

Issued 26 December 2006

## **Town Policy on Conduct of Town Employees in Dealing with the Public**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the Town's guidelines for its employees in dealing with the public, establish procedures for the filing of citizen complaints relative to the conduct of town employees in dealing with the public, the commission of complaint review committees to investigate such complaints, document the procedures to be followed by complaint review committees, establish disciplinary policy for findings of inappropriate conduct, and set policy for the final disposition of filed complaints.

### **Conduct in Dealing with the Public**

All Town employees are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and helpful manner when dealing with the general public. If a citizen is uncertain or ill-advised as to a required course of action, every effort shall be made by town employees to ensure that the citizen is given courteous, clear and thorough instructions on how and when to proceed.

Similarly, it is expected that citizens will treat town employees professionally and with courtesy.

In those instances where a citizen may become emotional or argumentative, the town employee should seek the assistance and support of their supervisor or a co-worker to ameliorate the situation and make written record of the incident and its particulars. If any citizen becomes abusive or aggressive, the town employee shall immediately request police intervention.

In no instance shall a town employee engage in an argumentative dialog with any citizen.

### **Filing of Complaints**

In those instances when an individual deems the conduct of the town employee or citizen inappropriate, a written complaint may be submitted to either the Town Administrator or Board of Selectmen for review and disposition.

All complaints so filed will be reviewed and a written disposition shall be provided within thirty days in accordance with the procedure set forth in this policy.

### **Establishment of Complaint Review Committee**

Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Town Administrator or Board of Selectmen shall assign a committee of not more than two individuals to review and investigate the received complaint. The individual(s) assigned should have little or no affiliation with the personnel or department involved, or the citizen, to the extent possible.

### **Complaint Review Procedure**

The assigned committee shall complete a thorough review of the written complaint, after which, each individual involved shall be interviewed to ascertain that the data as presented is accurate and advise involved individuals that a formal review is underway. When appropriate, witnesses shall be interviewed for further clarification of the issue.

Where a violation of town, state, or federal regulations are alleged, the committee must familiarize itself with the written policy/regulation covering such and ascertain the nature and severity of the violation.

All review findings are to be regarded as confidential and not subject to release to other than the committee membership until the time of final disposition of the complaint.

### **Findings of the Review Committee**

Upon completion of its review, the complaint committee shall formally document its findings, as well as, its recommendations for closure. In those instances where the complaint is substantiated, the committee shall specify the recommended disciplinary action.

### **Disciplinary Actions Arising from Valid Complaints**

When the substantiated complaint indicates that a town employee's conduct was inappropriate or in violation of town, state, and/or federal regulations, disciplinary action shall be administered in accordance with existing town policy or applicable union contract, whichever takes precedence.

When the substantiated complaint indicates that a citizen's conduct was inappropriate or in violation of town, state, and/or federal regulations, the Board of Selectmen shall take reasonable and appropriate action to correct the citizen's conduct.

### **Disposition of Filed Complaints**

Upon completion of the committee's review, all findings and recommendations must be documented and submitted to the Board of Selectman for action.

Whenever possible, final disposition of the complaint shall be conducted in an open forum. However, when the reputation of a citizen and/or town employee may be affected, non-public disposition may be employed, provided, however, that aggrieved parties are allowed to participate in the non-public hearing covering such. All records of complaints, their findings and disposition will be maintained in a town file established for that specific purpose.