

TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY
Operating Principles of the Selectboard
Adopted March 14, 2023

WHEREAS, Selectboard members are elected to a governing board, rather than as independent Town officials; and

WHEREAS, the Selectboard functions most effectively when members work collaboratively to identify the most critical issues facing the Middlebury community in areas such as infrastructure improvements, economic development, and energy efficiency and sustainability, and then establish the funding and project priorities needed to address them; and

WHEREAS, the voters of Middlebury have chosen to adopt a Town Manager form of government and have amended the Town Charter accordingly; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with 24 VSA § 1235, the Selectboard has appointed a Town Manager to whom the Board has delegated full responsibility for the general supervision of the affairs of the Town;

NOW THEREFORE, the members of the Town of Middlebury Selectboard hereby adopt the following Operating Principles to affirm our mutual understanding of, and commitment to, certain leadership practices that support the efficient operation of Middlebury's municipal government:

1. ***In its relationship to members of the community***, the Selectboard affirms:
 - a. That Board members are leaders in the community and not simply messengers for their constituents. While it is necessary and appropriate for members to bring the concerns and opinions of their constituents to the Board, members also have a role in educating constituents to help them understand the bigger picture on issues of personal interest. On some issues, a Board member may need to take a leadership role contrary to the views of his or her constituents.
 - b. That the Board represents the entire community at all times, and each Board member must seek a balance between being responsive to the diverse and legitimate interests of individual members of the community and the need to consider the common good. From time to time, these two may be in conflict.
 - c. That Board members should refrain from making statements or promises regarding the outcome of matters that will come before the Board until after

having a full and fair opportunity to weigh the merits of an issue during a Board meeting.

d. That, from time to time, a majority decision of the Board may be contrary to an individual member's interests or those of his or her constituents; however, every Board member should abide by all decisions once they are made and demonstrate respect for the democratic process in their interactions within the community.

2. ***In its relationship to the Town Manager***, the Selectboard affirms:

a. That, having delegated full responsibility to the Town Manager and his or her staff for the day-to-day administration of Middlebury's municipal services and functions, the Board's leadership focus is primarily on questions of policy and long-term strategic planning directed toward the welfare and betterment of the community.

b. That it recognizes and supports the administrative chain of command and will refer questions, concerns, requests and complaints from members of the community to the Town Manager for appropriate action or delegation to a Department Head.

c. That Board members will refrain from providing work direction or requesting assistance from Town Staff directly, and will instead bring all such concerns to the attention of the Town Manager through the full Board.

3. ***In its relationship to fellow Board members***, the Selectboard affirms:


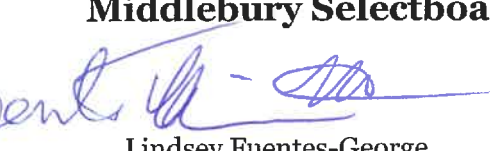

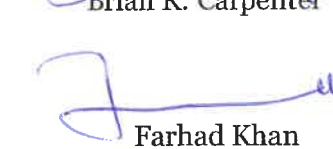
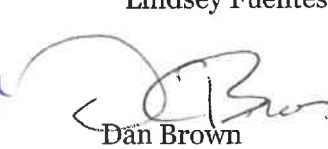
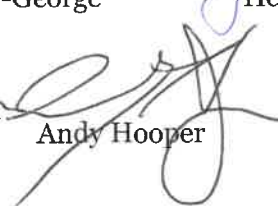
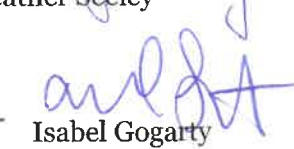
a. That action at official legal meetings is binding, and that an individual member cannot bind the Board outside of such meetings.

b. That it will uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.

c. That Board members should refrain from communicating the position of the Selectboard to reporters or state officials without prior agreement from the full Board.

4. ***In its relationship to Town Staff***, the Selectboard affirms:
- a. That Board members will refrain from seeking input from individual Town staff members outside of scheduled meetings, regarding operational issues, utilization of staff, planning, or policy matters.
 - b. That Board members will refrain from seeking support from individual staff members at all times.
 - c. That Board members will refrain from providing work direction or the perception of work direction, or requesting assistance from Town staff members directly, and will instead bring all such concerns to the attention of the Town Manager through the full Board.
 - d. That Board members recognize and support the established chain of command for employees wishing to voice concerns or make internal complaints about work environment and, if approached by a Town employee, will refer him or her to the appropriate supervisor, Department Head or the Town Manager.
 - e. That Board members will refrain from publicly criticizing an individual employee but will instead immediately bring any concerns about an employee's conduct or work performance to the attention of the Town Manager.

Middlebury Selectboard

 Brian R. Carpenter	 Lindsey Fuentes-George	 Heather Seeley	
 Farhad Khan	 Dan Brown	 Andy Hooper	 Isabel Gogarty