

ARTICLE VIII: CODE OF ETHICS

Section 1.801: DEFINITIONS

For purpose of this Article, the following terms shall be defined in the following manner:

- A. **Officer:** The term "Officer" shall be defined to include every member of the City Council, School Board, Police Commission, Fire Commission, each member of every land use regulatory board, i.e. the Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, Historic District Commission, Conservation Commission, Technical Advisory Committee, Traffic Safety Committee, Building Code Board of Appeals, Recreation Board, Planning and Development Council, and Economic Development Commission, every department head as that term is used in the Administrative Code, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, Superintendent of Schools, the Trustees of the Trust Funds and members of the Housing Authority.
- B. **Employee:** The term "Employee" shall include all employees of the City including the Police, School and Fire Departments whose salary is paid in whole or in part from the City Treasury.
- C. **Governing Body:** The term "Governing Body" shall mean the City Council, School Board, Police Commission, and Fire Commission.
- D. **Official Duties:** The term "Official Duties" shall mean the following:
 - 1. In the case of members of the City Council, School Board, Fire Commission, Police Commission and the City Manager, those duties and responsibilities set forth in the City Charter and/or established by State law.
 - 2. In the case of members of Land Use Regulatory Boards, the Trustees of the Trust Fund and the Portsmouth Housing Authority, those duties and responsibilities set forth in the legislation that established each board and/or outlines the duties and responsibilities of each board.
 - 3. In the case of the Chief of Police, the Superintendent of Schools, the Fire Chief, and all employees, those duties and responsibilities set forth in the respective job description for each party or employee.

Section 1.802: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- A. No Officer or employee shall engage in any business or transaction or shall have a financial or other private interest, direct or indirect, which is in conflict with the proper discharge of his/or her official duties.

- B. **Representing Private Interests Before City Agencies:** No Officer or employee shall appear in behalf of private interests before any governing body or land use regulatory board of which the officer or employee is a member or membership on which is subject to approval by the officer or employee.
Officers and employees, however, may appear without compensation in behalf of constituents or in the performance of public or civic obligations. This section shall not prohibit appearances upon matters only incidentally requiring official action which do not develop into a substantial part of the employment, provided, that the retainer is not for the purpose of appearing before the governing body or land use regulatory board.
- C. **Representing Private Interests Before Courts:** No officer or employee shall represent private interests in any action or proceeding against the interests of the land use regulatory board or governing body of which the officer or employee is a member, or membership on which is subject to approval by the officer or employee in any litigation to which the City is a party.
- D. **Disclosures of Interest in Legislation:** A Councilor who has a direct or indirect financial or other private interest in any proposed legislation shall publicly disclose, on the official records of the Council, the nature and extent of such interest.
- E. **Disclosures by Officer or Employee of Interest in Legislation:** An officer or employee who has a direct or indirect financial interest or other private interest in any legislation and who participates in discussion before or gives official opinion to the Council, shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of such interest.
- F. **Gifts and Favors:** No officer or employee shall accept any gift, over \$100.00, whether in the form of service, loan, thing or promise, any other form from any person, firm or corporation which to his/or her knowledge is interested directly or indirectly in any manner whatsoever, in business dealings with the City. This provision shall not apply to campaign contributions of \$100.00 or less.
- G. **Disclosures of Confidential Information:** No officer or employee, who holds any investment direct or indirect in any financial, business, commercial or other private entity which creates a conflict with his/her official duties shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of such interest.
- H. **Investments in Conflict with Official Duties:** Any officer or employee, who holds any investment direct or indirect in any financial, business, commercial or other private entity which creates a conflict with his/her official duties shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of such interest.
- I. **Incompatible Employment:** No officer or employee shall engage in or accept private employment or render or seek services or goods for private interests when such employment or service creates a conflict with his/her official duties.

Section 1.803

Any violation of any provisions of this ordinance shall constitute cause for fine, suspension or removal from office or employment.

Section 1.804: BOARD OF ETHICS

- A. There is hereby created and established a method for appointing a Board of Ethics. This Board shall consist of five persons: one member each selected by lot from the City Council, School Board, Police Commission and Fire Commission and the City Attorney (ex officio) or such other legal counsel (ex officio) that the Board should decide. The Board member shall be drawn at the first meeting of the calendar year of each of the governing bodies.

The members of the Board shall elect a chairperson. They shall adopt such rules for the conduct of their business as they see fit and they shall have the power to draw upon the various City departments for reports and information and stenographic and clerical help. They shall have all subpoena powers as may be available to them under State law.

- B. **Advisory Opinions:** Upon the written request of the Officer or employee concerned, the Board shall render advisory opinions based upon the provisions of this Code. The Board shall file its advisory opinions with the City Clerk but may delete the name of the officer or employee involved.
- C. **Hearings and Determinations:** Any individual having information that an officer or employee as defined in Section 1:801, other than the City Manager or the City Attorney, is engaged in improper activities or has a conflict of interest may present his or her complaint to the City Attorney.
1. Said complaint shall be in writing, under oath, specific and to the point. The City Attorney shall review the written complaint with the Mayor and if either the Mayor or the City Attorney feels that the complaint is of substance, then the Mayor shall refer the matter to the Board.
 2. If both the Mayor and City Attorney believe that the complaint is without substance, the person making the complaint and the subject of the complaint shall be notified in writing of that fact.
 3. The Board shall hold a hearing which may be public or private at the discretion of the Board and at which the accused party shall be entitled to be represented by Counsel at his or her own expense to examine the party making the complaint, to summon witnesses and to present evidence on his or her behalf. If the Board finds that the individual is guilty as charged in the complaint, the whole matter shall be referred to the appropriate governing body for enforcement as set forth in Section 1:805.

4. Complaints against the City Manager and/or City Attorney for violations of this Ordinance shall be in writing, under oath, specific and to the point, and shall be referred directly to the Mayor or Assistant Mayor. If either the Mayor or Assistant Mayor believes that the complaint is of substance, then the complaint shall be referred to the Board for a hearing as set forth in paragraph C.3 above. If the City Attorney and the Assistant Mayor believe that the complaint is not of substance, then the person making the complaint and the Mayor shall be notified of that decision.
5. Complaints against the Mayor shall be filed with the City Attorney who shall review them with the Assistant Mayor. If either the City Attorney or the Assistant Mayor believes that the complaint is of substance, then the complaint shall be referred to the Board for a hearing as set forth in paragraph C.3 above. If the City Attorney and the Assistant Mayor believe that the complaint is not of substance then the person making the complaint and the Mayor shall be notified of that decision.
6. All members of the City Council (including the Mayor), School Board, Police Commission and Fire Commission are eligible to serve and must serve on the board when requested to do so except, however, that any person that has been charged in a complaint shall be barred from serving on that particular board.
7. All complaints shall be disposed of or forwarded to the Board by the City Attorney and/or the Mayor and/or the Assistant Mayor within thirty days after receipt.
8. The Board shall have thirty days to investigate and hold meetings and to report to the appropriate governing body as a whole if their findings warrant further action.
9. The statements of the findings of the Board shall be issued upon the request of any person charged.

Section 1.805: ENFORCEMENT

- A. Sanctions: In the event that the Board of Ethics determines that any officer or employee subject to its control, has engaged in any act prohibited by this ordinance or failed to make a mandated disclosure, the governing body shall take any one of the following steps:
 1. In the case of the Governing body members:
 - a. Vote for removal pursuant to the City Charter as amended
 - b. Vote to publicly censure the offending member
 - c. Vote to place the matter on file
 - d. Vote for innocence of any wrong doing

2. In the case of all officers and employees the governing body, consistent with the Merit System and any applicable bargaining agreements, shall:
 - a. Vote for removal
 - b. Vote for dismissal
 - c. Vote for suspension for a definite period
 - d. Vote for the censuring
 - e. Vote to place the matter on file
 - f. Vote for innocence of any wrongdoing.

B. Criminal Sanctions: In addition to the civil sanctions imposed by this ordinance, violation of any provision of this ordinance shall constitute a criminal offense and the City Council may authorize the City Attorney or any other attorney approved by it to prosecute such a violation in the Portsmouth District Court.

The penalty for violation of any provision of this Ordinance upon conviction in the Portsmouth District Court shall be \$1,000 for each offense.

(Adopted In Its Entirety 4/4/88)

Transaction:

> Buying or selling of

Something,
kinds or
of goods,

~~goods, services or~~
exchange or transfer
services or funds