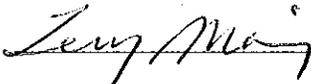


# TOWN OF WILLISTON, VERMONT

## Town Volunteer Policy

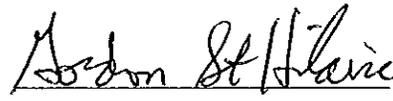
Adopted: May 21, 2019.

### Williston Selectboard

  
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The purpose of this Policy is to provide a procedure for recruiting and appointing Town volunteers. It also addresses the required conduct and expectations for anyone serving as a Town volunteer.

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## I. Purpose.

Citizen participation and volunteerism are critical to the success of a democratic government form. The Town of Williston engages a number of community volunteers to serve on local and regional Boards, Commissions and Committees to provide the critical role of policy-making and governance assistance. Volunteers also serve in non-administrative official roles for the Town. The intent of this policy is to document the processes and expectations for Town volunteers in their service and conduct to the community.

## II. Appointment and Volunteer Charge.

Under the authority of the Williston Town Charter Article 15, volunteers are appointed by a majority vote of the Williston Selectboard. Standing volunteer bodies and non-administrative positions are defined in the Charter, and the Selectboard has the authority to create new volunteer bodies and positions in response to a perceived community need. Each volunteer body shall operate under a specific charge which at a minimum will accomplish the following: Define the overarching purpose and role of the body, specify the quantity of members and the duration of terms. Terms are staggered to allow for minimal turnover in a given year, and be structured on a fiscal year basis (July 1 – June 30). For regional bodies of which the Town is a member, the organizational governing documents will define the charge of the appointed representative.

## III. Appointment Process

Individuals interested in taking on a volunteer role with the Town should apply using an application made available through the Town Manager's Office. Vacant positions will be advertised to the community. The Selectboard will interview all individuals interested in a position during open session of a duly warned meeting, and take action to make an appointment should a suitable candidate be identified.

Incumbents holding positions will be notified by April of the year when their term is set to expire in June to ascertain their interest in being reappointed to the volunteer position held for another term. The Selectboard may consider a range of factors when considering reappointment of incumbents including attendance, adherence to Conflict of Interest Ordinance, diversity of backgrounds, adherence to Open Meeting principles and other factors.

## IV. Volunteer Expectations

**Attendance:** Volunteers serving on public bodies are expected to attend at least 60% of meetings each calendar year. Town staff will keep attendance records for each Town volunteer body and obtain attendance records for each regional body. In order to be a

fully engaged volunteer, attendance and participation at meetings are central tenets to successful service and engagement. The Town is often presented with multiple individuals looking to fill a single volunteer position. Active participation is therefore critical in the role as the volunteer positions are highly sought.

Volunteers seeking reappointment that do not meet the attendance expectation each year of their expiring term should address their absences in a letter to the Selectboard and may be asked to re-interview for the position before reappointment may be considered.

If a volunteer is absent from meetings for three consecutive months without being granted a formal leave (see section V) then Town staff or the point of contact for a regional entity should alert the Chair of the respective body. The Chair will then discuss the absences with the volunteer, and together they will decide whether continued service as a volunteer is the best fit for the individual at the present time.

**Meeting Preparation:** Volunteers are expected to come to meetings prepared to discuss the items on the agenda. Preparation should include reviewing all meeting materials distributed beforehand and asking any clarifying questions to the appropriate staff member to be well-informed about the agenda items up for discussion before the meeting.

**Participation During Meetings:** Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions during meetings and be actively engaged to share their thoughts and viewpoints. Active engagement may mean different things to different volunteer members. For example, one volunteer may prefer to actively listen and share their thoughts at the decision point of an issue, while another volunteer member may like to ask more clarifying questions along the way. Different engagement styles help the volunteer body function as a unit and are welcome. Not being fully present during a meeting by appearing disengaged, active on a technology device for purposes outside of meeting business or leading the discussion off topic hinders the work of the volunteer body and sets a poor example to the public.

**Effective Working Relationships:** A volunteer governance body brings an array of backgrounds and perspectives together to design effective public policy recommendations for the greater good of Williston and the region. Volunteers may not always agree on an issue, but it is imperative to be cordial and respectful of other volunteers' viewpoints on issues and for a volunteer to treat their colleagues with the utmost respect. A public service position sets an example to the community on how to conduct civil and respectful discourse.

**Decision Considerations:** When asked to make a decision on a Town of Williston volunteer body, a member should consider the information presented and make a decision on the matter that they feel is in the best interest of the Town. For volunteers representing the Town on a regional body decision-making should be reflective of the policy goals established by the Selectboard and act to advance those initiatives on the regional scale for services shared in the county.

**Conduct:** The Town's Conflict of Interest Ordinance addresses the expectations for conduct of elected and appointed officials in the Town. Violations of these expectations can lead to removal of a volunteer, per the process outlined in the Ordinance. All volunteers shall abide by the terms of this Ordinance. All volunteers will be provided a copy of the Ordinance at the beginning of their term of service.

## V. Leave of Absence

A volunteer may request a leave of absence from a volunteer role for up to three (3) months in the event of personal illness, care for a family member, military deployment or extended time out of Town for work in which participating remotely via a technological means is not feasible.

### Appendices

Conflict of Interest Ordinance

List of all volunteer positions with term lengths

Open Meeting law summary

Charge for Board

Decision process rules

Guidelines for service on regional boards