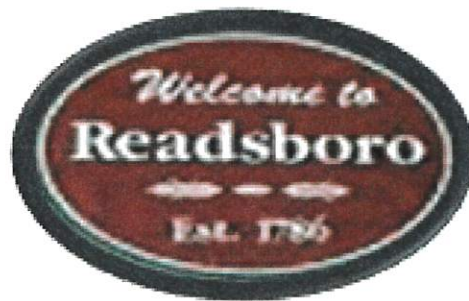


# Personnel Policies

Town of Readsboro, Vermont



**Adoption Date: March 1, 2023**  
**Effective Date: March 1, 2023**

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## **Section 1: Title and Authority**

This policy shall be known as the Town of Readsboro personnel policy. It has been adopted by the Town of Readsboro Selectboard pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 1121 and 1122.

This personnel policy does not constitute a contract of employment. Employment with the Town of Readsboro is *at will* and not for any definite period or succession of periods of time. The Town or the employee may terminate employment at any time, with or without notice. The Selectboard reserves the right to amend any of the provisions of this personnel policy for any reason and at any time, with or without notice.

This personnel policy will be administered by the Selectboard or their authorized representative. Any reference to authority of the Town will be the responsibility of the Selectboard as duly elected representatives of the Town of Readsboro, VT.

## **Section 2: Persons Covered**

This personnel policy applies to full-time and part-time employees of the Town of Readsboro. Except as stated herein, elected officers and their statutory assistants, members of Town boards and commissions, volunteers, seasonal employees and persons who provide the Town with services on a contract basis are not covered by this policy.

For purposes of this policy, a full-time employee is an employee who works at least forty (40) hours per week on a regular and continuing basis. A part-time employee is an employee who works fewer than forty (40) hours per week on a regular and continuing basis.

If/When the positions of the elected Town Clerk and elected Town Treasurer are the same individual the benefit package of a full-time employee will be provided to that individual as indicated in Section 17: Eligibility for Benefits.

Employees are required to adhere to all safety and dress code policies. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

All employees shall be available by phone contact, pagers, or other approved form of communication, for emergency situations during non-working hours. The Selectboard, a member of the Selectboard, or their authorized representative will have discretion on what constitutes an emergency. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure accurate and timely contact information is on file. It is expected that each employee will respond in a timely manner, if/when emergencies occur.

Where a conflict exists between this policy and any relevant policy or individual employment contract, the latter will control.

## **Section 3: Equal Employment Opportunity**

The policy of the Town of Readsboro is to provide equal opportunity to all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, nationality origin, marital status, disability, veteran's status or any other category under local, state or federal law.

#### **Section 4: Licensing Requirements**

- Employee shall possess or be eligible within twelve (12) months of employment to possess and maintain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) sufficient to operate town equipment.
- If applicable, employees shall possess an appropriate State of Vermont Public Water System Operators Certificate as determined by Vermont ANR and Department of Environmental Conservation Class 4B or better and Grade 1 Domestic Wastewater License, or the ability to obtain said certificate within the timetable established by the certifying agency. If after 3 attempts the employee fails to obtain the required licenses it will be the sole responsibility of the employee to pay for cost associated with obtaining them.

#### **Section 5: Probationary Period**

All new employees will be required to complete a three hundred and sixty-five (365) day probationary period. The purpose of this probationary period is to determine whether the employee is suited for the job. During the probationary period, an employee may be terminated at any time at the sole discretion of the Town. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, an employee terminated during the probationary period will have no right to appeal such termination.

#### **Section 6: Conduct of Employees**

All employees are considered representatives of the Town and as such are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous, helpful and respectful manner in all their interactions with the public and other employees.

All employees are expected to faithfully execute the duties and responsibilities of their position to the best of their ability and in compliance with the provisions of this personnel policy.

#### **Section 7: Hours of Service**

Regular work hours for the Department of Public Works (DPW) shall be 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with thirty (30) minutes allowed for lunch, unless the DPW Superintendent and the Selectboard or their designee agree otherwise.

Other town offices will clearly indicate and post their offices hours to the public. (e.g. DPW Office, Municipal Transfer Station)

Regular work hours may be changed and employees may be expected to work additional hours that may exceed forty (40) hours in a given week, as circumstances require.

All employees are expected to be in attendance during regular work hours. Employees who will be absent from work are expected to notify their supervisor in advance whenever possible. Employees who are calling in sick are expected to notify their Supervisor prior to the beginning of the work day.

### **Section 8: Gratuities and Gifts**

Employees may not directly or indirectly ask, demand, exact, solicit, accept or receive a gift, gratuity, act or promise beneficial to that individual, or another, which could influence any action or inaction associated with their official duties on behalf of the Town, or create the appearance of impropriety in connection with any actions or inactions associated with their official duties on behalf of the town.

### **Section 9: Outside Employment**

The primary occupation of all full-time employees shall be to the Town. Employees may not engage in any outside business activities during their normal working hours. Employees are prohibited from undertaking outside employment that interferes with their job performance or constitutes a conflict of interest.

Prior to accepting any outside employment, employees will disclose their intent to their Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative, in writing and obtain prior clearance from the Town that such employment does not constitute a conflict of interest. (See adopted Conflict of Interest Policy).

A conflict of interest means a direct or indirect personal or financial interest of an employee, his or her close relative, household member, business associate, employer or employee. A close relative includes a spouse, civil union partner, romantic co-habitant, parent, stepparent, grandparent, child, stepchild, grandchild, sibling, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, parent-in-law and sibling-in-law.

### **Section 10: Political Activity**

No employee may use his or her official authority for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the nomination or election of any candidate for public official, or demand or solicit from any individual direct or indirect participation in any political party, political organization or support of any political candidate. Employees are prohibited from using Town facilities, equipment or resources for political purposes and from pursuing political activities while working.

This personnel policy is not to be construed to prevent employees from becoming or continuing to be members of any political party or organization, from attending political party or organization meetings or events, or from expressing their views on political matters, so long as these views are clearly articulated as being those of the individual and not of the Town, and these activities do not interfere with the individual's ability to effectively perform his or her duties and take place or are expressed during non-working hours. Nor is this personnel policy to be construed from prohibiting, restraining or in any manner limiting an individual's right to vote with complete freedom in any election.

### **Section 11: Nepotism**

The Town – in recognition of the potential for a conflict of interest to occur in the workplace where a close relative is responsible for supervising or evaluating the work performance of another close relative – discourages the hiring or transferring of relatives, when doing so will result in a close relative supervising or evaluating another close relative, or a close relative supervising or evaluating the immediate supervision of another close relative.

A close relative includes parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse and children of either the employee or the employee's spouse.

### **Section 12: Alcohol and Drug Use**

Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited, unless the drug is prescribed and used in the manner prescribed by a duly licensed physician or dentist

All Town employees who are required to hold commercial drivers' licenses as part of their employment with the town are subject to pre-employment and regular random drug and alcohol testing in accordance with the Department of Transportation rules and procedure. Procedures and policies are outlined in the Town's Drug and Alcohol Policy for CMV Operators. Employees who are found to be using illegal drugs or alcohol on the job will be subject to immediate dismissal.

### **Section 13: Possession of Firearms**

Employees shall not possess a firearm while in any Municipally owned vehicle and may not engage in any recreational activities during working hours.

### **Section 14: Tobacco Use**

In recognition of the hazards that tobacco poses to the health of employees, and in accordance with 18 V.S.A. §§ 1421 et seq. and §§ 1741 et seq., the Town hereby prohibits employees' use of tobacco in any form in all publicly owned buildings, offices and enclosed areas, and in all Town vehicles.

## **Section 15: Annual Performance and Motor Vehicle Evaluations**

Employees may be subject to job performance evaluations at such times and in such manner as the Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative deems reasonable. At the beginning of each evaluation period and again at the mid-point of the annual period, the supervisor shall discuss goals and objectives that are expected of the employee. The results of such evaluations will be submitted to the employee. If deficiencies are noted by a supervisor, there shall be a corrective action program created to cure these deficiencies. The supervisor and employee shall meet and discuss all aspect of the deficiencies and what improvement(s) is/are expected. The plan shall be in writing with copies provided to the employee and will be placed in the employees personnel file and will become a part of the employee's personnel file.

Employees will also be subject to the following Commercial Driver License Motor Vehicle evaluations:

- annual motor vehicle records check,
- annual review of driving record,
- annual limited query of the Federal Motor Car Safety Administration (FMCSA) Clearinghouse in accordance with §382.701(b)(2),
- annual driver self-certification of motor vehicle violations under §391.27

## **Section 16: Personnel Records**

Personnel records will be maintained for each employee of the Town. In accordance with Vermont's Public Records Law, any employee or the employee's designated representative may inspect or copy his or her personnel file at a mutually agreeable time during regular office hours. The Town reserves the right to have its representative present at the time its files are examined or copied.

## **Section 17: Use of Town Equipment**

The use of Town equipment or property for personal use is strictly prohibited.

- No equipment shall be removed from Town property (premises/buildings) without authorization from the Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative.
- Only Town employees or Selectboard members are allowed in/on Town vehicles/equipment.
- All lights shall be turned off, and air condition units shall be turned off. In colder seasons the heat shall be turned down when buildings are not being utilized.
- Damages to equipment shall be reported to the Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative immediately.

## **Section 18: Use of Town Computer System**

The Town computer system is to be used by employees for the purpose of conducting Town business. Occasional, brief, and appropriate personal use of the Town computer system is

permitted, provided it is consistent with this policy and does not interfere with an employee's job duties and responsibilities.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding anything created, sent or received on the Town computer system. The Town may monitor any and all computer transactions, communications and transmissions to ensure compliance with this policy and to evaluate the use of its computer system. All files, documents, data and other electronic messages created, received or stored on the Town computer system are open to review and regulation by the Town and may be subject to the provisions of Vermont's Public Records Law.

Employees may not introduce software from any outside source on the Town's computer system without explicit prior authorization from their supervisor. Employees may be held responsible for any damages caused by using unauthorized software or viruses they introduce into the Town computer system.

Employees who have a confidential password to access the Town's operating system should be aware that this does not mean the computer system is for personal confidential communication, nor does it suggest that the computer system is the property of that person.

Transmission of electronic messages on the Town computer system shall be treated with the same degree of propriety, professionalism, and confidentiality as written correspondence. The following are examples of uses of the Town computer system which are prohibited:

- Communications that in any way may be construed by others as disruptive, offensive, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, or threatening;
- Communications of sexually explicit images or messages;
- Transmission of chain letters or solicitations for personal gain, commercial or investment ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non job-related solicitations during or after work hours;
- Access to Internet resources, including web sites, social media and news groups, that are inappropriate in a business setting;
- Any other use that may compromise the integrity of the Town and its business in any way.

Email messages that are intended to be temporary, non-substantive communications may be routinely discarded. However employees must recognize that emails sent, received, or stored on the Town computer system are subject to Vermont's Public Records Law and may be covered by the State of Vermont's retention schedule for municipal records.

For purposes of this section, computer system means all computer-related components and equipment including, but not limited to, host computers, file servers, workstation terminals, laptops, software, internal or external communication networks, the world wide web (www), the Internet, commercial online services, bulletin board systems, back up systems, and the internal and external e-mail systems accessed via the Town's computer equipment. Use of technology for personal use must be done on approved personal time, i.e. lunch break.



## **Section 19: Eligibility for Benefits**

The town currently offers the following group insurance programs, (i.e. Health, Dental, Vision, Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Weekly Income Insurance (Short-Term Disability, and Long-Term Disability), for the benefit of its eligible full-time employees, after ninety (90) days from date of hire. Specifics of these programs will be determined by the Selectboard.

The town reserves the right to change insurance carriers, or to add, delete or amend insurance benefit programs in its sole discretion. The town also reserves the right to change the amount or percentage of its contribution to the cost of any group health insurance program. Employees will be provided with advance notice of any change in the contribution rate.

In regards to the uniform policy of the Town of Readsboro, the DPW Crew is in agreement to buying their own uniforms with an annual allotment, set up by the Town, after ninety (90) days from date of hire. The town reserves the right to change this agreement at any time to deem a purchasing of stated uniforms for the crew instead of issuing above based allotment.

With an equitable annual allotment, to be set by the Selectboard, it would be possible to purchase 5 sets of pants, Hi-Viz T-shirts and shirts as well as a pair of boots that would be ASTM compliant. All shirts will have Readsboro DPW embroidered on shirt.

## **Section 20: Holiday Leave**

After ninety (90) days from date of hire, full-time employees will receive the following paid holiday leave:

1. New Year's Day (January 1)
2. Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
3. Independence Day (July 4)
4. Labor Day (1<sup>st</sup> Monday in September)
5. Thanksgiving Day (4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in November)
6. Veterans Day (November 11)
7. Christmas Day (December 25)

Employees will receive holiday leave pay at the employee's regular rate of pay. Under emergency conditions, employees working on a holiday will received one and one half (1 ½) times the regular rate of pay.

Holidays falling on a Saturday will be observed the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed the following Monday.

A full-time employee who is required to work on a holiday will be compensated at the rate of one and one-half times (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay.

If a full-time employee is not required to work on a holiday, hours paid for the holiday *will* be counted as hours worked when determining overtime compensation.

Holidays that fall during an employee's vacation leave will not be charged as vacation leave.

At no time will there be fewer than two (2) DPW employees on staff during working days.

**Section 21: Vacation Leave**

Eligibility and accrual of Vacation Leave is effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every Calendar Year.

Full time employees will accrue vacation at the following annual rates:

<u>Years of Consecutive Town Service</u>	<u>Annual Accrual Rate</u>
After 1 <sup>st</sup> year	One (1) Week
After 2 <sup>nd</sup> through 9 <sup>th</sup> year	Two (2) Weeks
10 <sup>th</sup> year through 14 <sup>th</sup> year	Three (3) Weeks
15 <sup>th</sup> through 24 <sup>th</sup> year	Four (4) Weeks

Full-time employees will receive vacation leave pay at the employee's regular rate of pay.

Employees are strongly encouraged to take an annual vacation. If an employee does not use all of the employee's vacation leave in a year, the employee may not carry unused vacation leave forward to the next year. If an employee has unused vacation leave, the employee will be compensated for this excess unused leave at a rate equal to the employee's regular rate of pay on the last day of the year of employment in which vacation leave was received. The employee may request accrued vacation pay be paid out at any point in the year in the event the employee works through their prior approved vacation. Pay out of vacation time is subject to the approval of their immediate Supervisor and the Selectboard.

Vacation leave weeks request shall be submitted to the supervisor. The supervisor shall decide to approve or deny request for vacation leave weeks, no less than one (1) month prior to the date of the request. The supervisor may consider the employees employment seniority date in deliberating multiple request for the same week(s).

Vacation Leave weeks may be utilized in one (1) day increments with twenty four (24) hour prior approval of the Supervisor.

The approval process to utilize Vacation Leave in less than whole week increments will be such that the employee shall fill out a request for leave as indicated on the form (Addendum B).

At no time will there be fewer than two (2) DPW employees on staff during working days.

**Section 22: Sick Leave**

Effective January 1, 2017, any employee who is age 18 or older, and work an average of 18 or more hours per week, and is working more than 20 weeks during the year, will receive at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 52 hours worked in accordance with Vermont's new Paid Sick Leave Law. Employees may be required to provide reasonable proof that the use of

employee's use of earned Sick time is for one of the purposes allowed by the Sick Leave Law. Employees are allowed to use accrued sick leave for the five (5) reasons as outlined by the law:

1. The employee is ill or injured.
2. The employee obtains professional diagnostic, preventive, routine, or therapeutic health care.
3. The employee cares for a sick or injured parent, grandparent, spouse, child, brother, sister, parent-in-law, grandchild, or foster child, including helping that individual obtain diagnostic, preventive, routine, or therapeutic health treatment, or accompanying the employee's parent, grandparent, spouse, or parent-in-law to an appointment related to his or her long-term care.
4. The employee is arranging for social or legal services or obtaining medical care or counseling for the employee or for the employee's parent, grandparent, spouse, child, brother, sister, parent-in-law, grandchild, or foster child, who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, or who is relocating as the result of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. As used in this section, "domestic violence", "sexual assault", and "stalking" shall have the same meanings as in 15 V.S.A. § 1151.
5. The employee cares for a parent, grandparent, spouse, child, brother, sister, parent-in-law, grandchild, or foster child, because the school or business where that individual is normally located during the employee's workday is closed for public health or safety reasons.

Sick Leave may be utilized in one (1) hour increments.

Waiting Period, Accrual Limits, Carryover, Termination or Retirement:

Waiting Period: There is no waiting period before employees can use their accrued Sick Leave.

Accrual Limits of Sick Leave: Accrual limits of Sick Leave are capped at 56 hours in a 12-month period.

Carryover of Sick Leave: The accrued amount of the required Sick Leave will be carried over at the beginning of the year.

Termination: Upon Termination or Retirement, the employee will not be paid for any accrued, unused Sick Leave.

### **Section 23: Personal Days**

Full time employees, after ninety (90) days from date of hire, will receive six (6) paid personal days per year.

An employee may use Personal leave for personal reasons.

Full-time employees will receive Personal Leave pay at the employee's regular rate of pay. The employee shall in advance request in writing to use of Personal time. Approval shall be indicated twenty-four (24) hours in advance in writing. This documentation shall be attached to the

employee's time card by the authorizing Supervisor. Personal Time may be utilized in two (2) hour increments. Time will be permitted to use such time off within a reasonable period, if such use does not unduly disrupt the Town's operations. Requests for use of Personal time must be submitted to the employee's Supervisor, who will have sole discretion to grant or deny the request. The approval process to utilize Personal Leave will be such that the employee shall fill out a request for leave as indicated on the form (Addendum B).

At no time will there be no fewer than two (2) DPW employees on staff during working days.

Upon separation from employment, an employee will not be compensated for unused Personal Leave. At no time shall these days be accumulated beyond each year.

#### **Section 24: Bereavement Leave**

Full time employees, after ninety (90) days from date of hire, will receive three (3) paid bereavement leave days per year. Employees may use bereavement leave for the death of an immediate family member, as defined as: parents, grandparents, siblings, spouse and children of either the employee or the employee's spouse.

Pay for bereavement leave will be at the employee's regular rate of pay.

Upon separation from employment, an employee will not be compensated for unused bereavement leave. At no time shall these days be accumulated beyond each year.

#### **Section 25: Parental and Family Leave**

Eligible employees may receive leave as described in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Vermont Parental and Family Leave Act (PFLA). These federal and state laws will determine employee eligibility, the qualifying reasons for such leave and the length of leave.

The Town reserves the right to designate any qualifying leave of absence granted under this policy as leave under FMLA or the PFLA. Where an employee's leave request is covered by the PFLA and the FMLA, the Town will adhere to the law that provides the most benefits to the employee. If an employee is entitled to leave under both the PFLA and FMLA, the leave periods will run concurrently.

For the purposes of determining the twelve month period in which an employee may be entitled to PFLA and/or FMLA leave, the Town will use a rolling twelve-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses such leave.

#### **Section 26: Short Term Family Leave**

In accordance with the Vermont Short Term Family Leave Law, eligible employees may be entitled to take unpaid leave not to exceed four hours in any thirty-day period and not to exceed twenty-four hours in any twelve month period for the following purposes:

- To participate in preschool or school activities directly related to the academic educational advancement of the employee's child, step-child, foster child, or ward;
- To attend or accompany the employee's child or other family member to routine medical or dental appointments;
- To accompany the employee's parent, spouse or parent-in-law to other appointments for professional services related to their care and well-being; or
- To respond to a medical emergency of the employee's family member.

The Town may require that leave be taken in a minimum of two-hour segments. At the option of the employee, accrued paid leave may be used. An employee shall make a reasonable attempt to schedule appointments for which leave may be taken outside of regular work hours. An employee shall provide the Town with the earliest possible notice of the intent to take short term family leave, but in no case later than seven days before leave is to be taken, except in the case of an emergency.

#### **Section 27: Leave of Absence Without Pay**

All requests for leaves of absence without pay for any reason other than those covered by federal or state law must be submitted in writing to the employee's Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative and must set forth the purpose for which the leave is requested. All leave requests must be for a definite period of time and include a specified date of return.

If a leave of absence without pay is granted, the employee may, at the Town's sole discretion, continue the employee's group health plan coverage by paying the required premium in accordance with the payment schedule established by the Town. Other employee benefits (e.g. Personal leave, vacation, seniority, etc.) will not accrue during the unpaid leave period.

#### **Section 28: Military Leave**

The Town will comply with the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. §§ 4303 et seq., and 21 V.S.A. §§ 491 et seq. Employees who take military leave subject to the provisions of these laws will be granted leave without pay. At the option of the employee, any paid leave accrued prior to the commencement of the leave may be used.

#### **Section 29: Jury Leave**

The Town will compensate employees for their service as jurors or witnesses at their regular rate of pay. In accordance with 21 V.S.A. § 499, employees will otherwise be considered in the

service of the Town for purposes of determining seniority, benefits, credit towards vacations, leave, and other rights, privileges, and benefits of employment.

When Town employees are called to serve as a witness in a court proceeding due to their status as an employee of the Town, the Town will compensate the employee for the difference between their regular rate of pay and their compensation as a witness. The Town will pay the difference only when the employees' regular rate of pay exceeds their compensation as a witness.

### **Section 30: Overtime and Compensatory Time Off**

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Town compensates all nonexempt employees at the rate of one and one-half hours for each hour actually worked in excess of eight (8) hours of contiguous work effort in any workday. At the discretion of the Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative, DPW employees may be given time off during the normal work week, in order to work weekends, without incurring overtime pay. Employees employed in executive, administrative or professional capacities as defined by the FLSA are exempt from this requirement.

In lieu of overtime pay, nonexempt employees may accrue compensatory time off ("comp time") subject to the following conditions:

- Comp time is earned at a rate of one and one half hours for each hour worked in excess of eight (8) hours of contiguous work effort in any workday.
- An employee may accrue a maximum of forty hours of comp time (40 hours of comp time represents 26.67 hours of actual overtime work). An employee who has accrued 40 hours of comp time will be paid overtime compensation for additional overtime hours of work.
- An employee may, at the Town's discretion, be paid in cash in lieu of compensatory time off.
- An employee receiving payment for accrued comp time will be paid at the regular rate of pay earned by the employee at the time the employee receives such payment.
- Upon termination from employment, an employee will be paid for unused comp time at a rate not less than the average regular rate of pay received by the employee during the last three years of employment or the employee's final regular rate of pay, whichever is higher.

An employee who has accrued comp time and requested use of comp time will be permitted to use such time off within a reasonable period after making the request, if such use does not unduly disrupt the Town's operations. Requests for use of comp time must be submitted to the employee's Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative, who will have sole discretion to grant or deny the request. Requests for use of comp time will not unreasonably be withheld.

The employee shall fill out a request for leave as indicated on the form (Addendum B)

At no time will there be no fewer than two (2) DPW employees on staff during working days.

### **Section 31: Employment Discrimination**

Vermont and federal law prohibit employment discrimination or retaliation based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, sex or age, or against a qualified individual with a disability with respect to all employment practices. Vermont law also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, ancestry, HIV status, and place of birth. It is also unlawful to retaliate against employees or applicants who have alleged employment discrimination.

Employees are encouraged to bring any complaints alleging unlawful discrimination to the attention of the employee's Supervisor/Selectboard or authorized representative who will arrange a meeting to discuss the matter. The meeting will take place as soon as reasonably possible, but in no case later than seven calendar days from receipt of notification. If the Supervisor/Selectboard or authorized representative is unable to resolve the matter during this meeting, the aggrieved party may submit to the Selectboard or authorized representative a written, signed complaint within seven additional calendar days. The Selectboard or authorized representative will then have an additional fifteen calendar days in which to conduct an investigation and to issue a report with recommendations to the Selectboard. The Selectboard will, within ten calendar days, notify the aggrieved party of its decision.

### **Section 32: Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal under federal and Vermont law and is strictly prohibited. The Town is committed to providing a workplace free from this unlawful conduct. All employees have the right to work without being subjected to insulting, degrading or exploitative treatment on the basis of their gender. It is against the policies of the Town for any individual, male or female, to sexually harass another individual in the workplace. In accordance with 21 V.S.A. § 495h, the Town has adopted the following sexual harassment policy. All employees are required to read this policy before signing the employee acknowledgement form.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a component of the basis for employment decisions affecting that individual; or
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to, the following when such instances or behavior come within one of the above definitions:

- either explicitly or implicitly conditioning any term of employment (e.g., continued employment, wages, evaluation, advancement, assigned duties or shifts) on the provision of sexual favors;
- touching or grabbing a sexual part of an individual's body;
- touching or grabbing any part of an individual's body after that party has indicated, or it is known, that such physical contact was unwelcome;

- continuing to ask an individual to socialize on or off-duty when that person has indicated he/she is not interested;
- displaying or transmitting sexually suggestive pictures, objects, cartoons or posters if it is known or should be known that the behavior is unwelcome;
- continuing to write sexually suggestive notes or letters if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- referring to or calling a person a sexualized name if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- regularly telling sexual jokes or using sexually vulgar or explicit language in the presence of a person if it is known or should be known that the person does not welcome such behavior;
- retaliation of any kind for having filed or supported a complaint of sexual harassment (e.g., ostracizing the person, pressuring the person to drop or not support the complaint, adversely altering that person's duties or work environment, etc.);
- derogatory or provoking remarks about or relating to an employee's sex;
- harassing acts or behavior directed against a person on the basis of his or her sex;
- off-duty conduct which falls within the above definition and affects the work environment.

It is also unlawful to retaliate against employees for filing a complaint of sexual harassment or for cooperating in an investigation of sexual harassment.

Any individual who believes that she or he has been the target of sexual harassment, or who believes she or he has been subjected to retaliation for having brought or supported a complaint of harassment, is encouraged to directly inform the offending person or persons that such conduct is offensive and must stop.

Any employee who wishes to report sexual harassment should contact:

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The Selectboard or Agent  
 Town of Readsboro, VT  
 301 Phelps Lane / P. O. Box 187  
 Readsboro, VT 05350  
 Office: (802) 423-5405  
 Direct: (802) 423-5652  
 Fax: (802) 423-5423

Once the Town receives a complaint of sexual harassment, it will take all necessary steps to ensure that the matter is promptly investigated and addressed. If sexual harassment is found to have occurred, the Town will take appropriate action, ranging from a verbal warning up to and including dismissal.

Complaints of sexual harassment or retaliation may also be filed with the following agencies:

Vermont Attorney General's Office  
 Civil Rights Unit  
 109 State Street  
 Montpelier, VT 05609-1001  
 Tel: (802) 828-3171 (voice/TODD)



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
1 Congress Street  
Boston, MA 02114  
Tel: (617) 565-3200 (voice), (617) 565-3204 (TODD).

These agencies may conduct impartial investigations, facilitate conciliation, and, if they find that there is probable cause or reasonable grounds to believe sexual harassment occurred, they may take a case to court.

### **Section 32: Employee Discipline**

The Town of Readsboro has adopted a progressive discipline process to identify and address employee and employment related problems. The Town's progressive discipline process applies to any and all employee conduct that the Town, in its sole discretion, determines must be addressed by discipline.

The progressive discipline process does not apply to elected officers and their statutory assistants. However, an elected officer may choose to follow the requirements of this policy for discipline and termination of his or her statutory assistants. A statutory assistant means an individual appointed to his or her position by an elected officer of the Town having express statutory authority to appoint an assistant. Statutory assistants include the assistant Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Treasurer.

Under the town's progressive discipline process, an employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for violation of the provisions of this personnel policy and/or failure to maintain an acceptable level of performance. The Town may take prior disciplinary action into consideration when disciplining or terminating an employee. Violations of different rules may be treated as repeated violations of the same rule for purposes of progressive discipline.

Most often, employee conduct that warrants discipline results from unacceptable behavior, poor performance, or violation of the Town's policies, practices, or procedures. However, discipline may be issued for conduct that falls outside of those identified areas. The Town also reserves the right to impose discipline for off-duty conduct that adversely impacts the legitimate interests of the Town. The Town reserves the right in its sole discretion to bypass progressive discipline and to take whatever action it deems necessary to address the issue at hand. This means that more or less severe discipline, up to and including termination may be imposed in a given situation at the Town's sole discretion.

The Town also retains the right to unilaterally eliminate positions or reduce the work hours of a position or positions due to economic conditions, shortage of work, organizational efficiency, changes in departmental functions, reorganization or reclassification of positions resulting in the elimination of a position or for other related reasons.

Probationary employees are not subject to the Town's progressive discipline process. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, an employee terminated during the probationary period will have no right to appeal such termination.

The Town will normally adhere to the following progressive disciplinary process, but reserves the right to bypass any or all steps of progressive discipline when it determines, in its sole discretion, that deviation from the process is warranted: (1) verbal warning; (2) written warning; (3) suspension; and (4) termination.

Employees are prohibited from engaging in conduct listed below and may receive discipline, up to and including termination, for doing so. This list has been established to provide examples of behavior that could warrant a range of disciplinary sanctions. Appropriate levels of discipline may be based on the severity of employee conduct. This list is not exhaustive.

- Refusing to do assigned work or failing to carry out the reasonable assignments of a Supervisor/Selectboard or their authorized representative.
- Being inattentive to duty, including sleeping on the job.
- Falsifying a time card or other record or giving false information to anyone whose duty is to make such record.
- Being repeatedly or continuously absent or late, being absent without notice or satisfactory reason or leaving one's work assignment without appropriate authorization.
- Conducting oneself in any manner that is offensive, abusive or contrary to reasonable community standards and expectations of public employees.
- Engaging in any form of harassment including sexual harassment.
- Misusing, misappropriating, or willfully neglecting Town property, funds, materials, equipment or supplies.
- Unlawfully distributing, selling, possessing, using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs when on the job or subject to duty.
- Fighting, engaging in horseplay or acting in any manner which endangers the safety of oneself or others. This includes acts of violence as well as threats of violence.
- Stealing or possessing without authority any equipment, tools, materials or other property of the Town or attempting to remove them from the premises without approval or permission from the appropriate authority.
- Marking or defacing walls, fixtures, equipment, tools, materials or other Town property, or willfully damaging or destroying property in any way.
- Willful violation of Town rules or policies.

### **Section 33: Employee Termination Process**

The Town of Readsboro has adopted an employment termination process. Most often, employee conduct that warrants termination results from unacceptable behavior, poor performance, or violation of the Town's policies, practices, or procedures. However, termination may result from conduct that falls outside of those identified areas. The Town need not utilize this termination process but may take whatever action it deems necessary to address the issue at hand.

The Town also retains the right to unilaterally eliminate a position and thus terminate employment or reduce the work hours for some or all employees due to economic conditions, shortage of work, organizational efficiency, changes in departmental functions, reorganization or

reclassification of positions resulting in the elimination of a position or for other related reasons. In such case, this termination process does not apply.

Probationary employees are not subject to the Town's termination process. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, an employee terminated during the probationary period will have no right to appeal such termination.

An employee being considered for termination will be provided with a written notice. The notice will contain a brief statement of the reasons termination is being considered and the date, time and place of a pre-termination meeting with the employee's supervisor. (The Town reserves the right to suspend the employee with or without pay for any reasonable length of time)

At the pre-termination meeting, the employee will be afforded an opportunity to present the employee's response to the reasons for termination. If the employee declines to attend the pre-termination meeting, the employee may submit written response to the pre-termination notice not later than the scheduled date of the meeting.

Within seven days of the date of the meeting, the supervisor will provide the employee with a written notice informing the employee whether he/she has been terminated. If the employee has been terminated, the notice will provide the general reasons therefore and will also inform the employee of the opportunity to request a post-termination hearing before the Selectboard by giving written notice of such request to the supervisor within seven days. The employee will be informed that the employee's failure to make a timely request for a post-termination hearing will result in such hearing being waived.

If a request for a post-termination hearing is made, the Selectboard will provide the employee with a notice informing the employee of the date, time, and place of the post-termination hearing before the Selectboard. The notice will inform the employee of his or her right to be represented by counsel, to present and cross-examine witnesses and to offer supporting documents and evidence. The notice will also inform the employee of his or her right to have the hearing conducted in executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313.

At the post-termination hearing, the employee will be afforded the opportunity to address the basis for termination by hearing and examining the evidence presented against the employee, cross-examining witnesses and presenting evidence on his/her behalf. The Selectboard will make such determinations as may be necessary in the event of evidentiary objections or disputes. When the hearing is adjourned, the Selectboard, under the authority granted by 1 V.S.A. § 313(e), will consider the evidence presented in the hearing in deliberative session.

The Selectboard will render a written decision within fourteen days after close of the hearing, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties.

#### **Section 34: Other laws**

This personnel policy shall control in the event of a conflict between its provisions and any other written or oral communications. Alternately, the provisions of this personnel policy shall be

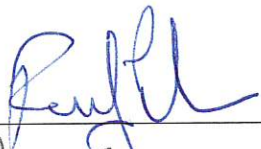
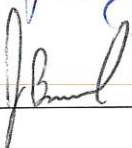
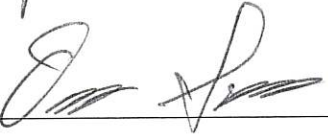
deemed superseded by any conflicting applicable federal or State law, Town ordinance or Charter provision.

**Section 35: Severability**

If any provision of this Personnel Policy or the application hereof to any person or a circumstance(s) is held invalid, this invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of the personnel rules which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. For this purpose, this Personnel Policy is severable.

ADOPTED this 1st day of March, 2023.

**SIGNATURES of SELECTBOARD:**

	_____	Raymond Eilers, Chair
	_____	Joseph Berard
	_____	Omar Smith

## **Addendum A: Annual Personnel Acknowledgement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that:

- A. I received a copy of the Town's personnel policy on \_\_\_\_\_;
- B. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about said policy and I have been provided with satisfactory information in response to my questions;
- C. I understand that the language used in this personnel policy is not intended to create, nor should it be construed to create, a contract of employment between myself and the Town;
- D. I acknowledge that the Town reserves the right to add, amend or discontinue any of the provisions of this policy for any reason or none at all, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice;
- E. I acknowledge that I understand the Town's personnel policy and I agree that I will comply with all of its provisions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

cc: Employee Personnel File

**Addendum B**  
**Request for Leave Form**

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_ (with date & time clock stamp)

Time clock stamp:
-------------------

I, \_\_\_\_\_ request the following time  
(PRINT FULL NAME)

\_\_\_\_\_ Vacation Leave | \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Leave

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please indicate what type)

---

Supervisor Approval:

Approval/Denied Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (with time  
clock stamp)

Time clock stamp must be at least 24 hours prior to the day of request:
--

Additional Supervisor comments:

cc: Employee Personnel File

## Addendum C: Driver Record Annual Self-Certification Form

**This form provides documentation that the employee noted below has provided a certification of his/her driving record in accordance with 391.27 of the FMCSA standards. This form is to be completed annually by the CDL driver to certify his/her driving record for the past year.**

Name of driver making certification: \_\_\_\_\_

*I certify that the following is a true and complete list of motor vehicle traffic violations (other than parking violations) for which I have been convicted or forfeited bond or collateral during the past 12 months that have occurred in any motor vehicle in any of the 50 states.*

Date of conviction #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense location: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of motor vehicle operated: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of conviction #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Offense location: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of motor vehicle operated: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Provide additional details on the back page for any additional convictions as required above. Attach additional sheets if needed.**

**If no violations are listed above, I certify that I have not been convicted or forfeited bond or collateral on account of any violation required to be listed during the past 12 months.**

Driver's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of certification: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality name: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality's address: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer signature & title: \_\_\_\_\_