

ARTICLE IX (ETHICS)

Section 1 - (Purpose)

(a) There is hereby established a Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as “The Code”) for all officials, employees, and volunteers of the City of Groton (hereinafter referred to as “City Official(s)”). This code shall establish and define ethical standards for The City.

(b) The term “City Official” is further clarified as any person involved with the government of the City of Groton. This includes any holder of public office (elected or appointed), any employee of the City (paid or unpaid), and any member of any Board, Commission, authority, or Committee of the City.

Section 2 – (Code of Ethics)

No City Official shall accept any employment or have any substantial financial interest in, direct or indirect, or engage in business, transaction, or professional activity or incur any obligation of any nature which is in conflict with the proper discharge of their duties on behalf of the City or which will tend to impair such City Officials independence of judgment or action in the performance of their official duties. Substantial financial interest, as used in this Code, is defined as monetary interest of a greater nominal value that is not common to the general public or a large segment thereof.

(a) City Officials serving on a the board, commission, authority, or committee involving the City shall disclose to the Chairperson of that Board, Commission, authority, or Committee on which such City Official serves when such City Official or any member of the City Official’s immediate family has a substantial financial interest in any matter of consideration by such board, commission, authority, or committee. The City Official shall recuse himself or herself from any participation in the consideration of any such matter. The term “immediate family’ is defined as any City Official’s spouse, siblings, children, parents, spouse’s parents, siblings, and children, and others who are members of the City Official’s household.

(b) City Officials shall not disclose information of a confidential nature concerning the affairs of the City, or use any confidential information acquired in the course of their official duties.

(c) No City Official, member of such City Official's immediate family, or business with which such City Official is associated, shall solicit or accept anything of value, including, but not limited to, a gift, loan, political contribution, reward, or promise of future employment based on any understanding that the vote, official action, or judgment, of the City Official would be or had been influenced by.

(d) No City Official shall misuse City owned vehicles, equipment, supplies, property, labor, or other City resource for their own personnel advantage or convenience. City property or resources which are legitimately placed in the trust of a City Official for the conduct of official City business will be preserved and cared for to the best of their ability.

(e) City Officials must bear in mind their role as public servants and as such are expected to behave in a manner that is honorable, courteous, impartial, and fair to the general public at all times in the performance of their duties.

Section 3 – (Board of Ethics)

There shall be a Board of Ethics (herein referred to as "The Board"), consisting of five (5) members, to be appointed from among the electors of the City, by the Mayor with the approval of the Council. Each Member shall serve without compensation for a term of four (4) years. The initial appointments which shall be made within ninety (90) days of adoption of this Charter as follows:

- 1 member to be appointed for a term of two (2) years
- 2 members to be appointed for a term of three (3) years and
- 2 members to be appointed for a term of four (4) years.

As members' terms expire, it will be the responsibility of the Mayor, with the approval of the Council, to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days. The Board's rules and regulations of procedure shall be established by the Code of Ethics. The activities, votes and rulings of this Board shall not be subject to oversight or reversal by any City Official or body. The Board shall have such powers and duties as may be set forth in this Charter or any other Ordinances of the City as may be applicable.

Terms: The members of the Board shall serve for term of four (4) years except for the initial appointment.

No board member may serve on the Board for more than two consecutive four (4) year terms. If a board member serves for two consecutive four (4) year terms, one year must elapse before he/she shall again be eligible to serve on the Board. Terms shall be staggered so that no more than approximately one third of the Board shall be up for appointment in any year, unless a vacancy (ies) needs to be filled.

Section 4 – (Duties and Powers of the Board)

(a) The Board shall render advisory opinions concerning the application of The Code to any City Official upon request. Such advisory opinions shall be published and filed with the City Clerk with such deletions as may be necessary.

(b) Upon the written complaint of any person, signed under penalty of false statement, or upon its own complaint, the Board shall investigate any alleged violation of the Charter or any Code of Ethics adopted the City to determine if sufficient probable to warrant further action by the Board.

(c) Upon receiving any complaint, the Board shall privately notify, in writing, using certified mail services with return receipt requested, the person against whom such complaint has been filed of the specific nature of the complaint made. The Board shall act on such complaint in accordance with the provisions of the CGS. No hearing shall be conducted with fewer than four (4) members of The Board in attendance.

(d) The person accused of ethics violations may choose between a public or private hearing. The City Attorney or duly appointed representative, who shall also be an attorney, shall attend such hearings and rule on all matters concerning the application of the rules of evidence The City Attorney shall also serve as advisor to the Board on any legal issues. At such hearings, the respondent shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel, the right to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, documents, records, and papers and to examine and cross-examine witnesses. The Board may administer oaths and issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, documents, records, and papers. At the request of the Board, any judge may issue a capias for the appearance of the respondent, witnesses, and the production of books, documents, records, and papers. The Board shall find no person in violation of this Charter and/or any such Code of Ethics except upon the concurring vote of four (4) of its members.

(e) The Board shall report to the City Council as appropriate, its findings as to whether or not a violation of The Code has occurred, together with

recommendations as to the disposition to be made. The City Council as the case may be, shall thereupon take such action as it may deem appropriate. In addition, the Board may make public its findings and opinions, with such deletions as may, in its discretion and as permitted by law, be necessary or desirable.

(f) The Board, upon the request of any City Official or upon its own initiative, renders written advisory opinions concerning any matters relating to The Code.

(g) All opinions, findings, and recommendations of The Board which are matters of public record, whether advisory or at the request of a complaint, shall be kept on file in the Office of the City Clerk.

(h) No complaint may be made under The Code except within two (2) years next after the alleged violation has become known to the complainant.

Section 5 - (Conflict of Interest)

No Public official, as shall be defined in the Code of Ethics of the City, as amended from time to time, shall vote upon any Ordinance or Resolution which involves the consideration of his or her own financial conduct or his or her own financial interest as such may be defined by the Code of Ethics of the City in existence at the time of the alleged violation.