Code of Ethics: Ashland County Historical Society

Any person representing the Ashland County Historical Society as paid staff, Trustee, or volunteer, is expected to adhere to these sensible and ethical guidelines:

The Ashland County Historical Society (ACHS) may be defined as the half-acre complex on Center Street, between Walnut and Washington Streets, and the half-acre site of the historic Ashland County Children's Home, now known as the Freer Children's Home. Both sites serve as the primary museum and historical society buildings, along with the corresponding outbuildings. It should be noted that the Ashland County Historical Society is, administratively, a privately operated nonprofit whose operating funds are derived from individual donors, both public and private grant monies, and membership. ACHS is not a governmental entity, and thus is subject to adherence to legal and ethical statutes as defined by the Ohio Revised Code §1702.

The purpose of the Ashland County Historical Society is to make Ashland County history come alive through preservation, education, and community engagement. This is done through providing inclusive and engaging programs, and exhibits, and serving as a source of greater understanding of Ashland County's role in the history of the region, state, and nation.

The Ashland County Historical Society is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, which owns the collections that are housed and exhibited at the various properties comprising the society.

The Board of Trustees of the Ashland County Historical Society, the staff, and volunteers associated with the ACHS all serve and/or work for the public interest and as such, must understand and respect the various documents that provide for the ACHS's establishment, character, and governance such as the bylaws, mission statement, code of regulation, collections management policy, and other adopted policies currently in existence and those yet to be established. As such the ACHS's Articles of Incorporation, mission statement, bylaws, and this Code of Ethics are established as fundamental documents upon which all other and various policies rest.

I. <u>Ethics for Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers</u>
   a. Must endeavor to conduct activities in such a way that no conflict of interest will arise between personal interest and the policies, operations, and interests of the ACHS.
   b. Must maintain confidential information learned during involvement with the organization. This does not preclude public disclosure of information that is properly in the public domain or information that should be released in fulfilling the ACHS's accountability to the public.
   c. Must act only as a part of the collective, not as an individual. Must neither act in a personal capacity to influence or otherwise use the actions of the organization on a personal behalf, nor attempt through questionable means to influence the decisions and actions of other members of the organization in any ACHS related matters.
   d. Must neither compete with the ACHS, nor work against the society, in acquiring items for the collection, for the society's use, or for a personal collection. Must disclose knowledge of the availability of collections or resources, which have been deemed desirable by the ACHS.
   e. Trustees, staff, volunteers, or individuals who may act for them, may not acquire items from the collections of the ACHS in any manner.
   f. May not act as an appraiser.
   g. Must not use ACHS affiliation to promote any personal collecting or business activities.

h. Must not use their home or business, or for any other personal purpose, any items that are a part of the ACHS's collection or any item under the guardianship of the museum; or, with certain exceptions, use any other property, supplies, or resources of the ACHS except for official business as approved by the ACHS Executive Director.
i. Must not repair, restore, alter, or remove items that are apart of the ACHS collection or any item under the guardianship of the museum, without the express approval of the Executive Director and/or Curator of the historical society.
j. Must never solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, loan, entertainment, or any other dispensation or items of value from any person, business or group which has or is seeking to obtain contractual or other business, financial, or professional favors with the ACHS; or for the purpose of promoting projects of personal interest or that have not been sanctioned by the ACHS Executive Director or Board of Trustees.
k. Trustees shall avoid giving directions to, acting on behalf of, or soliciting administrative information from any museum staff member, unless theExecutive Director is apprised and consents to such actions.
l. Trustees shall not seek ACHS staff assistance on personal needs other than would be rendered to the general public in similar circumstances or with similar needs.
m. The board shall not adopt any policy or activity that may jeopardize the basic nonprofit status of the society or reflect unfavorably upon it as an institution devoted to public service.
n. Must be circumspect in referring others to outside suppliers of services such as appraisers and restorers. Whenever possible, more than a single qualified source should be provided.
o. When acting on behalf of the ACHS, strive to the best of their ability with the information and resources provided them to interpret in a non-discriminatory manner the displays, exhibits, or mission of the Ashland County Historical Society, and to make the public aware of the history, primarily of the people, places, and things of Ashland County, Ohio.
p. Hold safe the assets of the organization. Assets include financial holdings, real property, historic collections, copyrights, and reputation. Staff and Board Members accept the responsibility to avoid Conflicts of Interest and are required to obey all state and federal laws governing service with the nonprofit organization.
q. Secure support for the organization. Nonprofit organizations need support through financial contributions and volunteer service. Trustees, volunteers, and staff should seek and provide contributions to support the organization based on personal resources of time, money, and relationships within the community.
r. Ensure proper delegation of authority within the organization. This organization operates as a partnership between the public community, Board of Trustees, society staff and volunteers. The position of the society board officers, board members, and chairs of standing committees are established in the ACHS Code of Regulations and executed via the organizational Bylaws.
s. Set policies that advance the society's stated purpose. The ACHS Board of Trustees, with recommendations from staff, committees, outside experts, provisions of local, state and federal law, and suggestions of constituent groups, assumes responsibility for setting, implementing, and monitoring/auditing the society's policies. All policies should be approved by majority vote and at official board meetings.

t. Attendance and timesheets
    i. Paid Staff - refer to the Ashland County Historical Society Employee Handbook for attendance and timesheet regulations.
    ii. Volunteers and Board Members – all volunteers should log their hours on the Volunteer Log at the front office of the Noonan House. This is to be done at the beginning and end of each shift and/or meeting. This data is used for grants and reporting purposes.

u. Museum/Society Representation. All employees, trustees, and volunteers should:
    i. Maintain a professional appearance and report to the Ashland County Historical Society or any associated function well groomed, clean, and in appropriate attire that represents the ACHS in a positive way to the public.
    ii. Show courtesy and respect to one another. Avoid using abusive, threatening, or offensive language.
    iii. Conduct themselves in a manner that elicits pride in the historical society.
    iv. Maintain ethical standards that are within the laws of the State of Ohio, United States, Ashland County, and the Ashland County Historical Society.
    v. Any discrepancies, concerns, or altercations should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director or the ACHS Board President.
    vi. The following activities are prohibited:
        1. Falsification of any historical society record.
        2. Refusal to carry out instructions (insubordination).
        3. Possession or sale of illegal drugs, firearms, or alcohol.
        4. Crime involving weapons, firearms, or explosives.
        5. Arson, open flame.
        6. Reporting to the society under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
        7. Harassing or threatening behavior.
        8. Destruction, alteration, or theft of the society property.
        9. Endangering the safety of another person.