

DRAFT_Code of Ethics_All Canterbury Boards

PURPOSE

The purposes of this Code of Ethics are to:

- Outline the ethical goals to which Canterbury Town Officials are expected to aspire
- Educate the Town Officials and residents about ethical and responsible conduct
- Establish ethical standards of conduct for Town Officials.
- This Code will also be made available to anyone seeking to run for office, or anyone who desires to be appointed to one of Canterbury's many Boards or Commissions. It will be included along with a description of the responsibilities of that Board and its members.

PREAMBLE

The Town of Canterbury values honesty, transparency, accountability, respect, and civility in the behavior of all its Officials. In order to promote and sustain an ethical culture, it SHALL be the duty of all Officials to read this Code of Ethics, become familiar with its content, and acknowledge this Code as one the duties they accept when taking the oath for their office.

In short, all Town Officials, whether elected, appointed, or hired:

- SHALL Treat people fairly, with dignity and respect
- SHALL act in the best interests of the Town
- SHALL maintain the highest standards of personal integrity in performing their public duties
- SHALL NOT abuse their positions for improper reasons or personal gain
- SHALL NOT engage in, or condone, bullying behavior, harassment, rudeness, or discrimination
- *(Note from Beth: See if we need to include language from point 5 of the list from Columbia Law School)*

ALL TOWN OFFICIALS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Uphold code of ethics which will include summation of what you LEGALLY can and cannot do.
- Not benefit personally or politically from Board activities (no profit from inside info, etc.)
- Respect the privileged communication that exists in Executive Session. (i.e. subjects/persons discussed IN Executive Session cannot be discussed OUTSIDE of Executive Session)
- Understand the Legal Requirements for entering into Executive Session, minute-taking during Executive Session, and sealing of minutes for an Executive Session.

- Be aware of what legally constitutes a “public meeting” and follow rules regarding online, Email, digital, text communication between Board or Committee Members **according to RSA 91:A.**

ALL TOWN OFFICIALS AS PART OF A TEAM:

- Should recognize that they alone cannot bind the Board or Committee outside of legal public meetings. (i.e. no false promises such as “I’ll be sure that you get...”)
- Should not make statements or promises about how they will vote on matters that come before the Board/Committee.
- In discussion with residents or other Board members, communicate clearly whether an opinion is yours personally, or the joint decision of your Board/Committee.
- Should NOT engage in, or condone, bullying behavior, harassment, rudeness, or discrimination

ALL TOWN OFFICIALS SHOULD STRIVE TO:

- Become educated in the rules and regulations of the Board or Commission they are part of including taking any training offered by the Town, NHMA, or other sources.
- Active Participation on their Board or Committee, including participation in discussion, being prepared for meetings, staying current on Board or Committee communications, attending meetings.

This includes “alternates” to a committee, who, while perhaps not necessary at all meetings, should still follow committee discussions, proposals, and votes. Even as an alternate, meeting attendance is encouraged to maintain connection with the committee and be prepared to step in when required.

- Professional Development. Each member should take advantage of professional development activities available through the town, NH Municipal Association, and other professional organizations.

Note: Workshops, seminars, and conferences specific to topics of your Board/Committee are generally reimbursed by the town.

- Show “Professional Respect” for persons elected, appointed, or volunteering on any other Town Boards or Commissions.

Professional respect does not preclude honest differences of opinion

Professional respect does preclude attacking a person's motives or integrity

- Treat people fairly, with dignity and respect and should not engage in, or condone bullying behavior, harassment, discrimination or rudeness.
- Never publicly criticize a Town employee or fellow Board/Committee member.
- Remember: At all times you represent the entire community. (no favoritism)
- In working for the community, a Board or Committee member should also...

74 (anything else?)

75 (anything else?)

76

77 CONSEQUENCES (see point 7 of Colombia Law School list, following page):

78 Board or Committee Members who willfully disregard this Code of Ethics and engage in behavior
79 that is illegal, that is disrespectful or harassing, that benefits them personally, or that do not
80 represent the best interests of Canterbury shall be subject to...

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82 Consequences For Elected Officials

83 -- ??

84 -- ??

85 Consequences For Appointed Board/Committee Members

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89 *Note from Beth: This last section is problematic. I believe that Town council has already weighed in*
90 *on the question of how “enforceable” this might be (unless a BOS member does something*
91 *patently illegal.) But seems like we need to say something here. We need to consider this issue in*
92 *the Code of Conduct for BOS members as well*

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97 *Note from Beth: We should consider the following list carefully and see how our Code of Ethics*
98 *follows these guidelines.*

99 *Also, we need to be able to credibly address points 6, 7, 8, and 9!*

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101 **Excerpt From Colombia Law School Center for the Advancement of Public Integrity**

102 A Code of Ethics should:

103 1. Avoid legalistic language and be easily digestible by the public.

104 2. Uniformly apply to all public officials – this includes elected officials, all city employees,
105 appointed officials, and any other government held position. This should also include citizens
106 serving on any commissions or boards, when they are acting in their official capacities.

107 3. Be readily available to the public.

108 4. Include comprehensive conflict of interest provisions which prohibits certain relationships
109 while mandating disclosure.

5. Cover corruption, abuse, fraud, bribery, other violations of the law, and non-criminal conduct which violates the code's conflict of interest provisions.
 6. Include an affirmative obligation to report suspected violations which affirmative obligation has its own enforcement mechanism.
 7. Have an independent enforcement mechanism for any violation.
 8. Contain adequate whistleblower protection for those who report violations.
 9. Cover the inducement of violations by private citizens.
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Note from Beth:

We have previously discussed the need for an additional list to be made available to all Boards and Committees. Not a Code of Ethics or Conduct per say, but more like a "Know your Committee Responsibilities before you actually commit to them!!"

INDIVIDUAL BOARDS SHOULD HAVE THEIR OWN...

Mission Statement (if applicable)

Job Descriptions

Outline of Responsibilities:

- Time Commitment (not only scheduled meetings, but other time commitments such as research, reading minutes, attending informational seminars, field trips, etc.)
- Communication (reading and replying to Board/Committee Emails in a timely manner)
- Attendance (Be on time and Be prepared. If you cannot attend, let your Chair know as soon as possible)
- Understanding of Legal responsibilities (meetings, communications, documents, voting, etc.)

Term of Office

Expectations for Alternates

Qualifications (While all volunteers are appreciated for their willingness to participate, certain work or life experiences could make a volunteer particularly valuable to a Board or Committee.)

Professional Development Requirements (such as NHMA seminars and trainings)

Procedures for MEETINGS and MINUTES

Procedures for RECORD KEEPING

Procedures for COMMUNICATION