

## TOWN OF NORWOOD

566 Washington Street  
Norwood, MA 02062

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

The Norwood Board of Selectmen ("the Board"), acting as the highest administrative body in the Town issues this Code of Conduct Policy to all members serving as an elected or appointed official for the community. While this policy is not intended to suppress communication or prevent serving officials from expressing their opinions, it is the intent to indicate a certain standard of acceptable behavior for all serving officials to abide by.

#### **SECTION I – PURPOSE**

The Town recognizes that all individuals elected and/or appointed by the Town must maintain and enforce respectful discourse with their fellow elected and/or appointed members, with those who work for the Town, those who volunteer their time and services on behalf of the Town and members of the public by striving at every meeting, forum, or other official interaction to treat every person fairly and with respect regardless of any differences of opinion.

This policy provides a centralized standard of conduct for all elected and appointed officials in the Town.

#### **SECTION II – APPLICABILITY**

This policy and all its sections shall apply to all elected and appointed officials acting on behalf of the Town and covers all of their actions and communications whether spoken or written, including but not limited to, all electronic communications including social media.

#### **SECTION III – CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Town elected and appointed officials are expected to act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably and in good faith at all times having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of the Town and the welfare of its residents.

The Town elected and appointed officials must refrain from communicating or acting in a disrespectful, abusive and/or threatening or illegal manner towards members of the community, other elected or appointed officials, the Town Manager or Town Staff.

Further, all elected and appointed officials of the Town must assume the following responsibilities:

##### **A. Conduct Generally and in Relation to the Community**

- i. Be well informed concerning the local and state duties of a board/committee member.
- ii. Never purport to represent the opinion of your board/committee except when specifically authorized by a recorded vote to do so.
- iii. Accept your position as a means of unselfish public service, and not for any financial benefit either personally or professionally from your board/committee position.
- iv. Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of the Norwood community.



- v. At all times demonstrate respect for the public, other board/committee members and Town Officials.
- vi. Safeguard confidential information in all matters before your board/committee as may be required by law.
- vii. Conduct yourself so as to maintain public confidence in our local government.
- viii. Conduct official business in such a manner that you cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of your official duties.
- ix. Unless specifically exempted, conduct the business of the public in a manner that promotes open and transparent government.
- x. Comply as fully as possible with all Town policies, including, without limitation, the following:
  - a) Harassment Policy
  - b) Professional Conduct
  - c) Social Media Policy
  - d) Other applicable Personnel Policies
- xi. Comply as fully as possible with all applicable laws, including, without limitation, the following:
  - a) The Open Meeting Law
  - b) Procurement Laws
  - c) The Ethics/Conflict of Interest Statute (G.L. c.268A)
  - d) Norwood General By-laws
  - e) Norwood Rules and Regulations

**B. Conduct in Relation to other elected and appointed officials**

- i. Treat all members of the board/committee to which you belong 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.
- ii. Participate and interact in official meetings with dignity and decorum fitting those who hold a position of public trust.
- iii. Recognize your responsibility to attend all meetings to assure a quorum and promptly notify the chairman/chair should you, for any reason, be unable or unwilling to continue to serve. Formal notice to resign from a board/committee requires written notification to the Town Clerk.
- iv. Recognize that action at official legal meetings is binding and that you alone cannot bind the board/committee outside of such meetings.
- v. Refrain from making statements or promises as to how you will vote on quasi-judicial matters that will come before the board/committee until you have had an opportunity to impartially hear evidence in matters and to decide matters based on common experience, testimony and evidence without prejudice toward individuals.
- vi. Uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
- vii. Make decisions only after the close of the hearing and discussion of all facts that have been presented and discussed.

**C. Conduct in Relation to the Town Manager**

- i. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the Town of Norwood administration. All matters shall be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for further action.
- ii. At the direction of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Manager or his/her designee may be given responsibility for recommending the disposition and/or solutions.



- iii. Other than the Board of Selectmen, individual board/committee members may not mandate action of the Town Manager.

**D. Conduct in Relation to Town Staff**

- i. Treat all staff as professionals and respect the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.
- ii. Refrain from giving instructions to or requesting assistance from Town staff but rather channel all such requests or activities through the Town Manager.
- iii. Avoid public criticism of an individual employee or a department. Every effort should be made to address concerns about staff performance with the Town Manager through private communication.
- iv. Officials who interact with Town staff must do so in a respectful manner and understand employees should not be expected to take direction from any individual official on any matter.

**SECTION IV – DISTRIBUTION AND EDUCATION**

- A. The Town Clerk shall provide a copy of this policy, to all elected and appointed officials upon its issuance and upon the subsequent appointment or re-appointment of any individual.
- B. Each individual shall sign and date the Acknowledgement Form, **BOS Doc #14**, indicating that he/she has received this policy. In the event that any member declines to sign the form or fails to return the form within the time-period noted on the form, it shall be noted by the Town Clerk's office and referred to the Board of Selectmen.
- C. The Town Clerk's Office shall track all who have been sent or handed this policy, as well as keep all Acknowledgement Forms on file.

**SECTION V – ENFORCEMENT**


- A. In addition to any other remedies or enforcement options available under the law, each board/committee may vote to censure an elected member and the appointing authority may decline to reappoint an individual who violates any provision of this Code of Conduct.
- B. If any elected or appointed official is accused of violating other applicable Town policies such as the Harassment Policy, the Professional Conduct Policy, the Social Media Policy, other applicable Town personnel policies, or provisions of this Code of Conduct Policy, the Board of Selectmen may take such action as is authorized by law and/or refer the matter to the Town Manager for investigation to the contact named in the specific policy or a disinterested outside firm or individual qualified to investigate the alleged conduct. The Town Manager is obliged to obtain any additional authority from the Board of Selectmen. The firm or individual to whom the matter is referred shall promptly investigate the matter and report back findings of fact and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, and the Town Manager if he/she was asked to have the matter investigated. The Board of Selectmen, in consultation with the appropriate board/committee, may then take such action as is authorized by law and/or as it deems fit in response to the matter. These remedies shall be in addition to, and not in substitution for, any other remedies that may be available by law.

If this matter involves a Board of Selectmen member(s), then the remaining members of the Board of Selectmen may then take such action as described above.

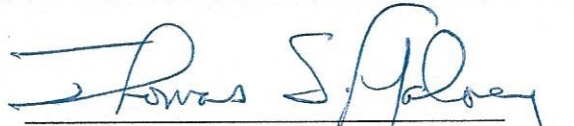
**SECTION VI – OTHER PROVISIONS**


- A. Any inconsistencies between this Policy and statutory law shall be resolved in favor of statutory law.
- B. The Board reserves the right, at any time, to modify or amend this Policy, or to adopt such other additional Regulations as the Board deems necessary.
- C. If any part, section, or subdivision of this Policy, or the application thereof, is held to be invalid, unconstitutional, or inoperative as to any particular person(s) or conditions, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Policy, which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Policy are declared to be severable.

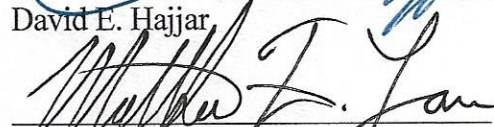
**The Norwood Board of Selectmen**

  
William J. Plasko – Vice-Chairman

  
Helen Abdallah Donohue

  
Thomas F. Maloney, Chairman

  
David E. Hajjar

  
Matthew E. Lane

APPROVED: 6 / 29 / 2021

With BOS Doc #14