

PENSACOLA-ESCAMBIA COMMUNITY CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the citizens of Escambia County, in order to secure for ourselves and future generations a government unified in mission, vision and values, efficient in the use of public resources, pro-active in improving the lives of its citizenry and fair and just for all, regardless of race, gender, creed, national origin or social station, do ordain and establish this Community Constitution. With this new government we adopt the following core values:

I. Accountability and Ethics

To be successful and to maintain the public trust democratic government requires of public officials and employees independence, impartiality, responsiveness and that decisions and policies be made in the people's best interest and that public office not be used for personal gain.

II. Access and Voice

Citizens should expect reasonable notice and access to all functions of government, as well as to the political leaders of that government. Citizens, within reasonable limitations respecting all interested citizens, should be permitted to witness the presentation, adjustment or determination of all issues, requests or controversies considered by their government and to speak publicly and be heard on matters affecting their interest.

III. Separation of Powers

Representative government should be divided into three separate but equal branches, these being the executive, the legislative and the judicial. No member of one branch of government should exercise the power granted to a separate branch of government other than that firmly established by law. By this separation of powers the essentials necessary to the proper exercise of democratic government - statesmanship, negotiation, debate and compromise - are encouraged.

IV. Just and Equitable Taxation

Taxation should be just and fair and taxes paid by citizens should generally be commensurate to the levels of service provided by the government and to the benefits provided to the community as a whole. To provide cost-effective services to the community government should be lean and efficient.

V. Protection of Basic Human Rights

A community's welfare is inescapably tied to the welfare of each individual within that community and a society can be rightly judged by its care for those unable to care for themselves. Recognizing the sanctity and dignity of every human being, the community should be quick to offer a hand up, not a hand out.

VI. Proper Use of Public Resources

The resources controlled by the government and managed in the public trust, be they financial, physical or environmental, must be secure and accounted for.

VII. Visionary Leadership

To improve the general welfare, security and well being of all citizens, government leaders should aspire to visionary leadership that, among other things enhances the local economy, promotes environmental stewardship and provides adequate and efficient infrastructure.

VIII. Diversity and Tolerance

We should strive to include all in the political process, as a diverse citizenry with diverse viewpoints is essential to a free and democratic society. Free speech and open debate are essential and should be respected and promoted.

IX. Environmental Stewardship

The community's natural and historic assets should be protected and geographical tourism, archaeology and historic preservation promoted. A unified government should also protect and sustain a healthy natural environment while encouraging responsible economic development.

X. Quality Education

The primary element of economic development is educational opportunity. Every effort should be made to ensure an affordable quality education is available to all in our community, from child to senior citizen, and a unified government should be a primary supporter within our community of educational initiatives at every level.

The stated community values are the guiding principles used to create, adopt, and implement the functions of unified government, they are not intended to create any private rights for individuals other than any that may be specifically set forth in this community constitution.

We recognize that in order for our stated community values to be manifested in a representative and democratic government and in order to create a vibrant, sustainable community, the following functions must be efficiently and effectively provided with accountability to the people. The elected chief executive of this government shall, within the bounds of the Community Constitution, provide and administer the following vital needs and essential functions:

- a. Public Safety: Including, but not limited to Law Enforcement, Jail Administration, Fire Protection, Land Use and Construction Permitting and Enforcement, Emergency Management, Lifeguards, Community Control, Animal Control and all additional needs and functions related thereto;

- b. Accountability & Finance: Including, but not limited to Budgeting, Accounting, Internal Auditing, Treasury, Assessment of Taxes, Collection of Taxes, and Fees and other Revenues, Debt Financing of Capital Improvements, Investment Control and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- c. Centralized Administrative & Management Services: Including but not limited to Purchasing, Facility Management, Fleet Management, Human Resources, Information Technology, Risk Management, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- d. Recreation & Leisure: Including but not limited to the responsible management and enhancement of Libraries, Parks, Arenas and Auditoriums, Beaches, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- e. Economic Development: Including but not limited to Strategic Planning, Commercial and Industrial Parks, Tourism, Commerce, Enterprise Zones, Community Redevelopment, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- f. Commercial, Professional, Growth Management Services: Including Engineering, Planning & Zoning, Inspections, Code Enforcement, Public Works, GIS, Environmental Services, Coastal Management, Legal Services, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- g. Utilities Management: Including without limitation the Escambia County Utilities Authority, Energy Services of Pensacola, Sanitation, Landfills, Water & Sewer, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- h. Transportation: Including but not limited to Mass Transit, Airports, Seaports, Rail, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- i. Hospitals and Health Care: Including but not limited to Health Departments, Indigent Care and Burials, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- j. Housing: Including but not limited Workforce Housing, Public Housing, Housing Departments, and any additional needs and functions related thereto;
- k. Accessible Quality Education
- l. Protection of Natural Resources

- m. Citizen Boards: Including but not limited to Architectural Review Board, Zoning Board, Planning Board, Value Adjustment Board, Library Board, Investment Advisory Board, and any additional boards needed and functions related thereto;

We believe that creating a government system around these essential needs and functions focuses the limited available resources available to the Community as a whole toward meeting and/or exceeding reasonable expectations within each of the core areas and can create a more vibrant and sustainable citizenry and government structure.