



Town of Dennis
Code of Conduct for Boards/
Commissions/Committees Policy

BOS Approved	November 19, 2019
BOS Revised	
#	Selectmen Policy

Code of Conduct for Boards/Commissions/Committees Policy

I. *Purpose*

The intent of this policy is to establish clear guidelines to serve as the standard for achieving and maintaining a high level of public confidence, trust, and professional respect with regards to how the Town and its officials conduct business. This policy is intended to define and create a centralized policy with regard to standards of conduct.

The Board of Selectmen recognizes the importance of professional standards at all levels of government, including those who volunteer their time and services on behalf of the Town. The Board encourages other boards and committees of the Town who are not appointed by the Selectmen to adopt this standard by reference, thereby creating a unified Code of Conduct for Town officials.

II. *Applicability*

This policy and all its sections shall apply to the Board of Selectmen and to the other boards, presiding officers, public officials, commissioners, and committees, and other representatives of the Town appointed by the Board of Selectmen, including those special municipal employee status.

- The term “the Board” and “the Selectmen” shall apply to the Board of Selectmen.
- The term “member” shall apply to those appointed by the Board of Selectmen.
- The term “official” shall apply to a Board of Selectmen member or member appointed by the Board of Selectmen.
- The term “appointing authority” shall apply to the Board of Selectmen.

- All commission members, committee members, board members, representatives appointed by the Board of Selectmen and other officials mentioned in this guideline are subject to this policy, including those with special municipal employee status.

III. *Code of Conduct*

These obligations and commitments shall be assumed by all members of the Board, Committee, or Commission and other officials defined in the Applicability section:

A. Conduct Generally and in Relation to the Community

- Be well informed concerning the local and state duties of a board/committee member.
- Remember that you represent the Town of Dennis at all times.
- Accept your position as a means of unselfish public service, not to benefit personally, professionally, or financially from your board/committee position.
- Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interest of all of the people.
- Demonstrate respect for the public that you serve.
- Safeguard confidential information.
- Seek no favor and believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by holding these positions is dishonest and/or unlawful.
- Conduct yourself as to maintain public confidence in our local government.
- Conduct official business in such a manner as to give the clear impression that you cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of your official duties.
- Unless specifically exempted (e.g. Executive Session), conduct the business of the public in a manner that promotes open and transparent government and maintain full compliance with the Open Meeting Law.
- Comply with all applicable Town policies.
- Comply with all applicable laws, including, without limitation, the following:
 - The Open Meeting Law
 - Public Records Law including all records retention schedules. Do not store originals of public records on your personal electronic device or in any location other than Town offices.
 - Procurement Laws

- The Ethics/Conflict of Interest Statute (M.G.L. c.268A)
- Special Municipal Employees are reminded that all Open Meeting Law and other regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Town of Dennis shall apply. Said status is subject to approval of the Board of Selectmen and the statute that governs it.
- All necessary disclosures required by M.G.L. 268A Section 19 and M.G.L. 268A Section 20 shall be filed with the office of the Town Clerk in a timely manner.

B. Conduct on Social Media

- Board and Committee members using social media platforms (including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) are reminded that their online persona reflects their character. Social media is not exempt from Open Meeting Law or Records Retention law. For the purposes of individual board/committee members using social media, please note:
- All board/committee members ("Officials") are expected and required to conduct themselves online in a manner consistent with the Town's policies and standards of conduct.
- Officials must not reveal any confidential or privileged information about the Town, its constituents, or its contractors.
- Officials must not harass others in contravention of the Town's computer use policy, anti-discrimination and harassment policy, regardless of the time, place, form, or manner in which the information is posted or transmitted. Comments may be deemed to violate this policy even if the Town's name or name(s) of any individual is not specifically referenced.
- Officials shall be as honest and accurate as possible when posting information or news. Officials should not use social media to post rumors or conjecture about the Town, its employees, constituents, officials, suppliers, vendors, or contractors.
- Officials may only express their personal opinions and should never represent themselves on social media as a spokesperson for the Town, unless specifically designated to do so.
- It is recommended that officials refrain from providing public opinions on a matter before their Committee, as it could be a violation of Open Meeting Law. Comments include "liking" a post or other similar responses on a social media site.

C. Conduct in Relation to Your Fellow Board/Commission/Committee Members

- Treat all members of the board/commission/committee 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.
- Recognize your responsibility to attend all meetings of your Committee and promptly notify the chairman should you for any reason be unable or unwilling to continue to serve. Formal notice to resign from a board/commission/committee requires written notification to the office of the Town Clerk.
- Recognizes that action at official legal meetings is binding and that you alone cannot bind the board/commission/committee outside of such meetings.
- Wait until a public hearing, whereby one has the opportunity to hear the pros and cons of an issue, prior to making statements or promises as to how you will vote on quasi-judicial matters that will come before the board/committee/commission
- Uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
- Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

D. Conduct in Relation to Town Administration.

- Treat all staff as professionals and respect the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.
- Recognize and support the administrative chain of command.
- Direct questions of Town staff and/or requests for additional background information through the Committee's respective staff or the Town Administrator as applicable and channel instructions or requests for assistance from Town Department Heads through the full Board/Commission/Committee and the Town Administrator.
- The Board of Selectmen, and individual committee members, shall refrain from giving direct orders to any Town staff who are under the direction and supervision of the Town Administrator.
- Committee members should refrain from impeding the Town Administrator from discharging his or her responsibilities, and refrain from giving orders or direction to the Town Administrator or attempting to direct the Town Administrator to take any particular action.

- Provide orders or directions to the Town Administrator for action as a Board, rather than as an individual Board member.
- Address any concerns about staff performance to the Town Administrator through private communication, rather than publicly criticizing an individual employee or a department.