
- Enter into memorandums of understanding or working agreements with as many agencies or organizations as necessary to coordinate the conservation and development of resources in the district.
- Ensure compliance with all agreements between the conservation district and other agencies.
- Keep in close contact with the Division of Conservation (DOC) on all administrative matters.
- Stay informed on activities and participates in programs of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).
- Establish, review, and implement conservation district policies and procedures.
- Hire qualified employees, provide for adequate training, and supervise personnel.
- Secure sufficient moneys for district programs and initiatives through the county commissioners, the State of Kansas, and other sources.

- Properly manage all funds, facilities and equipment belonging to the district.
- Review the long-range plan annually and keep current based on resource needs of your district and constituent feedback.
- Develop an annual work plan to address your priority conservation needs, complementing the goals and objectives of the long-range plan. Refer regularly to the annual work plan to see that planned activities are carried out.
- Develop a realistic annual budget.
- Publish and distribute an annual report of the conservation district accomplishments.
- Keep local, state, and national public officials informed of your conservation needs and accomplishments.
- Promote natural resource management through contests, exhibits, demonstrations, meetings, tours, service clubs, and special projects.
- Sponsor educational activities for children and adults.

Note: Also, check out Appendix 2-C: Effective Boards Make a Difference (NACD) from an article by the National Association for Conservation Districts.

Expense Reimbursement

A supervisor shall receive no compensation (money, thing of value, or economic benefit) for services, but may be entitled to expenses, including traveling expenses, necessarily incurred in the discharge of duties (K.S.A. 2-1907). Such reimbursable expenses may include mileage, transportation, registration fees, meals, and lodging. In the event that a board meeting is not held due to lack of a quorum, the supervisors who do show up at this meeting may receive mileage. All reimbursements must be documented with receipts and kept on file in the district office. A Travel Claim form appears in Chapter 5, *Financial Management*, which may be used for this purpose.

Each conservation district should adopt policies and procedures on expense reimbursement. Policies should include conditions, processes, rates, and funding source(s) for reimbursement. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) sets the standard mileage rates that may be used to calculate the maximum amount reimbursed to a supervisor using their own vehicles for business related travel. Conservation districts are not required to pay the maximum IRS rate, however all changes should be approved by the conservation district board.

Administrative Structure

The Conservation Districts Law requires all conservation districts to designate a chairperson from among the supervisors. It also states the supervisors may delegate powers and duties to their chairperson, supervisors, agents, or employees as they may deem proper. It is the responsibility of each district board to identify its needs and adopt policies, duties, and procedures for supervisors, agents (such as advisors), and its staff.

Supervisor Roles

Each supervisor has a specific role to play in the operation of the conservation district. Conservation districts operate under the direction of a board consisting of five supervisors. The first board meeting after the annual meeting elections, the conservation district board of supervisors should reorganize. Some conservation districts annually rotate its officers to provide all members with leadership experience. Conservation district boards elect officers to carry out specific roles for the conservation district, especially in board meetings. All positions on the board have the same voting rights and can vote on all issues before the board unless a member needs to abstain due to personal conflict. Each individual member shares responsibility for carrying out the duties of the board, but also has individual responsibilities.

Individual board members may be given authority or power to act on behalf of the board in specific, limited tasks. The authority or power is granted through board action (motion or policy) and must be recorded in the meeting minutes. Conservation boards may choose to limit or grant authorities to individual supervisors relating to different actions, such as staff supervision, managing projects, signing documents, and serving as a district spokesperson for public presentations or media. Position descriptions may also be developed (for more information see Board Member Position Descriptions provided later in the chapter and Appendix 2-A: Example Supervisor Position Description.)

In addition to the responsibilities and duties of all board members, the following describes the main roles common for conservation district officers and members.

- **Chairperson:** The chairperson of a conservation district board is designated (normally elected by other board members) to provide leadership to the conservation district board. In general, the chairperson ensures the effective action of the board in governing and supporting the conservation district, and oversees board affairs. The chairperson acts as the official spokesperson for the conservation district. As the head of the board, the chairperson sets the meeting agenda (with input from district employees and other supervisors), presides at meetings, appoints committees, assigns responsibilities, and ensures new supervisors are oriented. According to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, the presiding officer (chairperson) has duty to provide the notice of board meetings, but that duty may be delegated. The chairperson is one of the three legal designees authorized to sign checks.
- **Vice-Chairperson:** In absence of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson assumes all duties and responsibilities of the chairperson in conducting the meeting, check signing authority, and other leadership duties. Therefore, the vice-chairperson must understand the responsibilities of the chairperson and be able to perform these duties in the chairperson's absence. The vice-chairperson assists with the duties of the chairperson. Some additional responsibilities may include arranging special programs for regular board meetings and serving as chairperson of at least one standing committee. The vice-chairperson also succeeds the chairperson in the event of resignation or death until the board is reorganized.
- **Secretary:** The secretary is not a required board position. However, it is the responsibility of the board that "secretary" duties, which some or all may be assigned to an employee, are carried out. Normally district staff notifies board members of each meeting, assists the chairperson with agenda preparation, records board meeting minutes, prepares correspondence, drafts district reports, and maintains financial records. The secretary is one of the three legal designees authorized to sign checks.

- **Treasurer:** The treasurer is responsible for the financial matters of the district, ensuring complete and accurate financial records, as well as maximization of cash and investments. According to state law, the treasurer reviews claim vouchers (and supporting documents), keeps complete payment records (may be assigned to district staff, however it is the responsibility of the treasurer to ensure complete and accurate records), and signs checks as one of the three legal designees. Normally the treasurer presents financial reports at meetings, leads district budget development, and serves as chairperson of the finance committee. In absence of the treasurer at a board meeting, a pro tem treasurer is appointed by the chairperson or is elected by the members of the board, and assumes all duties and responsibilities of the treasurer on a temporary basis.
- **Member:** Any member of the board that is not an officer assumes duties and carry-out tasks assigned by the chairperson and assists board officers as requested. A member should be familiar with the total program of the conservation district and be prepared to serve in one or more of the other board offices.

Note: Boards work cooperatively as a unit to plan and oversee implementation of their district's programs. As a representative of the district board, opinions expressed publicly by the individual board members should be consistent with established board policy, regardless of the individual's personal agenda or opinions.

Advisors

A conservation district board can benefit by appointing one or more advisors, sometimes referred to as associate or assistant supervisors, to provide information, advice, assistance, or other special expertise to the board. In addition, the conservation district board may designate an advisor to serve on an organization as a conservation district board representative. With the involvement of more people, it is possible to expand the scope of district programs as well as broaden community input and support to the district.

The district might consider the following types of individuals to serve as advisors:

1. An advisor might be a potential district supervisor. This could serve both as a learning period for the advisor and as a time for the board to observe the advisor's commitment and ability.
2. A former district supervisor who would like to remain active in the district. This would ensure that the district continues to benefit from the experience of a past supervisor.
3. An individual who is or should be professionally involved in conservation could provide a special service to the district. Consider the benefits of naming the extension agent, a teacher, a city planner, or newspaper person as an advisor.

It is the responsibility of the conservation district supervisors to delegate duties to the advisor, and it is recommended to develop a written description of the responsibilities, activities, and limits on authority, and length of term. Appointment and reappointment should be an official action of the board. Be sure to orient advisors and involve them in meaningful activities and projects to help maintain their interest and support.

Advisors have no official or legal authority. Therefore, they cannot make motions or vote on official district business. However, if an advisor performs a conservation district function at the request of the

board, the conservation district board may provide reimbursement from the Enterprise Fund for mileage, meals, and lodging.

Committees

The board of supervisors may form needed committees to perform a specific role, project, or program. Committees may be used to investigate, deliberate, and analyze issues or projects. Committees have no legal or official authority and cannot vote on the district board's business or obligate district funds. The two primary types of conservation district committees are a standing committee and a special committee.

1. A standing committee is a permanent committee charged with working on a basic aspect of a district function. Standing committees may have a focus on recruiting potential board members (nominating committee), planning, education, finance, research, personnel, water quality, or stewardship.
2. A special or an “ad hoc” committee is a temporary work group created to accomplish a specific task within a limited time frame. Examples include forming committees for the Local Work Group, a tour, the annual meeting, or a grant.

Districts are encouraged to have a policy on board committee responsibilities. All committees should have a clear understanding of their purpose, charge, expectations, responsibilities, and time frame for reporting back to the board or completing tasks. Committee members may include district board members, advisors, and representatives of cooperating agencies and associations, or interested citizens. Committees may also serve as an "entry point" and training ground for people who may eventually become a district supervisor.

Board Member Position Descriptions

Conservation districts should consider developing board member position descriptions for several possible uses, including: to encourage and recruit potential board members, to train and develop the current board members, or as a tool to assess the job performance of existing members. Having in place a well-organized and accurate position description that reflects the board’s function and structure will ensure potential candidates are well informed about what to expect as a board member. New board members who are provided with the description will be prepared for their term of service. Current board members can refer to their position description throughout their term of service and expect to be evaluated accordingly. See Appendix 2-A: Example Supervisor Position Description for ideas on crafting a position description specific to your conservation district. The format can also be adapted to make position descriptions for board officers, advisors, and committee chairs.

Recruiting New Board Members

Recruiting the right people with the right skills and talent can help ensure effective conservation district programs. Additionally, a district board whose members exhibit a diverse combination of skills will be better able to gain community support for district and local conservation efforts. As an organization representative of the people within the district boundaries, it is also valuable for the board makeup to reflect the gender, age, and race makeup of the people within the district. Before the actual search for a potential new board member begins there are several steps that should be taken to assist in the process for recruiting quality board members who best suit the needs of the conservation district. District boards

then develop and use a variety of recruitment strategies to find citizens who have skills and interests compatible with the district.

Here are some key board member recruitment steps:

- **Analyze district needs.** In order to figure out what kind of board members are desired to lead the conservation district, a process to analyze the needs of the conservation district in relationship to the district's key priorities and future activities should take place. This could consist of listing the district's current major programs and activities, as well as listing future programs and activities the conservation district board would like to accomplish. Also, identify the knowledge, experience, and skills needed to help the district meet these accomplishments such as: Agriculture, Accounting, Education, Personnel, and Public Relations.
- **Identify desirable qualities.** List qualities that will help the board function better and do its job better. These general descriptive characteristics such as open minded, strong leadership skills, team player, passion for conservation, and reliability are qualities to be sought, encouraged, and developed in all members.
- **Develop a recruitment document.** Recruiting efforts are aided by developing a brief information sheet to provide to prospective members explaining what the conservation district is and the programs and services it offers. This document might include:
 - Conservation district mission and vision statements.
 - Primary goal, programs and activities of the conservation district.
 - Major issues the board is currently facing.
 - Main responsibilities and duties of board members.
 - Expectations of board members.
 - Benefits of being a conservation district supervisor.
- **Create a board member position description.** A position or job description will give prospective board members a better understanding of what is expected of them by defining their responsibilities, duties and obligations. If such roles are clearly defined, prospective board members will be more likely to meet the expectations set for them. The position description may be used in recruitment efforts and provided to the board members once they have been elected or appointed. See Appendix 2-A: Example Supervisor Position Description for ideas on crafting a position description specific to your conservation district.
- **Develop a board composition grid.** A key ingredient to increasing the district's impact in the county is to have diverse board membership representatives who bring a wide and varied range of skills, backgrounds, and ethnicity. A board composition grid is a helpful tool to see how well the current board covers the various criteria. Across the top of the matrix write the names of the current board members. Down the left side of the matrix list desired conservation district board member criteria for effective leadership and governance. Have each board member check off their relevant items. This exercise will help identify the gaps in your current board, and establish priorities for recruitment. For example, if no one currently on the board has accounting knowledge then seek a member with strong financial skills. See Appendix 2-E: Example Board Composition Grid for some ideas on developing one for your conservation district.

- **Develop recruitment strategies.** Ongoing recruitment utilizing a nominating committee and using a variety of strategies normally produces a greater number of potential nominees who represent more diverse skills, interests, and backgrounds. Some recruiting methods include:
 - Recruitment brochure.
 - District newsletter.
 - News releases / newspaper advertisements.
 - Public service announcements.
 - Letters to organizations.
 - Recommendations from board members, staff, and cooperating agencies.

- **Create an information form.** An application or information form can be used to collect information on potential candidates. The form should ask about things the conservation district board members want to know. Each interested candidate completes the form. A *Potential District Board Member Information Form* could include such things as:
 - Name, address, home phone number, work phone number.
 - Explain your interest in soil and water conservation and becoming a district board member.
 - Are you willing to commit the amount of time needed for the board's work including out-of-county meetings and workshops?
 - Briefly describe what contributions and skills you would bring to the conservation district.
 - Nature of your work.
 - Professional and educational background.
 - List other organizations, clubs, and affiliations (include dates, offices held, and honors received).
 - Please provide a brief biography of yourself.

- **Evaluate potential candidates.** Information gathered is compared to qualifications the district board has identified to fill needs on the board. In addition, interviewing prospects is an excellent way to find out if this is a good fit or not and answer any questions the prospective board member may have. Evaluations may be performed by a nominating committee to make recommendations to the board members to fill a vacancy on the board or in preparing the slate of nominees for an election. In lieu of the nominating committee evaluating potential board members to fill a vacancy on the board, this step can be performed by or with the assistance of the district board members.

Additional information on board member recruitment can be found on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) website at www.nacdnet.org, entitled *Conservation District Board Member Recruitment and Community Outreach Guide*. Please refer to Chapter 4, *Conservation District Annual Meetings* for more information on elections.

Nominating Committee

All conservation districts should have a nominating committee to search for energetic persons who are committed to conservation and willing to devote time and effort as a board member. The nominating committee is normally appointed annually by the conservation district board chairperson with input from the other board members. The nominating committee should consist of no fewer than three members and may be made up of representatives from different local organizations or leaders in the community. District supervisors should not serve on the nominating committee or attend the committee meetings because their presence could hinder full and open discussions.

Ideally this committee works throughout the year looking for potential candidates who are interested in the conservation and protection of natural resources within the county. To be effective, recruiting must be a continuous process, as a part of the on-going efforts to strengthen conservation district boards. This will ensure that the nominating committee will be able to provide a list of qualified potential candidates for any vacancy occurring on the board throughout the year, as well as for nominations for supervisors whose terms expire.

When making contact with a potential candidate, a nominating committee member provides the recruiting documents developed by the conservation district that provides the information about the conservation district and the position. Nominating committees use the selection criteria developed by the conservation district board to start recruiting a pool of candidates best suited for the position. They should start identifying recruiting prospects by looking at individuals, who are already active in district activities such as advisors / associate supervisors, district standing committee members, and other district volunteers. In addition, they search for those who are connected in the community or who were identified through other outreach efforts. They should avoid selecting “well known” individuals just for the sake of their name.

Note: The Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and Division of Conservation (DOC) recommends using the *Guidelines for Educating Nominating Committees* per KACD Resolution passed in 2005. This is included in this chapter as Appendix 2-B: Guidelines for Education Nominating Committees.

Elections, Resignations, and Appointments

The election of supervisors occurs at the conservation district annual meeting, which must be held every year in January or February. Supervisors are elected to serve three-year terms of office. Expiration of district supervisors’ terms are staggered so one or two supervisor(s) are elected each year. The incumbent supervisor must be declared as a candidate and be nominated in order to run for re-election to the district board. More information on elections may be found in Chapter 4, *Conservation District Annual Meetings*.

A supervisor must resign if he/she no longer meets the eligibility requirements outlined in K.S.A. 2-1907. A common reason would be when a supervisor moves out of the district (county). Any supervisor who finds it is impossible to adequately fulfill the duties of this position because of poor health, lack of time, or any other reason that would not allow being a positive contributor to the board, should initiate conversation with the other supervisors about a voluntary resignation to allow another to serve who is able to be fully involved. The board should formally accept resignations in a board meeting.

The Division of Conservation must be notified, in writing, of any name changes due to marriage, divorce, or any other reason. The Division of Conservation (DOC) must be notified when a board position becomes vacant. If a supervisor resigns, the DOC requires a copy of the resignation letter. In the case of a supervisor’s death, the conservation district board should notify the DOC in writing.

In the event of a death, disqualification, or resignation of any supervisor, the remaining supervisors shall appoint a qualified elector of the district to fill the office for the remainder of the unexpired term. The board action must be recorded in the official minutes of the conservation district.

Note: Supervisor information is entered and updated in CSIMS by district staff.

Oath of Office

All officials elected or appointed under any law of the State of Kansas shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take an oath or affirmation, as per K.S.A. 54-106. An official oath may be found towards the end of this chapter as Appendix 2-F: Conservation District Supervisor Oath of Office, and one is also available in the Cost-Share and Information Management System (CSIMS), which can be accessed and printed by a district employee.

The oath of office is administered to the newly elected or appointed supervisor by anyone authorized to administer oaths. By law, notaries, judges of courts in their respective jurisdictions, mayors of cities and towns in their respective cities and towns, clerks of courts of record, county clerks, and register of deeds are authorized to administer oaths pertaining to all matters wherein an oath is required (K.S.A. 54-101). All oaths shall be administered by laying the right hand upon the Holy Bible, or by the uplifted right hand (K.S.A. 54-102).

Soon following election or appointment, one blank copy of the oath is provided by the conservation district to the newly elected or appointed supervisor, and must be completed before participating in official actions of the board. The original is retained in the district files and a copy is given to the new supervisor. The original is scanned and uploaded into the Division of Conservation (DOC) CSIMS program. A re-elected supervisor who is serving consecutive terms does not have to take the oath again.

Note: A (qualified) district supervisor shall hold office until a successor has been elected or appointed and has become qualified (oath of office completed).

Orientation and Board Development

New supervisors need to feel like they are an integral part of the board as soon as possible. No matter how well qualified your new board members are, it will take some time to get them up-to-speed and feeling comfortable as a contributing member of the board. Orientation and board development are absolute necessities for building strong boards, which leads to successful conservation districts. Through orientation, board members become familiar with their responsibilities and the conservation district they are about to serve. Supervisors need to have the skills, knowledge, and experience to effectively promote, administer, and implement conservation district programs. Board development is ongoing. Continuous training, to meet both the routine demands of their roles and the emerging demands affecting their conservation district is a key component to successful conservation districts.

Orientation is not a one-shot program, but rather a process continuing over the first few months. Board development begins with “the ask.” Board member responsibilities and expectations should be discussed with the person before nomination or appointment. Once a supervisor has been selected, a more thorough orientation should take place as soon as possible covering the conservation district program and activities, policies, procedures, norms, structure, and other information. This helps the new supervisor feel more comfortable with the group and understand its processes. Proper orientation leads to better understanding, more commitment, and less frustration. Initial orientation is usually done by the board chairperson with staff assistance, but do not overwhelm the new supervisor with too much information at once. Consider assigning a new supervisor a “mentor” who will provide support during the initial three months, answer questions, and ease their transition into the board.

A new supervisor should be provided with a copy of the *Kansas Conservation District Supervisors Handbook*, which can be downloaded from the Kansas Department of Agriculture website at <https://agriculture.ks.gov/divisions-programs/division-of-conservation/conservation-districts/supervisors>. See Appendix 2-G: Orienting New Supervisors Checklist that can be used as an aid in the orientation process.

Ongoing board development activities should be part of the plan for every board and for every supervisor. Conservation district supervisors should always be working to increase skills in order to provide the best service and leadership to the conservation district. It is important to stay informed on conservation issues and programs to assist in achieving the conservation district's mission. The board needs to be involved in programs which are designed to enhance their performance. Board members should take advantage of the many opportunities available to them for learning more about their duties and responsibilities. By attending area meetings and workshops, and state and national conferences, conservation district supervisors can gain ideas and knowledge from the sessions, as well as from visiting with other attendees.

The DOC has developed Training Modules that can be used to inform supervisors and staff about the basic operations of conservation districts. The intent of these modules is to have educational materials available on an on-going basis to conduct in-house training at district board meetings. The modules may also be used as self-taught packages and may be especially useful for new supervisors and employees. The Training Modules are available by contacting your local Conservation District Manager.

Information on the Supervisor Training and Recognition Program is available from district managers, along with the Training Module information. The Supervisor Training and Recognition Program was officially adopted by the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts and the State Conservation Commission at their August 2, 2010, Joint Meeting. The program is based on national guidance provided by the National Association of Conservation Districts and the National Association of State Conservation Agencies.

Board Member Manual

One of the best tools board members can have is a good board member manual. A conservation district should consider developing a board member manual and making it available to all the supervisors. By having essential background information in a manual, a new board member will soon be able to make meaningful contributions. The board member manual will continue to be a source of information to refer to on an as-needed basis and a place to keep board meeting minutes and other current conservation district documents. The supervisors should be encouraged to bring their manual to each board meeting or after initial orientation; it could be kept at the office and provided to them at each meeting.

A three-ring loose-leaf binder is ideal so outdated information can be easily removed and new information added. A binder with a two-inch spine and tabbed dividers will provide lots of room for key documents. Staff should make sure all documents are dated and should three-hole punch the documents before distributing to board members. For suggestions on contents of a board member manual, please refer to Appendix 2-G: Orienting New Supervisors Checklist.

The following are suggested sections for how a board member manual might be organized:

1. Introduction (information about your conservation district including names of staff and a list of board members with contact information, and oath of office).

2. Board Meeting Minutes (including the financial and staff reports).
3. Conservation Partners (NRCS, DOC, KACD, etc. - organization info and staff).
4. Financial Information (budget and audit).
5. Operational and Legal Documents (long range plan, annual work plan, annual report, and Conservation Districts Law).
6. Policies and Procedures (governing policies, personnel policies and other operational policies).
7. Contracts (if not practical to include a copy of the contract itself, provide an overview of each contract the district has with another agency or organization).
8. Board Education (materials that can be used as resources; some from the DOC or outside sources).
9. Newsletters, Brochures (materials developed by the conservation district and newspaper articles)
10. Miscellaneous.
11. Notes (blank, lined pages for board member's own notes).

Ethics and Accountability

The conservation district board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the conservation district adheres to legal standards and ethical norms. As public officials, conservation district supervisors must faithfully perform their duties in the best interest of the conservation district and for the benefit of the people. All conservation district supervisors, elected or appointed, are required to take and subscribe to an oath, in which they swear to support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the State of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of a conservation district supervisor. They are expected to conduct their job in a professional manner and to ensure fair and equitable program delivery to all. Supervisors should not use their conservation district position or confidential information received for personal gain. In brief, any activity that violates the public trust can be considered unethical behavior.

Our system of government places public officials on a higher level of review. Even a perception of a conflict of interest or nepotism can seriously detract from the very positive work being done by conservation districts. As "trustee" of public funds, district boards should avoid actions that may be perceived negatively by the public. Even though a conservation district has authority to spend district funds (all of which are public funds) in a certain way, the conservation district board has an obligation to fulfill the public trust to use public funds as effectively as possible. For example, conservation district supervisors may be reimbursed for meals while performing business related duties, however lavish, extravagant or excessive cost of meals may not pass public scrutiny in a positive light. Another example of avoiding the appearance of possible misconduct would be not to hire family members as district employees. There are no nepotism laws preventing this; however, other board members may be influenced either directly or indirectly in their decisions regarding personnel actions, even when the related supervisor does not participate in performance evaluations or salary negotiations.

The Kansas Conflict of Interest Law, K.S.A. 75-4301 et seq., sets out standards with which that local government officials must comply. The Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission administers, interprets, and enforces laws relating to conflict of interests. The Kansas law takes the public policy position that a person should not be forbidden from holding office, or required to refrain from discharging the duties of an office already held, merely because of some possibility for a future conflict of interests.

The provisions outlined in the conflict-of-interest law do not prevent a supervisor from dual office holding (e.g. a district supervisor can concurrently serve as a county commissioner). Furthermore, there is not a prohibition from serving as a local official while the agency one serves does business with a local official's private business interests (e.g. a district supervisor's business can be hired by the conservation district). There is, however, a prohibition from participating as a local official in the making of contracts between the local agency and their own private business interests. The law does state that a public officer does not make or participate in the making of a contract if he or she abstains from any action in regards to the contract. There are two exceptions where a public official is not required to abstain from voting on a contract. The first is when the contract is a result of a competitive bid, and the second is when the price of the property or service is fixed by law.

Note: The primary point of contact for conflict-of-interest issues for conservation districts is the Division of Conservation. District employees and supervisors may however, directly contact the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, 901 S. Kansas Ave., Topeka, Kansas 66612, 785.296.4219.

Local laws should also be checked to see if they identify actions or conduct which supplement the requirements of the state law. One common objective of these local laws is to ensure that public officials avoid even the appearance of possible impropriety.

Caution should be taken when considering hiring a supervisor to work or provide a service for the conservation district. The Conservation Districts Law, K.S.A. 2-1907, states: "A supervisor shall receive no compensation for services, but may be entitled to expenses, including traveling expenses, necessarily incurred in the discharge of duties." This prohibits an individual from receiving compensation for work or duties performed as a member of the conservation district board. The individual, however, may receive compensation for services performed as an independent contractor and the Kansas conflict-of-interest law requirements are followed. Keep in mind, that just like hiring any independent contractor, the conservation district should have assurance that the independent contractor to be hired is qualified to do the job at the best price. Through examination of various Kansas Attorney General Opinions rendered for similar situations, it has been determined that a supervisor of a conservation district may not be employed by the conservation district of which he/she is a member of the board. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations provide the definitions of employee versus independent contractor.

Note: See Publications 15 and 15-A on the IRS website at www.irs.gov for information on how to determine whether an individual providing services is an employee or an independent contractor.

Strengthening ethics and accountability should be an ongoing commitment by boards. Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards by public officials is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government. One way to be sure board members are clear on expectations and proper conduct is to develop a set of principles covering governance practices and ethical conduct. For suggestions please refer to Appendix 2-H: Example Code of Ethics.

Removal for Cause

Any supervisor may be removed by the Division of Conservation upon notice and hearing in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas Administrative Procedures Act, for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office, but for no other reason (K.S.A. 2-1907). The following definitions are provided as a general guideline and are not to be construed as legal advice. “Neglect of duty” is refusal or unwillingness to perform the mandatory duties of the office. “Malfeasance” includes misconduct in the performance of official duties and any criminal wrongdoing.

Upon a majority vote of the board in open session, the supervisors may petition the DOC to remove a supervisor from office. The letter petitioning for removal must include thorough documentation of the reason for removal and of attempts to work with the supervisor. Upon receipt of written petition for removal of a supervisor from office, the DOC will advise the district of the procedure to be followed for removal.

Personal Liability

The Kansas Tort Claims Act establishes the liability of all governmental entities and governmental employees. According to Attorney General Opinion No. 87-31, district supervisors are considered state employees for purposes of the Kansas Tort Claims Act and are covered accordingly. Please refer to Chapter 6, *District Operations* for detailed information on the Kansas Tort Claims Act.

Appendix 2-A: Example Supervisor Position Description

Happy County Conservation District Supervisor Position Description

Position Overview:

A conservation district is a political subdivision of state government with statutory powers and responsibilities to implement a local program of natural resource conservation and encourage wise land management. The governing body of the conservation district consists of five supervisors. This position, together with other members of the board of supervisors, is legally, fiscally, and morally responsible for all activities of the Happy County Conservation District. Supervisors have no individual authority, unless it is delegated to them by the board. However every supervisor has the responsibility to provide effective leadership in operation and administration of the conservation district. Supervisors receive no compensation, but may be reimbursed for actual expenses of mileage, registration, meals and other associated expenses when performing their duties.

Mission Statement:

To provide local leadership and assistance in promoting individual responsibility for proper land management practices in Happy County to conserve soil, water, and related natural resources through information, education, and incentive-based programs in partnership with other agencies and organizations.

Primary Duties:

- Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the board.
- Exercise due diligence and good judgment in decision making.
- Foster a positive working relationship with other board members, staff, and partners.
- Participate in establishing goals, objectives, and priorities for meeting the conservation needs of the county and oversee the implementation.
- Recommend, review, and oversee policies and procedures.
- Provide financial direction and accountability.
- Cooperate with fellow board members to secure adequate operating funds for the district.
- Participate in personnel management.
- Monitor and participate in evaluating the effectiveness of the conservation district through a regular review of operations, programs and services.
- Ensure compliance with applicable laws and contractual obligations.
- Attend activities and events of the conservation district.
- Promote the conservation district services and programs.
- Represent the people in the district in regard to conservation issues, which requires staying informed of their conservation needs and taking action to meet those needs.

Term of Service:

Supervisors are elected by qualified electors of the district at an annual meeting held in January or February for a term of three years. Expiration of district supervisors' terms are staggered so one or two supervisor(s) are elected each year. When a vacancy occurs in the membership before the term has expired, the remaining supervisors appoint a qualified elector of the district to fill the office for the remainder of the unexpired term. There is no limit on number of terms served.

Appendix 2-A: Example Supervisor Position Description (continued)

Qualifications:

- U.S. citizen, at least 18 years of age, and resides in Happy County.
- Interest in soil, water, and other natural resources conservation.
- In addition to leadership skills, have knowledge and skills in one or more of the following:
 - Agriculture.
 - Environmental sciences.
 - Natural resource issues.
 - Boardsmanship.
 - Financial management.
 - Personnel management.
 - Strategic planning.
 - Education.
 - Public speaking.
 - Legislative process.
 - Outreach.

Meeting and Time Commitment:

- Board meetings are on the second Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m., USDA Service Center, Gladville, KS. Meetings typically last two hours. Meeting preparation and follow-up approximately one hour.
- Committees of the board meet three to four times per year, for approximately three hours.
- Annual meeting of the conservation district normally is on the third Tuesday in January, 6 p.m., and typically last three hours.
- Attend at least two conservation district sponsored events per year, time varies.
- Attend various meetings related to local conservation issues, as able, time varies.

Expectations of Supervisors:

- Committed to serving in the best interest of the conservation district and its constituents.
- Perform the duties and the responsibilities of the board of supervisors diligently.
- Support the mission, goals, and objectives of the conservation district.
- Attend and participate in monthly board meetings on a regular basis. To be fully effective supervisors should not miss more than three board meetings per year.
- Attend at least two conservation district sponsored events.
- Participate on a standing committee of the board, and serve on special committees as necessary.
- Attend at least two meetings / workshops per year sponsored by the State Conservation Commission or the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts.
- When attending meetings on behalf of the conservation district, make an effort to represent the view of the board as a whole, not just your personal thoughts.
- Participate in workshops and seminars related to soil and water conservation.
- Understand the conservation district policies and procedures.
- Become knowledgeable of the Conservation Districts Law and other laws applicable to the district.
- Become familiar with conservation district finances, budget, and financial / resource needs.
- Understand and keep informed on natural resources / conservation issues.
- Be fair, honest, reasonable, even-tempered, and impartial.
- Be active, positive, innovative, open minded, and action-oriented.

Appendix 2-B: Guidelines for an Effective Board Member

Conservation district supervisors are the key to the success of the district in promoting and coordinating a program to conserve and develop natural resources. The following guidelines will assist a conservation district supervisor in being an effective, proactive board member:

1. Attend and participate in all board meetings and functions.
2. Be prepared for meetings.
3. Be attentive to board business.
4. Make decisions in response to all proposals presented to the board.
5. Effectively convey the district's mission, values, programs, and services to others.
6. Foster teamwork.
7. Understand and carry out responsibilities.
8. Be aware of the different natural resource needs within the district and actively seek input for solutions.
9. Assume duties and follow through on assigned tasks.
10. Participate in training opportunities.
11. Attend area, state, and national meetings and workshops.
12. Model good conservation practices.
13. Understand the roles and responsibilities of district employees.
14. Be knowledgeable of and follow the laws applicable to conservation districts.
15. Ensure ethical integrity and maintain accountability.
16. Review and understand the conservation district mission, policies, programs, and goals.
17. Be familiar with the functions of other conservation agencies involved with the conservation district.
18. Stay informed about issues affecting the conservation district.
19. Keep informed on legislation and policies of local, state, and federal government pertaining to conservation issues.
20. Promote the district's programs and activities.
21. Communicate with and support your district staff.
22. Seek feedback from constituents.
23. Regularly self-evaluate personal work performed in board member capacity.
24. Respect and encourage others.
25. Be willing to accept or listen to new ideas or suggestions.
26. Look for new and better ways.
27. Ask for help when needed.
28. Be committed, positive, and enthusiastic.

Appendix 2-C: Effective Boards Make a Difference (NACD)

Permission granted by the National Association for Conservation Districts (NACD) to use the following excerpt from an article that appeared in the *NEWS & VIEWS* November / December 2007 issue.

Effective Boards Make a Difference

Do you ever wonder what makes some boards click and carry out effective programs, while others seem stagnant and unable to have an impact in their community? When you look closely at effective boards, you may find they share some common attributes.

An Effective Board:

- *Is made up of leaders;*
- *Guides program through a strategic plan and goal-setting;*
- *Understands the board's mission and how the program achieves the mission;*
- *Has a make-up that reflects the diversity of the community it serves; and*
- *Has productive working relations between the board, manager and staff.*

While there are many more attributes of effective boards, the following article examines the five characteristics listed above and gives insight into how to strengthen your board.

Board Members Are Leaders

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things. – Peter F. Drucker

Conservation district board members are notorious for their passion about conservation and their community. Their commitment motivates them to serve as publicly elected officials, giving countless hours of time away from family and business to tend to the needs of the district and community. Effective leaders express a willingness to cooperate with fellow board members and staff and collaborate on projects and programs by sharing their talents and expertise. Effective leaders not only show up for board meetings, they participate regularly by expressing their views on conservation issues. They also respect and value the opinions and ideas expressed by fellow board members.

Being Effective - It's Not Easy

Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there. – Will Rogers

Being an effective leader and board member takes time, energy and focus. But focusing that energy into developing and implementing a strategic plan can be rewarding. Sometimes simply going through the process of planning can spark a district to accomplish many tasks, but having someone assigned as task-master can help keep the implementation on the front burner for the board and implementation then becomes a part of the district's daily operations.

Your Strategic Plan- A Roadmap to Success

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal." – Henry Ford

Does your conservation district have a clear vision of the kinds of services and programs you want to provide to your customers during the next five years? Have you set realistic, quantifiable goals to help you achieve that vision? Having a realistic strategic plan is similar to having a roadmap when driving to an unfamiliar destination. Without a roadmap, it is easy to get lost and never arrive at your intended destination. A 3-5 year strategic plan can clearly define the purpose of the district and establish realistic goals and objectives consistent with the mission. It will also define a time frame that the district has the capacity to meet. A conservation district's financial and human resources rarely exceed a community's conservation needs. Having a strategic plan focuses a district's limited resources on key priorities, ensuring the resources are used in the most effective way.

Appendix 2-C: Effective Boards Make a Difference (NACD) (continued)

Developing and implementing a strategic plan can serve as a vehicle to communicate a district's goals and objectives to its customers and cooperators. It can also provide a base from which a board can measure performance and report accomplishments to its community leaders and funding sources. Effective boards draw up their roadmap and use it to successfully arrive at their planned goals.

Districts on a Mission

Outstanding people have one thing in common: an absolute sense of mission. Zig Ziglar

Successful conservation districts know it is acceptable to say no when requested by others to deliver assistance that does not fit within the district's mission. Having a clear understanding of the mission and the programs and services that support that mission helps districts stay focused, accomplish goals and provide staff with a positive work environment. Frequently, district employees become frustrated and, at times, overworked and burned out when they feel they must meet every request that comes through the door. Staying focused on the mission, goals and priorities can alleviate some of that frustration.

Reflecting the Community You Serve

There is nothing noble about being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self. – Hindu Proverb

When we hear the word “diversity,” most of us think of multiculturalism or civil rights issues. However, diversity is actually a much larger concept. Diversity is the vast collection of physical and cultural components that make us different from each other. This includes ethnicity, ideology, religious beliefs, organizational ties, disability, personality, culture, skills, personal experiences and countless other things. Allowing for these differences can help to ensure that there is a broad representation of skills, ideologies and experiences.

Recruiting people of different skills, backgrounds and ethnicity is a positive method of enhancing creativity on your board and promoting ideas that will appeal to a wider range of people. Before you begin your recruitment efforts, first assess your board's demographics to determine if it represents your community's diversity. The U.S. Census Bureau website at www.census.gov/ has relative information about your county and local community that can be helpful. There are also additional resources available on NACD's website at www.nacdnet.org/resources/guides/.

Governance vs. Management: Getting the Most from your District Officials

Don't tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results. – George S. Patton

One district manager was overheard lamenting “My board is not interested in setting policy; they only want to focus on what kind of truck to buy for the staff and the size of engine and wheels it should have!” Similar scenarios are played out daily by many organizations and there are several symptoms that lead to this situation. One issue may be the lack of confidence, legitimate or not, that the board has in the staff. If there is a lack of confidence, the board may feel the need to take charge of management and may lose sight of their role as leaders and policy-makers. Allowing the board to focus its attention on goal setting and policy development and the staff on operations and management allows the best use of board members' time and talents and drives the district program forward.

Examples of Governance Issues

- Setting workload priorities for staff
- Conducting workload analysis prior to hiring new staff
- Meeting with community leaders to develop new partnerships
- Presenting budget needs to county commissioners

Examples of Management Issues

- Purchasing office copier
- Preparing board members for speaking engagements and board meetings

Appendix 2-D: Guidelines for Educating Nominating Committees

Note: The following guidelines are recommended by the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and the Division of Conservation (DOC) per KACD Resolution passed in November 2005.

To implement the Conservation Districts Law, a conservation district needs a board that understands its roles and responsibilities. Recruiting qualified candidates for conservation district supervisor positions is the first step in securing a board that will carry out its fiduciary responsibility. It is not only important that potential supervisor candidates have an understanding of what is expected from them to be a conservation district supervisor; it is just as vital that nominating committees understand what is needed and expected in a candidate for the elected position of conservation district supervisor.

Orientation of a candidate is recommended so that candidate will have an understanding of what the job requires and what is expected from him or her.

Orientation of the nominating committee is recommended so they will understand what is expected from them as committee members and what the job of conservation district supervisor requires. This will aid them in recruiting nominees that have an understanding of what the job of conservation district supervisor is.

Nominating Committees

The conservation district board of supervisors appoints a committee to nominate qualified electors from the conservation district to serve on the board of supervisors. After selecting the nominating committee and appointing its chair, the district board should then present an orientation program to the nominating committee. This program should include:

1. What is the purpose of the nominating committee?
2. What is a qualified elector?
3. What is the purpose of a conservation district board?
4. What is expected from a conservation district supervisor to implement district law in the conservation district?

1. What is the purpose of the nominating committee?

A nominating committee is a group of qualified electors of the conservation district, appointed by the conservation district board of supervisors who nominate candidates who are qualified electors of the conservation district to stand for election as supervisor at the conservation district's annual meeting. The conservation district board appoints a chairperson of the nominating committee to see that the committee fulfills its duties. The committee must nominate candidates who are willing to serve as conservation district supervisors. They must make an effort to recruit candidates who understand the roles and responsibilities that will be expected of them as elected public officials charged with implementing district law within their district.

Appendix 2-D: Guidelines for Educating Nominating Committees (continued)

2. What is a qualified elector?

Kansas Conservation Districts Law, K.S.A. 2-1907 states: *“The governing body of the district shall consist of five supervisors who are qualified electors residing in the district.”* A qualified elector of the conservation district is defined in Article 5, Section 1 of the Kansas Constitution: *“Every citizen of the United States who has attained the age of eighteen years and resides in the voting area in which he or she seeks to vote shall be deemed a qualified elector.”* This means that anyone can serve as a conservation district supervisor as long as they meet the legal age and residency requirements. Nominating committees need to understand that a qualified elector is anyone, regardless of whether they are involved in agriculture or not. To ignore all qualified electors is to limit the candidate pool.

3. What is the purpose of a conservation district board?

The purpose of a conservation district board, made up of 5 supervisors elected by the qualified electors of the conservation district is to implement the Kansas Conservation Districts Law and related programs in the board’s respective district.

4. What is expected from a conservation district supervisor to implement district law in the conservation district?

The fiduciary responsibility of a conservation district supervisor is to do the things necessary to implement the District Law. To perform the fiduciary duty of a conservation district supervisor, that supervisor must make an effort to: **1.** be informed of the issues that affect the conservation district, **2-** seek resources and advocate for policy to implement district law in the conservation district, and **3.** educate others in the conservation district, including funding sources, of the importance of natural resource conservation.

A conservation district supervisor cannot serve the patrons of the conservation district by only attending the monthly board meetings. A supervisor must participate outside of the board meetings to advocate for the district and educate oneself on the issues that affect his or her conservation district. It is a breach of that supervisor’s fiduciary responsibility not to make any effort to serve his or her respective district.

Appendix 2-F: Conservation District Supervisor Oath of Office

_____ **COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR
OATH OF OFFICE**

Pursuant to K.S.A. 54-106 et seq., "All officers elected or appointed under any law of the state of Kansas shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe an oath or affirmation, as follows:

‘I, _____, do solemnly swear [or affirm, as the case may be] that I will support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of a _____ County Conservation District supervisor. So help me God.’”

Supervisor Signature

Subscribed and sworn before me this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

Notary or Authorized Officer

My term expires _____.

Authority: K.S.A. 54-101 et seq.
K.S.A. 75-4308 et seq.

Distribution: Original: District File
Copy: New Supervisor
Upload into CSIMS: Division of Conservation

K.S.A. 54-101. Officers authorized to administer oaths. Notaries public, judges of courts in their respective jurisdictions, mayors of cities and towns in their respective cities and towns, clerks of courts of record, county clerks, and registers of deeds, are hereby authorized to administer oaths pertaining to all matters wherein an oath is required.

Appendix 2-G: Orienting New Supervisors Checklist

Providing new board members with the information they need to perform effectively is a critical step in developing a strong Board of Supervisors. Use this checklist for recommended background material and suggestions to assist with the orientation process.

*Suggested content for creating a “Board Member Manual”

- Kansas Conservation District Supervisors Handbook* (available on the DOC website)
- Board Member’s Manual (if created)
- *Copy of their Oath of Office
- *Board member and staff directory
- *List of State Conservation Commission Commissioners and staff with contact information
- *List of Kansas Association of Conservation District Directors and staff with contact information
- *Copy of the Conservation Districts Law, K.S.A. 2-1901, et seq.
- *Board member position description or list of duties and responsibilities
- *Staff position description
- *History of board / conservation district
- *Policies and procedures
- *List of acronyms
- *A copy of the Local Operational Agreement with NRCS
- *Current committee assignments
- *Mission and vision statements
- *Conservation district long range plan
- *Conservation district annual work plan
- *Conservation district annual report
- *Conservation district budget
- *Calendar of district events / activities / meetings
- *Board meeting minutes / treasurer’s reports of last 3 months
- *Most recent agenda
- *Important Dates Relating to DOC Programs (DOC document)
- *Use of Conservation District Funds Guidelines (DOC document)
- *Financial Management Checklist for Conservation District Supervisors (DOC document)

Appendix 2-G: Orienting New Supervisors Checklist (continued)

- *A Guide to Conduction Executive Sessions (DOC document)
- *Roberts Rules of Order Motions Chart (DOC document)
- *Guidelines for an Effective Board Member (DOC document)
- Appoint a mentor
- Have an orientation session and serve refreshments
- Offer ride to first meeting
- Make members feel welcome
- Introduction of board members, district and NRCS staff
- Tour of office and relevant facilities
- Ask about their interests
- Explain the relationship with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other partners
- Review relevant legal documents
- Review Kansas Open Meeting Act (KOMA)
- Point out board meeting norms, expectations for behavior
- Brief overview of programs and services
- Provide overview of current projects and issues
- Highlight past accomplishments
- Explain where references and documents are located
- Ask for their perception of the district
- Ask what issues concern them
- Explain how board develops the agenda
- Brief each agenda item
- Description of funding sources
- Explain financial reports format
- Listen to new members
- React positively to new member's comments
- Don't assign tasks too early
- Discuss time, dates, and place of future meetings and determine best meeting times
- Review questions of the new member
- Members should phone / visit new member between meetings
- Don't overwhelm

Appendix 2-H: Example Code of Ethics

Happy County Conservation District Board Member Code of Ethics

As a Member of the Board, I Will:

- Properly administer the affairs of the district.
- Faithfully comply with all laws and regulations applicable to the district.
- Conduct the duties of my office diligently with integrity and fairness.
- Secure needed funds for adequate district operations and encourage the cultivation of sources of revenue that are sustainable for the long-term.
- Ensure the district funds are being managed and utilized in a manner that is consistent with public accountability and maximum effectiveness.
- Keep safe all funds and other properties of the district.
- Represent all constituents of the district and not a particular geographic area or special interest group.
- Act in the best interest of the conservation district and the district constituents. Promote decisions which only benefit the public interest.
- Work in good faith with other board members and staff towards achievement of our mission and goals.
- Effectively and efficiently work with organizations and other governmental agencies in order to further the interest of the district.
- Attend at least 75% of board meetings, committee meeting, and special events.
- Participate actively in board meetings and actions.
- Listen carefully to my fellow board members and the constituents I serve.
- Evaluate all decisions so that the best service or product is obtained at a minimal cost without sacrificing quality and fiscal responsibility.
- Respect fellow board members and their opinions in and outside of the board meeting.
- Respect and support the majority decisions of the board.
- Keep well-informed of developments that are relevant to issues that may come before the board.
- Always work to learn more about the board member's job and how to do the job better.
- Vote to hire the best possible person to work for the district.
- Treat all employees equitably.
- Avoid any conflicts of interest between my board position and my professional or personal life, and remove myself from discussion and abstain from voting on matters in which I have conflict.
- Agree to resign my position if I find myself unable to carry out my duties.

As a Member of the Board, I Will Not:

- Use the conservation district or any part of the organization for my personal advantage or the personal advantage of my friends and relatives, including information obtained, unless the information is available to the public.
- Improperly influence or attempt to influence other officials to act in my own benefit.
- Give preferential treatment to any person.
- Accept anything of value from any source which is offered to influence my actions as a public official.
- Discuss the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting.