

## **TOWN CODE OF ETHICS**

The Town Council adopted the attached Code of Ethics at its meeting on August 9, 2016.  
The Code addresses how members will conduct themselves in an ethical manner to earn and maintain the public's full confidence for integrity.

The Code of Ethics is adopted for execution by each elected or appointed member of a Town public body, including the Mayor and Town Council Members, the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Architectural Review Board.

**Mission:** In Cooperation With and For Our Citizens ... The Mayor, Town Council and the Staff of Warrenton are dedicated to providing public safety, economic opportunity, and quality public services in an attractive, well-planned community with historic character for the benefit, enjoyment and accessibility of all.

**Values:** To Achieve Our Mission, We Strive To. . . Provide high level services in a cost-effective manner; display honesty, respectfulness, and fairness in all relationships; support the health and economic well-being of our citizens and businesses; preserve our historic small-town character; encourage opportunities, services and infrastructure that allow people of all means to live, work and visit here; and address public concerns and opportunities promptly and effectively.

We recognize our Mission can be achieved only by the exchange of information and that through team work we can maintain an environment in which we can maximize our potential.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **Preamble**

The citizens and businesses of Town of Warrenton, Virginia, are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government, which has earned the public's full confidence for integrity. In keeping with the Town of Warrenton's Commitment to Excellence, the effective functioning of democratic government therefore requires that public officials, both elected and appointed, comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operations of government; that public officials be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions; that public office be used for the public good, not for personal gain; and that public deliberations and processes be conducted openly, unless legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

To this end, the Town of Warrenton Town Council has adopted this Code of Ethics for members of the Council and of the Town's boards, commissions and committees to assure public confidence in the integrity of local government and its effective and fair operation.

### **1. Act in the Public Interest**

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be their primary concern, members will work for the common good of the people of the Town of Warrenton and not for any private or personal interest, and they will assure fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before the Town of Warrenton Town Council, boards, commissions, and committees.

### **2. Comply with the Law**

Members shall comply with the laws of the nation, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Town of Warrenton in the performance of their public duties. These laws include, but are not limited to: the United States and Virginia constitutions; the Code of the Town of Warrenton; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, employer responsibilities, and open processes of government; and Town ordinances and policies.

### **3. Conduct of Members**

The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Town Council, boards, commissions, and committees, the staff or public.

4. Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties in accordance with the processes and rules of order established by the Town Council and boards, committees, and commissions governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the Town Council by Town staff.

5. Conduct of Public Meetings

Members shall prepare themselves for public issues; listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body; and focus on the business at hand. They shall refrain from interrupting other speakers; making personal comments not germane to the business of the body; or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings.

6. Decisions Based on Merit

Members shall base their decisions on the merits and substance of the matter at hand, rather than on unrelated considerations.

7. Communication

Members shall publicly share substantive information that is relevant to a matter under consideration by the Town Council or boards, committees and commissions, which they may have received from sources outside of the public decision-making process.

8. Conflict of Interest

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the common good, members shall not use their official positions to influence government decisions in which they have a material financial interest, or where they have an organizational responsibility or personal relationship that may give the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In accordance with the law, members shall disclose investments, interests in real property, sources of income, and gifts; and they shall abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist.

9. Gifts and Favors

Members shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office, which are not available to the public in general. They shall refrain from accepting any gifts, favors or promises of future benefits which might compromise their independence of judgment or action or give the appearance of being compromised.

#### 10. Confidential Information

Members shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel or affairs of the Town. They shall neither disclose confidential information without proper legal authorization, nor use such information to advance their personal, financial or other private interests.

#### 11. Use of Public Resources

Members shall not use public resources that are not available to the public in general, such as Town staff time, equipment, supplies or facilities, for private gain or personal purposes.

#### 12. Representation of Private Interests

In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, members of the Council shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before the Town Council or any board, committee, commission or proceeding of the Town, nor shall members of boards, committees or commissions appear before their own bodies or before the Town Council on behalf of the private interests of third parties on matters related to the areas of service of their bodies.

#### 13. Advocacy

Members shall represent the official policies or positions of the Town Council, boards, commissions or committees to the best of their ability when designated as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, members shall explicitly state they do not represent their body or the Town of Warrenton, nor will they allow the inference that they do.

#### 14. Policy Role of Members

The Town Council determines the policies of the Town with the advice, information and analysis provided by the public, boards, commissions, and committees, and Town staff. The Town Council delegates authority for the administration of the Town to the Town Manager.

Members therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the Town or the professional duties of Town staff; nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement Council policy decisions.

#### 15. Independence of Board and Commissions

Because of the value of the independent advice of boards, committees and commissions to the public decision-making process, members of the Town Council shall refrain from using their positions to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board, committee or commission proceedings.

## 16. Positive Work Place Environment

Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work place environment for Town employees and for citizens and businesses dealing with the Town. Members shall recognize their special role in dealings with Town employees and in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

## 17. Implementation

As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the Town, the Town of Warrenton Code of Ethics is intended to be self-enforcing. It therefore becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions.

For this reason, ethical standards shall be included in the regular orientations for candidates for the Town Council, applicants to boards, committees and commissions, and newly elected and appointed officials. Members entering office shall sign a statement affirming they have read and understood the Town of Warrenton Code of Ethics. In addition, the Town Council, boards, committees and commissions, shall annually review the Code of Ethics and the Town Council shall consider recommendations from boards, committees and commissions to update it as necessary.

## 18. Compliance and Enforcement

The Town of Warrenton Code of Ethics expresses standards of ethical conduct expected of members of the Town Council, boards, committees and commissions. Members themselves have the primary responsibility to assure that ethical standards are understood and met, and that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government.

The chairs of boards, committees and commissions and the Mayor have the additional responsibility to intervene when actions of members that appear to be in violation of the Code of Ethics are brought to their attention.

The Town Council may impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with the Town's ethical standards, such as reprimand, formal censure, loss of seniority or committee assignment, or budget restriction. Where allowed by law, the Town Council also may remove members of Town-appointed boards, committees and commissions from office.

A violation of this Code of Ethics shall not be considered a basis for challenging the validity of a Town Council, board, and committee or commission decision.

## **RESOLUTION**

### **A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT UPDATED MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE WARRENTON TOWN COUNCIL AND FOR THE MEMBERS OF ALL BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS APPOINTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, the Town Council has determined that the adoption of a Mission and Values Statements and Code of Ethics for its members and the members of all Council-appointed boards, committees and commissions will assist in achieving these ends; and

WHEREAS, the citizens and businesses of the Town of Warrenton are entitled to have fair, ethical and accountable local government which has earned the public's full confidence; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with Town Council's commitment to excellence, all public officials, both elected and appointed, must comply with both the letter and spirit of the laws and policies affecting the operation of government; and

WHEREAS, all public officials, both elected and appointed, are required to be impartial and fair in their judgment and actions and ensure that public office is used for the public good; and; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Town Council 9th day of August 2016, that the following Mission and Value Statements and Code of Ethics is hereby adopted: