

TOWN OF STRAFFORD

GRIEVANCE POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Town of Strafford to ensure that all employees have the right to voice their grievances in a safe and fair atmosphere without fear of retaliation. We recognize the importance of open communication between the Town and its employees in resolving disputes and maintaining a comfortable working environment. Thus, the Town of Strafford has adopted a procedure by which employee complaints will receive full and thorough consideration.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Misunderstandings, problems or conflicts can arise in any workplace. Many of these difficulties simply resolve themselves. We recognize, however, that some may persist and require special attention. The following formal grievance procedure will be followed, in so far as is possible, to hear and resolve situations that employees believe to be detrimental to themselves or to the Town of Strafford. The Town is committed to maintaining a positive working environment by providing timely and reasonable responses to employee grievances.

Step One--Communication with Supervisor: Initially, an informal discussion of the problem with the immediate supervisor is encouraged. If, however, the employee does not believe that such a discussion is appropriate, he or she may proceed directly to Step Two.

Step Two--Communication with a Selectman. If the problem is not resolved after a discussion with the supervisor or if it is felt that such a discussion would not be appropriate, the employee is encouraged to request a meeting with a Selectman designated to handle personnel grievance issues. The Selectman will investigate and respond within five working days.

Step Three--Formal Written Communication to the Board of Selectmen. If, after Step Two, the problem has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee should submit a written request for resolution to the Board of Selectmen as a whole. (Forms for Grievances and Requests for Problem Resolution are available.)

The Board of Selectmen will consider the facts, conduct an investigation and respond to the employee's concerns within ten working days. This written request should document all relevant information about the grievance, including what action has thus far been taken by the supervisor and/or the Selectman designated to handle personnel grievance problems.

Step Four--Final Conflict Resolution. If, after Steps One-Three, the problem has still not, to the employee's satisfaction, been resolved, the employee may have recourse to the judicial system.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Sexual harrassment is a form of discrimination against an employee because of gender or sexual orientation which involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It is illegal under both state and federal law.

Sexual harrassment occurs when:

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

It is a violation of the policy of the Town of Strafford for any employee, male or female, to sexually harrass another employee. The law requires that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Strafford take action upon learning of an incident of sexual harrassment, even if the affected employee does not wish to file a formal complaint. Any individual in a position which requires supervision of employees in the Town of Strafford is responsible for promptly responding to, or reporting, any complaint or suspected acts of such harrassment. Retaliation in any form is also a violation of this policy.

Step One--Documenting Incidents of Sexual Harrassment. If an employee feels he or she is being sexually harrassed, or if he or she feels that the working environment is conducive to sexual harrassment, the individual should document these incidents by listing dates, times, places, specific acts of harrassment and names of witnesses.

Step Two--Communication with Offending Person(s). The employee is encouraged to inform the offending person(s) that such conduct is not welcome and must stop.

Step Three--Communication with Supervisor or a Selectman. If the employee does not wish to discuss the matter with the offending person(s), or if direct communication has not been successful, the employee is encouraged to report the matter to his or her supervisor or, in the event that the Supervisor is the harrassing individual, the employee is encouraged to request a meeting with a Selectman designated to handle personnel grievance issues.

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It is the responsibility of the Supervisor or the Selectman designated to handle such grievances to investigate the complaint and to act promptly to stop the offending behavior. All information provided by the employee will be confidential.

Step Four--Formal Written Communication to the Board of Selectmen. Should the employee feel that the problem remains unresolved, then the employee may file a formal written complaint with the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen will investigate the matter and respond to the complainant in writing within seven working days.

Step Five--Further Recourse. Should the employee feel that the matter has still not been adequately addressed through Step Four, he or she may file a complaint with the following state or federal agencies:

- Vermont Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Unit, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, tel: (802) 828-3171. Complaints must be filed within 300 days of adverse action.
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02114, tel: (617) 565-3200. Complaints must be filed within 300 days of adverse action.

5/11/94
Date

Stephen Willbanks
Stephen Willbanks, Chair

Kendall Mix
Kendall Mix, Selectman

Tim Cadwell
Tim Cadwell, Selectman

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Attest: Roberta Robinson
Roberta Robinson, Town clerk