



Newtown Board of Ethics
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In an effort to provide responses to frequently asked questions about how the Board of Ethics operates, the following questions and answers may be helpful.

- 1) **Where does the authority for the Board of Ethics come from?** Our authority comes first from the Connecticut General Statutes, specifically 1-82a, and also from the Town Charter (Chapter 303 – Board of Ethics)
- 2) **Can I make an anonymous complaint?** No. The Town Charter requires that an ethics complaint be signed by the person making the complaint. This is to discourage frivolous complaints and to comply with the Charter's second requirement, that the person whose conduct is the subject of the complaint be told the name of the person who filed it. The Board of Ethics also requires the person making the complaint to sign the Complaint Petition and provide contact information. This is so that the Board can contact that person to request information for its investigation.
- 3) **Who may file a complaint and why might they want to?** Anyone may file a complaint if they believe that a violation of the Newtown Code of Ethics (Town Charter, Chapter 27 – Code of Ethics) has occurred. The Code of Ethics applies to all officials and/or employees of Town of Newtown as follows:
 - a. Elected or appointed officials of the Town, either paid or unpaid (voluntary)
 - b. Elected members and alternates of all boards and commissions
 - c. Appointed members and alternates of all boards, commissions and authorities and Town supported public services
 - d. Employees, which includes paid consultants, of the Town and of all boards, commissions, committees and authorities, including the Board of Education.
- 4) **Who is involved when a complaint is filed?** When a complaint is filed by the Complainant against a specific person or persons (the Respondent or Respondents), the Board of Ethics becomes involved to determine if a violation of the Code of Ethics occurred.
- 5) **What happens after a Complaint Petition is received?** Once a Complaint Petition has been received, the Board of Ethics must determine whether there is probable cause that the alleged violation occurred by investigating the complaint. If probable cause is found a



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public hearing will be held. Please see the Newtown Board of Ethics Complaint Processing Procedures document for more detail.

- 6) **Why are probable cause investigations confidential and/or held in Executive Session?** The Board of Ethics is required to do so under Connecticut statute 1-82a.
- 7) **When does the public find out that a complaint has been filed?** If probable cause was found to exist for a complaint, the Board of Ethics would schedule a public hearing to address the complaint. If, however, probable cause was not found to exist, everything related to the complaint remains confidential as required by Connecticut statute 1-82a. Please see the Newtown Board of Ethics Complaint Processing Procedures document for more detail.
- 8) **What happens at a hearing?** Please see the Newtown Board of Ethics Complaint Processing Procedures document for more detail.
- 9) **Can the Board of Ethics have an elected official removed from office?** No. The Board of Ethics cannot remove an elected official from office. Please see the Chapter 303 of the Newtown Charter and the Newtown Board of Ethics Complaint Processing Procedures document for more detail.
- 10) **What happens if the Respondent is found to have violated the Code of Ethics?** The Board of Ethics recommends action to the Board of Selectman who then take action as they deem appropriate. Please see Chapter 303-6B of the Newtown Charter.
- 11) **Are the meetings open to the public?** Yes. The public may attend any part of any meeting except for executive sessions. Meeting notices and agendas are published by the Newtown Town Clerk.

If you have general questions about the Newtown Board of Ethics and its operations, please contact the Chairman, Newtown Board of Ethics at: Jackie Villa, PO Box 127, Stephenson, CT 06491, (203) 364-1255.