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**TOWN COUNCIL**  
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Renard J. Carlos  
Sean M. Polster  
Heather D. Sutphin  
William T. Semple II  
Brett A. Hamby  
James N. Hartman III  
Kevin T. Carter

TO: Town Council Members, Planning Commission & Board Members

FROM: Brandie Schaeffer, Town Manager

DATE: July 14, 2020

RE: Code of Ethics Statements

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The Town Council adopted the attached Code of Ethics at its meeting on August 9, 2016. The Code addresses how members will ethically conduct themselves 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, and citizen Committee Members. It includes a statement of affirmation by individual members of each body to sign and date.

Please read the Code of Ethics sign the Member Statement and return it to Town Clerk, Elizabeth Gillie at your earliest convenience. Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Brandie M. Schaeffer  
Town Manager

## TOWN MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENTS

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.

EXPERIENCE

## TOWN OF WARRENTON 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 ethically conduct themselves 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.

### 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 is 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. 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.

E X P E R I E N C E

### 3. Respect for Process

Members shall perform their duties following 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.

### 4. 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.

### 5. Decisions Based on Merit

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

### 6. 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.

### 7. Conflict of Interest

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.

Under 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.

## 8. Gifts and Favors

Members shall not take any special advantage of services or opportunities for personal gain, by virtue of their public office, which is 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.

## 9. 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.

## 10. 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.

## 11. 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 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.

## 12. 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.

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### 13. 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.

To prioritize staff time, Members shall not cause Town staff to spend more than one hour on any project without the specific approval of a simple majority of Council Members in an open meeting with a quorum present unless such time is the result of a closed session discussion involving duly authorized projects such as work on litigation, the sale or purchase of real property or any other issues associated with a properly authorized closed session. Any project requiring more than one hour by staff shall be brought to the attention of the Town Manager and Mayor who may place the project for discussion upon the next Town Council meeting's agenda.

### 14. 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.

### 15. Positive Work Place Environment

Members shall support the maintenance of a positive and constructive work environment for Town employees and 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.

### 16. 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.

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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.

## 17. 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 violate 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.

## 18. Email Etiquette

In an effort to ensure that all Council Members are receiving the same information, any request for information from staff by a Member shall result in the same information being disseminated to the entire Council. This shall apply to all requests concerning development projects, emergencies, capital improvement projects, or any other matter that has a direct impact on the community as a whole. It is understood that not all communications should be disseminated to prevent an inordinate amount of emails to the Council Members; however, this rule is intended to ensure that all Council Members have equal access to issues involving the Town.

E X P E R I E N C E

**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.

EXPERIENCE

Model of Excellence  
Town of Warrenton Town Council, Boards, Committees and Commissions

MEMBER STATEMENT

As a member of the Town Council, or of a Town of Warrenton board, committee or commission, I agree to uphold the Code of Ethics for elected and appointed officials adopted by the Town and conduct myself by the following model of excellence. I will:

- Recognize the worth of individual members and appreciate their individual talents, perspectives and contributions;
- Help create an atmosphere of respect and civility where individual members, Town staff and the public are free to express their ideas and work to their full potential;
- Conduct my personal and public affairs with honesty, integrity, fairness and respect for others;
- Respect the dignity and privacy of individuals and organizations;
- Keep the common good as my highest purpose and focus on achieving constructive solutions for the public benefit;
- Avoid and discourage conduct which is divisive or harmful to the best interests of the Town of Warrenton;
- Treat all people with whom I interact in the manner I wish to be treated;

I affirm that I have read and understand the Town of Warrenton Code of Ethics.

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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