

## **1.0 Guiding Principles**

These Guiding Principles establish the Code of Ethics for officials and employees of the Town of Front Royal. It is a charter against which you may measure your own actions and against which you will be judged by those whom you serve. Use these Guiding Principles as your daily guide for the privilege of being in a position of public trust.

### **AS AN OFFICIAL OR EMPLOYEE OF THE TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL, I BELIEVE IT IS MY DUTY TO:**

Comply with the Town's Code of Ethics.

Be efficient, courteous, and impartial in the performance of my duties, assuring fair and equal treatment of all persons, claims, and transactions coming before me in my official capacity.

Work in full cooperation with other public employees in promoting the public welfare, recognizing that my private interest must always be subordinate to the public interest.

Make decisions conscientiously in compliance with public law and policies of the Town Council, and subordinate my personal views to the requirements of law, my duty to office, and the regulations of the department in which I perform my public duties.

Be scrupulously honest in handling public funds and in the conversion of public property, never using any funds or property under my care for private benefit of others or myself.

Never accept or engage in employment incompatible or in actual or possible conflict with my public duties.

Refuse to represent private interest before departments of the Town government or in the courts in any matter involving the interests of the Town as a party or in which my official position is a consideration.

Disclose all sources of income which may represent a conflict of interest with my official duties and to disclose the nature and extent of any personal interest in a business entity engaging in any transaction with the Town in which I may be involved in my official capacity as a public official or employee.

Refrain from disclosing confidential information concerning the Town government.

Refrain from accepting gifts or favors or promise of future benefit which might

compromise, or appear to reasonable people to compromise, my independence of judgment or action as a public official or employee.

Expose corruption wherever discovered.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

### **1.1 Declaration of Policy**

In order to ensure that (i) Town officials represent fully the public and (ii) Town citizens maintain the highest trust in their public officials and employees, the Town of Front Royal hereby adopts the Virginia Comprehensive Conflict of Interests Act for all Town officials and employees.

### **1.2 Responsibilities of Public Office**

Appointed officials and employees are agents of public purpose and hold office for the benefit of the public. They are bound to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia and to carry out impartially the laws of the nation, state and municipality and thus to foster respect for all government. They are bound to observe in their official acts the highest standards of morality and to discharge faithfully the duties of their office regardless of personal considerations, recognizing that the public interest must be their primary concern. Their conduct in both their official and private affairs should be above reproach.

### **1.3 Dedicated Service**

Officials and employees of the Town of Front Royal should be loyal to the political objectives expressed by the electorate as interpreted by the Council and the programs developed to attain those objectives. Appointed officials and employees should adhere to the rules of work and performance established as the standard for their positions by the appropriate authority. Officials and employees should not breach the law or ask others to do so, and they should work in full cooperation with other public officials and employees unless prohibited from doing so by law or by officially recognized confidentiality of their work.

### **1.4 Fair and Equal Treatment**

#### **A. Interest in Appointments**

Canvassing of members of the Council, directly or indirectly, in order to obtain preferential consideration in connection with any appointment to the municipal service shall disqualify the candidate for appointment except with reference to positions filled by appointment by the Council.

**B. Use of Public Property**

No official or employee shall request or permit the use of Town-owned vehicles, equipment, materials, or property for personal convenience or profit.

**C. Obligations to Citizens**

No official or employee shall grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any citizen beyond that which is available to every other citizen.

**1.5 Conflict of Interest**

No official or employee, whether paid or unpaid, shall engage in any business or transaction or shall have a financial or other personal interest, direct or indirect, which is incompatible with the proper discharge of his/her official duties in the public interest or would tend to impair his/her independence of judgment or action in the performance of his/her official duties. "Personal interest," as distinguished from "financial interest," includes an interest arising from blood or marriage relationships or close business or political association.

Specific conflicts of interest are enumerated below for the guidance of officials and employees.

**A. Incompatible Employment**

No official or employee shall engage in or accept private employment or render services for private interests when such employment or service is incompatible with the proper discharge of his/her official action in the performance of his/her official duties.

**B. Disclosure of Confidential Information**

No official or employee shall, without proper legal authorization, disclose confidential information concerning the property, government, or affairs of the Town. Nor shall he/she use such information to advance the financial or other private interest of himself/herself or others.

**C. Gifts and Favors**

No official or employee shall accept any valuable gifts, whether in the form of services, loans, things, or promises, from any person, firm, or corporation which to his/her knowledge is interested directly or indirectly in any manner whatsoever in business dealings with the Town; nor shall any such official or employee, (1) accept any gift, favor, or thing of value that may tend to influence him/her in the

discharge of his/her duties, or (2) grant in the discharge of his/her duties any improper favor, service, or thing of value.

**D. Representing Private Interests Before Town Agencies or Courts**

No official or employee whose salary is paid in whole or in part by the Town shall appear on behalf of private interests before any agency of the Town. He/She shall not represent private interests in any action or proceeding against the interests of the Town in any litigation to which the Town is a party.

Nothing in this **Code** shall deny any official or employee from appearing before any agency of the Town in his/her own behalf, provided the records of the proceedings clearly state the fact that he/she is appearing in his/her own behalf, and provided further that the nature of his/her interest is clearly set forth in the records.

**E. Contracts with the Town**

No official or employee shall have a personal interest in a contract with the department or board, committee, commission, or similar body of which he/she is an official or employee other than his/her own contract of employment.

No official or employee shall have a personal interest in a contract with any other department or board, committee, commission, or similar body of the Town of Front Royal unless such contract is (i) awarded as a result of competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation as defined in Virginia Code § 11-37 or is awarded as a result of a procedure embodying competitive principles as authorized by Virginia Code subsection D of § 11-35, or (ii) is awarded after a finding, in writing, by the Town Manager that competitive bidding or negotiation is contrary to the best interest of the public.

The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to:

1. An employee's personal interest in other contracts of employment with his/her own governmental agency which accrue to him/her because of a member of his/her immediate family, provided the employee does not exercise any control over the employment or the employment activities of the member of his/her immediate family and the employee is not in a position to influence those activities.
2. Contracts for the sale by a government agency of services or goods at uniform prices available to the general public.

**F. Disclosure of Interest in Legislation**

Any official or employee who has a personal or financial interest, and who participates in discussion with or gives an official opinion to the council, shall disclose on the records of the council or other appropriate authority the nature and extent of such interest.

## **1.6 Political Activity**

No appointive official or employee in the administrative service shall use the prestige of his/her position in behalf of any political faction. No appointive official or employee in the administrative service shall orally, by letter, or otherwise, solicit or be in any manner concerned in soliciting any assessment, subscription or contribution from any Town of Front Royal employee to any political faction, nor shall he/she be a party to such solicitation by others. No employee of the Town of Front Royal while in uniform, an occupant in any Town vehicle/equipment, or performing any official duties shall attempt in any manner to influence the ballot choice of any voter in a Town of Front Royal election. No appointive official shall take any active part in political campaigns for candidates for political office in the Town of Front Royal.

No official or employee, whether elected or appointed, shall promise an appointment to any municipal position as a reward for any political activity.

As used in this section, the term “appointive official” shall include only the following, the Town Manager, the Clerk of Council, and the Town Attorney.

## **1.7 Applicability of Code**

When officials or employees have doubt as to the applicability of a provision of this Code to a particular situation, they should apply to the Town Manager for an advisory opinion and be guided by that opinion when given.

## **1.8 Sanctions**

Violation of any provision of this **Code** should raise conscientious questions for the official or employee concerned as to whether voluntary resignation or other action is indicated to promote the best interest of the Town. Violation may constitute a cause for suspension, removal from office or employment, or other disciplinary action.