

**Ethics Policy
Proposed Amendments -1/3/2012**

Sec 7—Ethics Panel

Sec 7(b)(3)

Change from 5 members to serve to 7 members (of the total 10 appointed) to serve.

Sec 7(d)

Change “within 5 days” to within 5 days or at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners whichever occurs later.

Sec 3—Standards

Add (m): No legal power or authority acting alone

Individual commissioners each acknowledges that he has no legal power or authority, and that official action can exist only by majority vote of the commission. An attempt to negotiate county business with any private party or any representative of another governmental unit without the advance approval of a majority of the county commission is prohibited. By way of example, it is permissible for any elected official to discuss county business in general terms with private parties and representatives of other governmental units (unless there is actual or threatened litigation against Jasper County by the parties involved). However, an elected official shall not make any written offers, draft any agreements, edit or revise any proposed agreements or plans, or suggest or propose (whether orally or in writing) any specific terms concerning money or services to be provided or received by the county unless that elected official has received express authorization in advance by a majority vote of the county commission.

Add (n): Frivolous and/or unsubstantiated claims

The filing of frivolous or unsubstantiated ethical violation(s) by a county commissioner, or at the direction of a county commissioner, or by any elected official or citizen shall be an ethical violation.

Sec 8 –Penalties

Add [c]: Frivolous and/or unsubstantiated filings:

Anyone who files an ethical violation that is not found to be substantiated shall have to pay all costs of the investigation within 30 days of the panel finding no ethical violation occurred. While the ethics board is voluntary, the county must pay for the cost, so it should be repaid by the complainant. The penalty shall be the greater of the actual cost to the county or \$250.