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<b>Department: All</b>	<b>Approved Date: 8/8/24</b>
<b>Title: Ethics Policy</b>	<b>Approved By: Selectboard</b>
	<b>Effective Date: 8/8/24</b>
	<b>Next Review Date:</b>

**Policy:**

It is the policy of the Town of Pownal to provide our Code of Ethics and Public Administrative Conduct, which will serve as a guide to proper conduct for all employees. We expect all employees to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in their conduct. This means following a basic code of ethical behavior that includes the following.

**Build Trust and Credibility:**

The success of our service delivery is dependent on the trust and confidence we earn from our fellow employees, elected and appointed officials and citizens. We gain credibility by adhering to our commitments, displaying honesty and integrity and reaching Towns goals solely through honorable conduct.

When considering any action, it is wise to ask: will this build trust and credibility? Will it help create a working environment in which we can succeed over the long term? Is the commitment I am making one I can follow through with? The only way we will maximize trust and credibility is by answering "yes" to those questions and by working every day to build our trust and credibility.

**Create a Culture of Open and Honest Communication:**

In the Town of Pownal everyone should feel comfortable to speak his or her mind, particularly with respect to ethics concerns. Managers and Elected Officials have a responsibility to create an open and supportive environment where employees feel comfortable raising such questions. We all benefit tremendously when employees exercise their power to prevent mistakes or wrongdoing by asking the right questions at the right times.

The Select Board will investigate all reported instances of questionable or unethical behavior. In every instance where improper behavior is found to have occurred, the Select Board will take appropriate action. We will not tolerate retaliation against employees who raise ethics concerns in good faith.

**Set the Tone at the Top:**

The Select Board has the added responsibility for demonstrating, through their actions, the importance of this Code of Conduct. In any organization, ethical behavior does not simply happen; it is the product of clear and direct communication of behavioral expectations, modeled from the top

and demonstrated by example. Again, ultimately, our actions are what matters.

To make our Code work, Select Board, Town Administrator, elected and appointed officials must be responsible for promptly addressing ethical questions or concerns raised by citizens or co-workers and for taking the appropriate steps to deal with such issues. The Select Board and Town Administrator should not consider employees' ethics concerns as threats or challenges to their authority, but rather as another encouraged form of business communication. We want the ethics dialogue to become a natural part of daily work.

#### **Uphold the Law:**

Our commitment to integrity begins with complying with Federal, State and Local laws, rules and regulations when we conduct business. Further, each of us must have an understanding of the policies, laws, rules and regulations that apply to our specific roles. If we are unsure of whether a contemplated action is permitted by law or policy, we should seek the advice from the subject matter expert. We are responsible for preventing violations of law and for speaking up if we see possible violations.

#### **Accurate and Timely Public Disclosures:**

We will make certain that all appropriate town business made in financial or other reports are full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable. This obligation applies to all Town full and part time employees, boards and elected official., including and especially anyone with any responsibility for the preparation for such reports, including drafting, reviewing and signing or certifying the information contained therein. No public goal of any kind is ever an excuse for misrepresenting facts or falsifying records.

#### **Pownal Core Values:**

"In Pownal, we recognize the importance of credibility, integrity and trustworthiness to our success as a government. We are committed to upholding high ethical standards in all our interactions, everywhere. We believe in the principles of honesty, fairness, and respect for the individual and community freedoms.


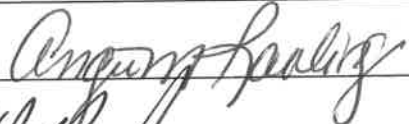



Living up to both the letter and spirit of this commitment is not always an easy task. As our population increases in diversity, we recognize that while there is some level of agreement over what constitutes honest and ethical practice, there can also be valid differences of opinions.

In our working lives, we often experience situations where the "right thing to do" is not immediately apparent. Loyalties-to our fellow employee, managers, citizens, vendors, to our families, community, the environment, the State of Vermont as a whole, and to ourselves-may seem

in conflict. When we're faced with a complicated situation, it can be difficult to decide where the ethical path lies. We will act in good faith based upon our values.

ADOPTED THIS 8 DAY OF August, 2024.

SIGNATURES OF THE SELECTBOARD:

  
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