The following expectations are not commission process policies. They comprise a key part of the commission job description and are incorporated into policy by reference.

ORIENT TO THE UNIQUE ROLE OF A COMMISSION MEMBER

1) **Think upward and outward more than downward and inward.** You are not a commission member to listen to routine reports or tackle short-term, concrete matters. You are a commission member to make governance decisions. There will be great temptation to focus on what goes on with management and staff instead of what benefit the utility should make in the district. The latter is a daunting task for which no one feels really qualified, yet it is the commission member’s job to tackle these more complex issues. In many cases, these big decisions are made by default through commission inaction.

2) Do not tolerate the making of big decisions by the timid action of not making them. **Keep the conversation about benefits, beneficiaries and costs of the benefits alive at all times.** Converse with staff, other commission members and the public about these matters. Ask questions, consider options and otherwise fill most of the commission consciousness with issues of outcomes and ends.

3) You may tend to understand and personally identify with one or more constituencies more than others. You have been appointed by one or more constituencies. Yet you are a commission member for the broad public purpose served. There is no way that the commission can be big enough to have a representative for every legitimate interest, so in a moral sense you must stand for them all. Think of yourself as being from a constituency, but not representing only it.

4) **Use your special expertise to inform the commission’s wisdom, but never to substitute for it.** If you work in accounting, law, construction or another field, be careful not to take your colleagues off the hook with respect to commission decisions about such matters. To illustrate, an accountant commission member shouldn’t assume personal responsibility for assuring fiscal soundness. She or he may, however, help commission members understand what fiscal jeopardy looks like or what indices of fiscal health to watch carefully. With that knowledge, the commission can pool its human values about risk, brinkmanship, overextension and so forth, in the creation of fiscal policies.

5) Even if your expertise and comfort lie in some subpart of the district’s challenge, the subpart is not your job as a commission member. Do not expect agendas to be built
around these areas or interests. **Agendas will be carefully constructed to accomplish the commission’s job of governing.**

6) No matter how considerable your expertise or how well you can do a staff job, as a commission member you are not there to do it or even to advise on it. You may offer your individual expertise to the chief engineer and director, should he or she wish to use it. But in such a role, accept that you are being a volunteer consultant and leave your commission member hat at home.

**BE RESPONSIBLE FOR GROUP BEHAVIOR AND PRODUCTIVITY**

7) **Be prepared to participate responsibly.** Do your homework, come prepared to work (sometimes the work is to listen), engage with curiosity and a commitment to understanding diverse points of view, agree and disagree as your values dictate, and accept the group decision as legitimate even if not—in your opinion—correct.

8) **Register your honest opinion on issues the commission takes up.** Consider this an obligation of commission service that applies to you and each of your colleagues. To foster this essential exchange of ideas, speak for yourself and listen with resilience. Encourage your colleagues to express their opinions without allowing your own to be submerged by louder or more insistent voices. Avoid making grand pronouncements or characterizing the views of others in a critical spirit. Ask clarifying questions to check your assumptions. Don’t try to represent a whole group or ask others to represent, defend or explain an entire group.

9) While doing your own job as an individual commission member is important, it does not complete your responsibility. **You must shoulder the potentially unfamiliar burden of being responsible for the group.** That is, if you are part of a group that does not get its job done, meddles in administration or breaks its own rules, you are culpable. Regular evaluation and improvement of actual commission activities compared to the “Commission Process and Commission–Executive Relationship” policies is an essential component of fulfilling this accountability.

10) Although the commission as a whole is responsible for its own discipline, it will have charged the president with a special role in leading the group to confront its own process. **Support the president in commission discipline.** Don’t make the president’s job harder; rather ask what you can do to make it easier.

**SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE**

11) Support the commission’s final choice. While diversity and dialog are essential to the process of policy development and adjustment, once a policy is in place every commission member must support and not undermine it. **No matter which way you voted, you are obligated to support the commission’s choice.** This obligation doesn’t mean you must pretend to agree with that choice; you may certainly maintain the integrity of your dissent even after the vote. What you must support is the legitimacy of
the choice that you still don’t agree with. For example, you must support without reservation that the chief engineer and director follows the formal commission decision, not yours, and you must not speak publicly in a way that undermines the legitimacy of the commission’s decision.

12) **Squelch your individual points of view during monitoring.** Your own values count when the commission is creating policies. But when the chief engineer and director’s performance is monitored, you must refer only to the criteria the commission decided, not your opinion about those criteria. In other words, the chief engineer and director must be held accountable to the commission’s decisions and in fairness cannot be judged against your opinion. You should present any opinion you may have about amending the policies, of course, but not so as to contaminate the monitoring process.