

Code of Conduct for Town Boards and Committees

Adopted: April 5, 2012 by the Sandwich Board of Selectmen

Amended: April 27, 2017 by the Sandwich Board of Selectmen

I. PURPOSE

The intent of this policy is to establish clear guidelines to serve as the standard for achieving and maintaining a high level of public confidence, trust and professional respect with regard to how the Town and its officials conduct business. This policy is intended to define and create a centralized policy with regard to standards of conduct.

The Board of Selectmen recognizes the importance of professional standards at all levels of the government, including those who volunteer their time and services on behalf of the Town. The Board encourages other boards and committees of the Town who are not appointed by the Selectmen to adopt this standard by reference, thereby creating a unified Code of Conduct for Town officials.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy and all its sections shall apply to the Board of Selectmen and to the boards, presiding officers, public officials, commissions and committees and other representatives of the Town appointed by the Board of Selectmen and those appointed by the Town Manager.

- The term “the Board” and “the Selectmen” shall apply to the Board of Selectmen.
- The term “member” shall apply to those appointed by the Board of Selectmen or the Town Manager.
- The term “official” shall apply to a Board of Selectman member or a member appointed by the Board of Selectmen or Town Manager.
- The term “appointing authority” shall apply to the Board of Selectmen.
- All commission members, committee members, board members, representatives appointed by the Board and other officials mentioned in this guideline are subject to this policy.

III. CODE OF CONDUCT

These obligations and commitments shall be assumed by all members of the Board and other officials defined in the Applicability section:

A. Conduct Generally and in Relation to the Community

- Be well informed concerning the local and state duties of a board/committee member.
- Remember that you represent the Town of Sandwich at all times.
- Accept your position as a means of unselfish public service, not to benefit personally, professionally or financially from your board/committee position.
- Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people.
- Demonstrate respect for the public that you serve.
- Safeguard confidential information.
- Seek no favor and believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by holding these positions is dishonest and/or unlawful.
- Conduct yourself so as to maintain public confidence in our local government.
- Conduct official business in such a manner as to give the clear impression that you cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of your official duties.
- Unless specifically exempted (e.g. Executive Session), conduct the business of the public in a manner that promotes open and transparent government and maintain full compliance with the Open Meeting Law.
- Comply as fully as possible with all Town policies, including, without limitation, the following:
 - Anti-harassment and Discrimination Policy
 - Anti-fraud Policy
 - Information Technology Resources Use Policy.
- Comply as fully as possible with all applicable laws, including, without limitation, the following:
 - The Open Meeting Law
 - Procurement Laws
 - The Ethics/Conflict of Interest Statute (G.L. c.268A).

B. Conduct in Relation to Your Fellow Board/Commission/Committee Members

- Treat all members of the board/commission/committee with respect despite differences of opinion; keeping in mind that professional respect does not preclude honest differences of opinion, but requires respect within those differences.
- Recognize your responsibility to attend all meetings to assure a quorum and promptly notify the chairman should you for any reason be unable or unwilling to continue to serve. Formal notice to resign from a board/commission/committee requires written notification to the Town Clerk.
- Recognize that action at official legal meetings is binding and that you alone cannot bind the board/commission/committee outside of such meetings.

- Refrain from making statements or promises as to how you will vote on quasi-judicial matters that will come before the board until you have had an opportunity to hear the pros and cons of the issue during a public meeting.
- Uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
- Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

C. Conduct in Relation to the Town Manager

- Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- Give the Town Manager full responsibility for discharging his or her disposition and/or solutions.
- Refrain from giving orders or directions to the Town Manager for action as an individual Board member.
- Refrain from giving instructions to or requesting assistance from Town department heads, but rather channel all such activities through the full board/commission/committee and the Town Manager.
- Refrain from providing information to the Town Managers that you would not be willing to share with other Board members.

D. Conduct in Relation to Town Staff

- Treat all staff as professionals and respect the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.
- Direct questions of Town staff and/or requests for additional background information through the Town Manager.
- Never publicly criticize an individual employee or a department. Concerns about staff performance should only be made to the Town Manager through private communication.
- Insure that all requests for staff support go through the Town Manager's office.

IV. DISTRIBUTION AND EDUCATION

- The Town Clerk shall provide a copy of this policy to all members as defined in the Applicability section upon its issuance and upon the subsequent appointment or re-appointment of any member.
- The Town Clerk shall also maintain and distribute educational materials from the State Ethics Commission to members.
- The Town Clerk shall develop a schedule of training programs to educate the Board and members on the Conflict of Interest Law and ensure compliance with said Law.
- The Town Clerk shall educate the Board, members and officials on the Conflict of Interest Law and ensure compliance with annual state mandated on-line training.

- The Town Clerk shall have each member sign a statement that they have read this policy and will comply with all requirements set forth in this policy; this form shall be available for public view. In the event that any member declines to sign the form, that fact shall be noted by the Town Clerk on the form.

V. ENFORCEMENT

This Code of conduct is intended to be self-enforcing, with members of committees being familiar with its provisions. Committee members themselves have primary responsibility to assure standards are met.