TOWN OF BROOKLINE, VERMONT

ETHICS COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY

February 5, 2025

1. Purpose

This policy ensures that town officials, employees, and volunteers follow ethical standards. It provides a fair process for investigating complaints and enforcing rules when violations occur.

2. Who Does This Apply To?

This policy applies to all elected and appointed officials, employees, and volunteers in Brookline, including Selectboard members, town employees, and committee members.

3. Filing a Complaint

- Any town resident, employee, or official can file an ethics complaint.
- Complaints must be in writing and submitted to the Town Clerk or another designated official.
- The complaint should include:
    - The name and contact information of the person filing it.
    - A clear description of the alleged violation.
    - Any evidence or witness information.

4. What Happens After a Complaint is Filed?

- The town will review the complaint within five (5) business days.
- If the complaint does not relate to ethics or lacks enough detail, it may be dismissed.
- If the complaint has merit, an investigation will begin.

5. Investigation Process

- The person being accused will be notified and given a chance to respond.
- The town will review documents, interview witnesses, and gather evidence.
- Investigations will remain confidential as much as possible.

6. Possible Outcomes and Actions

If a violation is found, the town may take the following actions:

- **For Elected Officials (e.g., Selectboard members):**
    - A private discussion about the issue.
    - A formal warning at a public meeting.

- A request for resignation (but they cannot be forced to resign).
- **For Appointed Officials (e.g., committee members):**
  - Any of the above actions.
  - Possible removal from their position.
- **For Employees:**
  - A warning, suspension, or even termination, based on the town's personnel policies.

If no violation is found, the complaint will be dismissed.

7. Appeals

- The person accused can appeal the decision within ten (10) business days.
- Appeals are reviewed by the Selectboard or Vermont courts, depending on the situation.

8. Protecting Those Who File Complaints

- No one will be punished for filing a complaint in good faith.
- Any retaliation against someone who files a complaint will be separately investigated.

9. Public Disclosure

- Final decisions may be made public, but personal details will be kept private when required by law.

10. When Does This Policy Take Effect?

This policy will take effect **60 days after adoption** unless a petition is filed to challenge it.

Adopted this 19 day of February, 2025.

SELECTBOARD for the TOWN OF BROOKLINE, VERMONT

Dorothy Mason

Stanley E Noyes