

## **TOWN OF STAMFORD CODE OF ETHICS INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT ORDINANCE**

### **SECTION 1. AUTHORITY.**

This ordinance is adopted by the Select Board ("Legislative Body") of the Town of Stamford ("Municipality") under authority of 24 V.S.A. § 1997.

### **SECTION 2. PURPOSE.**

The purpose of this ordinance is to enact procedures for the investigation of complaints that allege a municipal officer has violated Vermont's Municipal Code of Ethics and the enforcement in instances of substantiated complaints, including methods of enforcement and available remedies.

### **SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.**

- A. "Designated Liaison" means the person designated by the Select Board to act as the point of contact between the complainant, the Select Board, and the Vermont State Ethics Commission.
- B. "Municipal Code of Ethics" means the municipal ethics framework in Vermont established by Act 171 (H.875) of 2024.
- C. The "Vermont State Ethics Commission" is a non-partisan, independent state agency empowered to accept, review, refer, advise on, and track complaints regarding ethical conduct in state and municipal government.
- D. "Municipal Ethics Complaint" means a complaint against a "Municipal Officer" or "Officer" alleging a violation of the Municipal Code of Ethics.
- E. "Municipal Officer" or "Officer" means:
  - 1. any member of the legislative body of the Municipality;
  - 2. any member of a quasi-judicial body of the Municipality; or
  - 3. any individual who holds the position of, or exercises the function of, any of the following positions in or on behalf of the Municipality:
    - a. advisory board or committee member;
    - b. budget committee member;
    - c. auditor;
    - d. cemetery commissioner;

- e. zoning administrator;
- f. town clerk;
- g. collector of delinquent taxes;
- h. department heads;
- i. lister or assessor;
- j. moderator;
- k. planning commission member;
- l. library trustee;
- m. road commissioner;
- n. treasurer;
- o. trustee of public funds; or

- F. "Public body" means any board, council, or commission of the municipality, any board, council, or commission of any agency, authority, or instrumentality of the municipality, or any committee or subcommittee of any of the foregoing boards, councils, or commissions.

#### **SECTION 4. COMPLAINTS.**

- A. Any member of the general public may make a Municipal Ethics Complaint including any person elected, appointed, or employed by the Municipality.
- B. All complaints of alleged violations of the Vermont Municipal Code of Ethics pursuant to 3 V.S.A § 1223(b), shall be filed with the Select Board, at the Stamford Town Office, 986 Main Road, Stamford, VT 05352 using the appropriate form (attached as Exhibit A).
- C. The Select Board will gather all the facts in a prompt, thorough, impartial, and confidential, to the greatest extent possible, manner by interviewing both the Complainant and the Municipal Officer regarding the subject of the complaint. The gathering of facts should be completed within thirty (30) days absent extenuating circumstances. Upon completion, a written statement of the facts shall be completed by the Select Board.
- D. Any advice and/or recommendations from the State Ethics Commission will be taken into consideration by the Select Board to determine what, if any, further action should be taken.
- E. No person will be adversely affected in either their volunteer or employment status with the Municipality as a result of bringing a Municipal Ethics Complaint.

**SECTION 5. ENFORCEMENT.** If the Select Board, after deliberation, determines that a violation of the Municipal Code of Ethics has occurred, the Municipal Officer who is

found to have violated the Municipal Code of Ethics may face the following disciplinary action:

A. **Enforcement against Elected Officers.** In cases in which the Municipal Officer holds an elected office, the Legislative Body may, in its discretion, take any of the following disciplinary actions against such an elected officer as it deems appropriate:

1. The Legislative Body may meet to discuss the conduct of the Municipal Officer. Executive session may be used for such discussion in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(4). The Municipal Officer may request that this meeting occur in public. If appropriate, the Legislative Body may admonish the offending Municipal Officer in private.
2. The Legislative Body may admonish the offending Municipal Officer at an open meeting and reflect this action in the minutes of the meeting. The Municipal Officer will be given the opportunity to respond to the admonishment.
3. Upon majority vote in an open meeting, the Legislative Body may request (but not order) that the offending Municipal Officer resign from his or her office.

B. **Enforcement against Appointed Officers.** In cases in which the Municipal Officer holds an appointed office, the Legislative Body may choose to follow any of the steps articulated in Section 5A. In addition to, or in lieu of any of those steps, the Legislative Body may choose to remove an appointed Municipal Officer from office, subject to state law.

C. **Enforcement against Employees.** In cases in which the Municipal Officer is also an employee of the Municipality, the Legislative Body may take any disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with the Municipality's personnel policy.

## **SECTION 6. APPEALS.**

A decision of the Legislative Body may be reviewable by the Vermont Superior Court pursuant to Rule 75 of the Vermont Rules of Civil Procedure. An enforcement action taken against an employee may be appealed in accordance with the Municipality's personnel policy.

## **SECTION 7. RECORD KEEPING**

All letters, investigative material, reports and decisions will be saved securely and in accordance with confidentiality and public record laws.

## **SECTION 8. OTHER LAWS.**

This ordinance is in addition to all other ordinances of the Municipality and all applicable laws of the State of Vermont. All ordinances or parts of ordinances, resolutions,

regulations, policies, or other documents inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

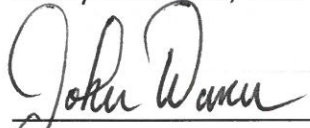
**SECTION 9. SEVERABILITY.** If any section of this ordinance is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such finding will not invalidate any other part of this ordinance. If any statute referred to in this ordinance is amended, this ordinance will be deemed to refer to such amended statute.

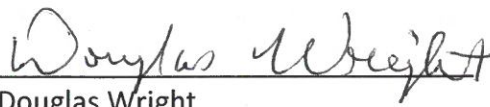
**SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This ordinance will become effective sixty (60) days after its adoption by the Legislative Body. If a petition is filed under 24 V.S.A. § 1973, that statute will govern the taking effect of this ordinance.

Adopted this 17th day of July, 2025.

TOWN OF STAMFORD SELECT BOARD

  
Nancy L. Bushika, Chair

  
John Dunn

  
Douglas Wright

  
Kurt Gamari

  
Michael Denault

**Adoption History**

1. Agenda item at regular Select Board meeting held on July 3, 2025.
2. Read and approved at regular/special Select Board meeting on July 17, 2025 and entered in the minutes of that meeting which will be approved on August 7, 2025.
3. Posted in public places on July 23, 2025.
4. Notice of adoption published in the Berkshire Eagle newspaper on July 25, 2025 with a notice of the right to petition.
5. Other actions (petitions, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

# TOWN OF STAMFORD, VERMONT

— Chartered 1753 —

986 Main Road, Stamford, VT 05352

stamfordvt.net

Phone (802) 694-1361

Fax (802) 694-1636

Official Use Only:  
Date Received:

## TOWN OF STAMFORD MUNICIPAL COMPLAINT FORM

The Town of Stamford has authority to accept, review, investigate, and track complaints regarding alleged violations of the Vermont Municipal Code of Ethics. 3 V.S.A. § 1223(b). Complaints alleging violations of the town's Policy for Investigation and Enforcement of Ethical Violations can be filed using this form.

Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

CONTACT INFORMATION (type or print clearly):

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach additional pages as necessary.

1. Who is this complaint against? Include their name, job title or position, and municipality. Please file a separate complaint form for each person you are complaining against.

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2. Date(s) of the alleged violation(s):

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3. How has this person violated the provisions of the statewide Municipal Code of Ethics or the town's Policy for Investigation and Enforcement of Ethical Violations? Be specific and provide as much detail as possible. Attach any documentation that supports your claim.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

4. Please indicate which provision(s) of the statewide Municipal Code of Ethics or the town's Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct Policy you believe have been violated.

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5. Provide the names and contact information for anyone else who may have information regarding this complaint.

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6. Has the conduct you describe above been the subject of a prior complaint? If yes, please explain.

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7. Is there anything else the investigating authority for the Town of Stamford should know about this complaint?



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Attach additional pages as necessary.

I certify that the information provided in this complaint is true, correct, complete, and of my own personal knowledge. I will fully cooperate in the process regarding this complaint.

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Signature (must be hand signed)	Date

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Submit complaint form directly to:

Stamford Select Board  
Stamford Town Office  
986 Main Road  
Stamford, VT 05352