



Office of the Town Manager  
Frank Cassidy

# STAFF REPORT

## Warrenton Town Council

Carter Nevill, Mayor  
Heather Sutphin, Ward 1  
William Semple, Ward 2  
Brett Hamby, Ward 3  
James Hartman, Ward 4 Vice Mayor  
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5  
Paul Mooney, At Large  
David McGuire, At Large

<b>Council Meeting Date:</b>	September 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2024.
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Code of Conduct Committee Report
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Consider Recommendations of the Code of Conduct Committee
<b>Department / Agency Lead:</b>	Town Council
<b>Staff Lead:</b>	Councilmen Paul Mooney

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Code of Conduct Committee was established at the March 12, 2024, Town Council Work Session. This newly formed Special Committee will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Code of Ethics for the Town Council and all boards and commissions beneath them. Staff have been instructed by the Town Manager to assist in this endeavor.

The Code of Conduct committee has reviewed the Codes of Conduct, Codes of Ethics, and their implementation across multiple jurisdictions around the Town of Warrenton. They have also incorporated references to the Virginia State Code for applicable laws and regulations.

The Code of Conduct committee comes forward with the following recommendations:

- 1) Review the proposed code of conduct and provide feedback no later than one week before the next Council meeting.
- 2) Consider the addition and updating of Citizen rules of conduct to better shape the processes of Citizen's time and public comment to align with the council's rules of decorum.
- 3) Consider with this change a request to the Town Manager to begin a rewrite of the Town Council Handbook to update the code of conduct sections and incorporate best practices, policies, and standard operating procedures to ensure the effective, knowledgeable, and ethical guidance of the Town's operations. Items to consider for the Town Manager for inclusion should be discussed at the next Town Council Meeting.

## BACKGROUND

The Code of Conduct Committee was established at the March 12, 2024, Town Council Work Session. This newly formed Special Committee will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Code of Ethics. For the Town Council and all boards and commissions beneath them. Staff have been instructed by the Town Manager to assist in this endeavor. Consider the points of direction for them to follow. This report will lay out suggested items for the committee to focus on.

Goals of the committee:

1. Review other communities Code of Conduct.

2. Review the Virginia State Code for applicable laws and regulations.
3. Establish a new code of conduct for review and action by the Council.
4. Take into consideration the recommendations from Ms. Jane Dittmar from the Virginia institute of Government.
5. Present the information for review and action by the Council no later than the August regularly Scheduled Town Council Meeting.

As there are Two Members of the Committee, no chairperson is necessary.

As a reminder, minutes of the meeting of the committee should be taken and meetings are open to the public under FOIA. The Town Clerk can assist with this process.

The Virginia Institute of Government, with Jane Ditmar as the attending facilitator, provided a work session on code of conduct and Ethics. This work session reviewed and discussed roles, opportunities, strengths, and recommendations to move forward. The report is attached. As the top recommendation, Ms. Ditmar recommended focusing on updating and reworking the Code of Conduct for Council Members. It was determined that by working on this first, moving forward with the strategic planning initiative will be more successful.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Receive the information from the Committee and consider their recommendations. Consider a resolution adopting the newly drafted Code of Conduct.

#### **Service Level/Collaborative Impact**

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The Code of Conduct will impact all departments, Boards, Commissions, and Committees of the Town of Warrenton.

#### **Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040**

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The Town Council is the guiding force behind all actions of Warrenton Plan 2040. This Code of Conduct will help guide this Council and future Councils with the

#### **Fiscal Impact**

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There is a minor fiscal impact with additional staff time for this committee.

#### **Legal Impact**

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The Town Attorney will be available to review the proposed Code of Conduct and discuss items with the Committee members.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Ethics Statement
2. Strategic Retreat report
3. Suggested items from the Virginia Institute of Government for Review.