



# **THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN**

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Adopted by the Board of Selectmen on:  
February 2019

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## I. APPROVAL

This Employee Handbook is approved for distribution to all hourly, appointed, and elected employees of the Town of Voluntown.

Approved by the Board of Selectmen February 2019.

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Tracey L. Hanson  
First Selectman

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Ronald J. Millovitsch  
Selectman

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Mark Oulton  
Selectman

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook represents a collection of the Town's policies as they have been issued, revised and amended over time.

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with our Town and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as a Town employee and outlines the programs developed by the Town to benefit employees.

The practices, policies, plans and benefits in this handbook apply to all employees including those whose conditions of employment are covered by a separate agreement or the terms of a collective bargaining agreement. However, if the policies of this handbook differ from the terms of a separate agreement or collective bargaining agreement, the provisions and terms of the separate agreement or collective bargaining agreement shall apply exclusively.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As the Town continues to grow, the need may arise, at any time, to amend or terminate the practices, policies, plans and benefits described in this document. Any changes will supersede the contents of this document.

## **DISCLAIMER**

**This handbook is intended for information and guidance. Since this handbook is only a summary compiled for the convenience of our employees and supervisors, it is not intended to cover all topics or circumstances. It is not an employment contract or agreement of any type, either expressed or implied, does not guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of employment, or guarantee benefits or working conditions between any employee and the Town of Voluntown. Bear in mind that unless your employment is covered by a separate agreement or the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, providing for the contrary, your employment with the Town is not for any specific time and may be terminated at-will by you or the Town for any reason and at any time.**

**The Town may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of this handbook at any time without prior notice and any such action shall apply to existing as well as future employees. Continuation of employment after any such action constitutes consent to such action. Additionally, the Town reserves the right to respond to specific situations in whatever manner it believes best suits the needs of the Town. Consequently, the Town's actions, from time to time, may vary from the attached policies and procedures, or any subsequent policies and procedures implemented. Furthermore, the Town's actions may from time to time be guided by policies and procedures which are not contained in this handbook.**

Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the employee handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about employment with the Town. Your

Supervisor or the First Selectman will be available to address any questions not answered by this handbook.

## **EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES/GLOSSARY OF EMPLOYMENT TERMS**

Employee: A person who receives wages or salary from the Town of Voluntown

Employer: The Town of Voluntown

Supervisor: Personnel responsible for delegating and/or supervising daily work assignments.

Exempt: Employees who are not subject to the overtime provisions of the wage and hour law. They have qualified for exemption under the law as executive, administrative or professional employees and outside salespersons.

Nonexempt: Employees who are compensated hourly or who are eligible for overtime as provided in the wage and hour law.

Introductory/New Employee: A newly hired person who has not yet completed six (6) months of uninterrupted employment if they are regular full-time employees and twelve (12) months if they are regular part-time employees.

Regular Full-Time: An employee who is not in a temporary or introductory status and who is regularly scheduled to work forty (40) hours per week. Regular full-time employees are eligible for all Town fringe benefits.

Regular Part-Time: An employee who has met the requirements set forth below (See New Employees) and is regularly scheduled to work less than forty (40) hours weekly and maintains continuous employment. Regular Part-Time employees are eligible for some Town fringe benefits on a pro-rata basis.

Temporary/Seasonal: Any employee hired for a specific period of time or for the completion of a specific project. The job assignment, work schedule and duration of the position will be determined on an individual basis. Normally, a temporary position will not exceed six (6) months in duration, unless specifically extended by a written agreement. Temporary employees are generally not eligible for benefits described in this Manual.

Anniversary Date: The first day you report to work is your "official" anniversary date. Your anniversary date is used to compute various conditions and benefits described in this handbook.

Reemployment: The status of an employee who leaves the Town on good terms only (i.e., leaves voluntarily and gives two weeks' notice, or is not terminated, etc.) and later seeks re-employment with the Town.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As an employee of the Town, you have access to confidential information. Confidentiality is to be observed and respected at all times both within and outside the office. All Town records, financial and operating data of the Town, and any other information of a private or sensitive nature, are considered confidential. Under no circumstances shall such documents or information be used for your own purposes or shown to friends, family members or any third party either inside or outside of the Town during or after your employment.

Employees are required to sign a Confidentiality Pledge that they will keep all information they learn on the job private and secure.

## **EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Our employees have the freedom to speak for themselves and discuss with us their concerns, suggestions and problems. All employees should utilize the Town's Open-Door Policy to resolve all problems, complaints or concerns they may have regarding employment with the Town. We firmly believe we have much to offer and will continue to listen and attempt to respond to the concerns and needs of our employees.

If you have any questions, we urge you to talk with your supervisor, the First Selectman or a member of the Board of Selectmen. Our open-door policy allows all questions regarding your employment to be discussed through both informal and formal procedures as outlined below:

Supervisor: Most of your questions and concerns can be satisfactorily settled by your Supervisor.

First Selectman: If discussions with your Supervisor proves unsatisfactory, you may present an issue to the First Selectman.

Board of Selectmen: If the matter is still not settled to your satisfaction, the matter will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen.

By using this open-door procedure, you can raise questions, bring suggestions, and discuss problems at the highest levels of the organization, if necessary. The Town hopes that you take constructive advantage of this procedure. Employees will be not be subjected to any form of discrimination or reprisal for identifying issues or raising a problem.

## **EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS**

The Town relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application and resumes, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment. References provided by the applicants may be investigated to determine the

applicant's ability. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of this information or data may result in the Town's exclusion of the individual from further consideration for employment or if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

It is our policy to provide equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, or sexual orientation.

This policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotion, transfer, termination, layoff, compensation, and all other conditions and privileges of employment in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

We are fully committed to this principle and to obtaining the cooperation and understanding of this effort by all our employees.

## **IMMIGRATION LAW COMPLIANCE**

The Town is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. The Town does not discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin.

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility.

Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an I-9 with the Town within the past three years, or if their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Management and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Written performance evaluations may be conducted to provide both management and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

## **PERSONNEL FILES**

The Town maintains all your employee and payroll records. It is important to keep your personnel file up to date. Coverage or benefits that you and/or your family receive could be negatively affected if the information in your personnel file is incorrect. Please inform the

Assistant to the Board of Selectman of any change(s) in the following items, as soon as possible:

- Legal name
- Home address
- Home telephone number
- Person to contact in case of emergency
- Number of dependents
- Marital status
- Change of beneficiary
- Military or draft status
- Exemptions for your W-4 tax form
- Driving record or status of driver's license

Personnel files are the property of the Town, and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only the First Selectman and members of the Board of Selectmen, who have a reason to review information in a file, can do so.

Employees who wish to review and/or obtain a copy of their file must submit a written request to the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen. Employees may obtain a copy of or review their personnel files in the Selectman's office, in the presence of the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen or an individual appointed by the Town to maintain the files.

Medical Records. All medical records are maintained in separate, confidential files in the First Selectman's office. Copies of medical records may be obtained upon written request.

## **STANDARDS OF BUSINESS ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy represents the standards of business ethics and conduct expected of all employees of the Town of Voluntown. The First Selectman's office is responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy, and the standards of business ethics and conduct that apply to them in their jobs, dealing with outside parties, and activities conducted on non-town time. Employees are responsible for complying with this policy as well as exercising reasonable judgment and awareness of outside laws and regulations not specifically called out in this policy which may affect their performance as a Town employee.

### **II. Policy**

It is the Town of Voluntown's policy to conduct its business fairly, impartially and in an ethical manner. This commitment means that the Town and its employees are expected to believe it and practice the following values:

- A. To be honest and trustworthy in all business endeavors.
- B. To be responsible, truthful and accurate in all communication and activity.
- C. To be dedicated and loyal to the Town of Voluntown and to our country and its laws.

### III. **Jurisdiction/Applicability**

This policy applies to all employees of the Town of Voluntown, without exception.

### IV. **Procedure**

The Town of Voluntown has established a variety of mechanisms for employees to receive information, obtain counseling on ethics related issues, as well as report suspected violations. The mechanisms include the following:

- A. **Reporting Relationships**. It is always recommended that an employee initially seek help or guidance with business ethics from their immediate supervisor as needed to resolve issues or concerns.
- B. **First Selectman**. Employees may contact the First Selectman at any time for advice, information, policy interpretation, or reporting of suspected ethics violations or issues.

All reports to the First Selectman, whether verbal or written, will be treated in confidence. The identity of the employee, as well as information provided will be treated confidentiality to the maximum extent possible.

All reports to the First Selectman will be investigated and corrective action taken, based on the outcome of the investigation. Reporting employees will be provided with a response of the results, and will be protected from retaliation, discrimination, or other adverse employer actions directly related to the incident investigated.

### V. **Business Ethics for Employees**

As stated above, honesty and integrity are expected of all employees in all business activities. This includes avoiding the perception of impropriety, or purposely misleading others through what is said or done, or not said or done. A good test for an employee to determine compliance with Town Standards of Ethical Conduct is to ask him or herself “Am I sure that neither the Town nor I will be embarrassed or compromised if/when my action becomes known within the Town or publicly?” A “no” answer signals there is a problem.

- A. **Gifts, Gratuities and Entertainment**. Employees may provide and accept customary business amenities, such as advertising, promotional, or goodwill gifts

(e.g., pens, mugs, calendars) of nominal value (\$20.00) retail). It is also acceptable for employees to participate in business-related functions, such as lunches or dinners. However, good judgment must be exercised regarding the cost, frequency and the intent to influence.

Entertainment of prospective or current suppliers or members of his or her family may be permissible if the circumstances are clearly based on a personal or social relationship rather than the business position of the supplier. Town employees must use good judgment in ensuring that social activities are sporadic and reciprocal in nature, and do not create an improper appearance.

**B. Recording and Reporting Information.**

All employees are responsible for accurately and honestly recording all data or information. This includes all Town records such as timecards, expense reports, and so on. It is improper for any employee to report and present data in a way that is intended to mislead or misinform.

**C. Utilizing and Protecting Town Assets and Other Data.** All employees have a responsibility to protect and safeguard Town assets against loss, theft and misuse. Town assets include not only cash and physical articles such as computers, but Town resident information.

**D. Physical Property.** Town equipment and supplies and facilities may only be used for conducting business for purposes authorized by the Board of Selectmen.

**E. Employment of Spouse and Relatives.** Hiring of spouse or other relatives as employees or consultants is permitted only with the knowledge and consent of the Board of Selectmen. A spouse or other relative may not be placed or accept a position involving a direct or indirect reporting relationship to the current employee.

**VI. Business Ethics for Employees Outside of Normal Work Hours**

There are activities that you may participate in as a private individual, but because of your employment with the Town of Voluntown, may lead to conflicts of interest or other concerns. A conflict of interest may be cause for dismissal.

**A. Conflict of Interest.** A conflict of interest exists if an employee participates in non-town activities or interests that affect the employee's loyalty, objectivity or commitments to the Town. The most common conflicts are addressed below.

**B. Time and Assets.** Employees may not perform outside work or solicit business while on Town time or premises, and may not use Town materials, resources or proprietary information for a non-Town purpose. In general, the Town's electronic

communications systems (e.g., telephones, computers, copying machines, fax machines, etc.) should be used for business purposes only.

- C. **Political Activity.** Employees who run for office, serve as a public official or campaign for a political candidate must do so on their own personal time. Town assets may not be used or deployed in support of personal political activity, nor will the Town reimburse employees for expenses incurred in support of personal political activity.

## **VII. Compliance.**

While it is important that common sense be employed in interpreting and carrying out these standards of business ethics and conduct, violations to this policy may result in serious consequences for the Town of Voluntown and its employees. Employees are encouraged to become familiar with the policy areas and procedures affecting them, and to seek assistance or guidance when necessary.

Employees have the responsibility to be alert and sensitive to actions by others that may be improper, unethical or illegal. If or when it appears that a fellow employee may be in violation of Town rules or regulations, employees have the obligation to bring that situation to his or her attention and, if not corrected, to the attention of the resources identified in Section IV above.

While employees are encouraged to report known or suspected violations to the Town, information obtained through rumor or hearsay should be handled with care and good judgment.

## **VIII. Disciplinary Action as a Result of Non-Compliance**

The Town of Voluntown is committed to operating according to the highest standards of business ethics and conduct. This policy is important to the Town and should be taken seriously by all employees. As a result, non-compliance or violation of these standards will not be accepted or tolerated and will lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a workplace free from the threat of violence. The Town of Voluntown is committed to the safety and health of its employees, customers, and visitors.

### **II. RESPONSIBILITY:**

It shall be the responsibility of all Town personnel to comply with these provisions.

### **III. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN:**

- A.** That for general purposes, the threat of violence is defined as: “any comment or behavior that would be interpreted by a reasonable person as indicating the potential of physical violence towards people or property.” Some examples of workplace violence are, but not limited to, i. Physical assault, threat to assault, or stalking an employee or customer.
- B.** Possessing or threatening with a lethal weapon, vandalism or arson.
- C.** Racial epithets or other derogatory remarks associated with hate crimes.
- D.** Bizarre or offensive comments condoning or inciting, violent events or behaviors.
- E.** Harassing phone calls, voice mails, or e-mail messages.
- F.** That any employee who observes or has knowledge of any violation of this Workplace Violence Policy should immediately contact his/her Supervisor, the First Selectman, at (860) 376-5880 or call 911 from a land line if there is a belief of immediate danger.

All employees are responsible for safety and helping to ensure a workplace free of danger, threatening remarks and/or gestures. Any employee who is in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and/or including employment termination.

## **WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish the Town’s policy regarding sexual harassment. It is the policy of the town of Voluntown that the sexual harassment of employees is unacceptable and prohibited. This stance is consistent with the Town of Voluntown’s efforts to maintain equal employment, non-discrimination in program services, use of facilities, and the Affirmative Action program.

### **II. RESPONSIBILITY:**

It shall be the responsibility of all Town personnel to comply with these provisions.

### **II. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN:**

That for general policy purposes, sexual harassment may be described as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical conduct and expressive behavior of sexual nature when:

- A.** submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual’s employment or education;
- B.** submission to of rejection or such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual;

C. conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an employee's professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or demeaning employment environment or unwanted sexual humor.

1. To provide a work atmosphere that is conducive to productivity.
2. To investigate all complaints of sexual harassment.
3. To discipline any employees found guilty of sexual harassment.
4. To provide all employees, particularly department managers and supervisors, with a working understanding of sexual harassment, its prevention and actions to take when complaints of sexual harassment are brought to their attention.

## **BENEFITS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Eligible employees at the Town are provided a wide range of benefits. A few the programs (such as Social Security, workers' compensation, state disability, and unemployment insurance) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Eligibility for other benefits is dependent upon a variety of factors, including the employee's classification. The Assistant to the Board of Selectmen can identify the programs for which you are/will be eligible. Details of many of these programs can be found elsewhere in the employee handbook and should be carefully reviewed. A package describing each of the offered benefits, in detail, will be provided to each new employee. It is then the employee's responsibility to initiate enrollment in those plans he or she selects.

### **EDUCATION/TRAINING**

The Town may require employees to attend formal and informal training programs and conferences. Employees required to attend any training or conferences shall be reimbursed all expenses associated with said training or conferences, provided that attendance and the costs thereof were approved in advance, in writing, by the Town. Check with the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen for details.

In addition, if you become aware of a particular conference, a seminar or training that you believe is appropriate for enhancing your skills (and/or those of other employees), please bring it to the attention of the First Selectman. The First Selectman will determine whether you may attend the training during working hours and whether you will be reimbursed for the costs to attend.

### **INSURANCE**

For the benefit and protection of all our regular full-time employees, we provide comprehensive group insurance, life insurance, vision and dental insurance. The cost of coverage may be shared by the Town and the employee. Employees who elect coverage are required to contribute their portion of the premium cost through automatic payroll deduction on a bi-weekly basis.

The Town reserves the right to change or provide alternate insurance carriers, health maintenance organizations, or benefit levels or to self-insure or fully insure as it deems appropriate for any form or portion of the insurance coverage referred to in this article, so long as the new coverage and benefits are substantially equivalent to the then existing insurance. For purposes of this paragraph, substantially equivalent means disruption not less than 90% of network services then currently available.

In addition, the Town may offer one and/or more alternate health insurance plans as option(s) to the primary health insurance plan, including, but not limited to, an HDHP/HAS. The Town reserves the right to determine terms, conditions, cost shares, and all other substantive aspects of any alternate plan.

A detailed explanation of all benefits, limitations and provisions is provided in separate booklets with which you will be provided. If you have any questions about the plan, contact the First Selectman or the Assistant to the Board of Selectmen.

### **INSURANCE BENEFITS CONTINUATION (COBRA)**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requires that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called "continuation coverage") at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. This notice is intended to inform you, in a summary fashion, of your rights and obligations under the continuation coverage provisions of that law.

If you are an employee of the Town and are covered by the Town's group health insurance plan (the "Plan"), you have a right to choose this continuation coverage if you lose your group health coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment for reasons other than gross misconduct on your part.

If you are the spouse of an employee covered by the Plan, you have the right to choose continuation coverage for yourself if you lose group health coverage under the Plan for any of the following four reasons:

1. The death of your spouse.
2. A termination of your spouse's employment (for reasons other than gross misconduct) or reduction in your spouse's hours of employment.
3. Divorce or legal separation from your spouse.
4. Your spouse becomes eligible for Medicare.

A dependent child of an employee covered by the Plan has the right to continuation coverage if he/she loses group health coverage under the Plan for any of the following five reasons:

1. The death of a parent.
2. A termination of a parent's employment (for reasons other than gross misconduct) or reduction in a parent's hours of employment.
3. Parents' divorce or legal separation.
4. A parent becomes eligible for Medicare.
5. The dependent ceases to be a "dependent child" under the Plan.

**Under the law, the employee or a family member has the responsibility to inform the Plan Administrator of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status under the Plan. The Town has the responsibility to notify the Plan Administrator of the employee's death, termination of employment or reduction in hours, or Medicare eligibility.**

When the Plan Administrator is notified that one of these events has happened, he or she will, in turn, notify you that you have the right to choose continuation coverage. Under the law you have at least sixty (60) days from the date you would lose coverage, due to one of the qualifying events described above, to inform the Plan Administrator that you want continuation coverage.

If you do not choose continuation coverage, your group health insurance coverage will end.

If you choose continuation coverage, the Town is required to give you coverage which, as of the time coverage is provided, is identical to the coverage provided under the plan to similarly situated employees or family members. The law requires that you are afforded the opportunity to maintain continuation coverage for three (3) years unless you lost group health coverage because of a termination of employment or reduction in hours. In that case, the required continuation coverage period is eighteen (18) months.

An additional eleven (11) months will be available to a covered employee and an enrolled dependent who is determined to be disabled under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act at the time he or she becomes eligible for extended continuation coverage under COBRA; or becomes disabled at any time during the first sixty (60) days of COBRA continuation coverage. The covered employee or enrolled dependent must provide notice of the disability determination to the Plan Administrator not later than sixty (60) days after the date of the Social Security Administration's determination, and before the end of the initial eighteen (18) months of COBRA continuation coverage.

If it is determined that the member is no longer disabled, the extended continuation of coverage period can be terminated on the first of the month following thirty (30) days after the final determination notice.

However, the law also provides that your continuation coverage may be cut short for any of the following four reasons:

1. The Town no longer provides group health coverage to any of its employees.
2. The premium for your continuation coverage is not paid.
3. You become eligible for benefits under another group health plan as a result of employment, re-employment, or marriage, except when the new plan contains any exclusion or limitation relating to any pre-existing condition.
4. You become eligible for Medicare.

You do not have to show that you are insurable to choose continuation coverage. However, under the law you may have to pay all or part of the premium for your continuation coverage.

The law also says that, at the end of the eighteen (18) months or three (3) year continuation coverage period, you must be allowed to enroll in an individual conversion health plan provided under the Plan.

The Town reserves the right to charge an administrative fee of two percent (2%) for COBRA enrollees.

If you have any questions about the law, please contact the Plan Administrator. Also, if you have changed marital status or you or your spouse has changed your address please notify the Plan Administrator.

## **PENSION PLAN**

The Town provides a pension plan for its employees. In order to be eligible to participate, you must be a full-time or part-time employee and have completed the probationary period. All bargaining unit members shall be eligible for participation in a Town sponsored 457(b) deferred compensation plans. A more complete description of the plan will be provided to each employee when they become eligible to participate.

## **TRAVEL EXPENSE**

An employee requested by the Town to use his or her personal automobile to perform official business, will be reimbursed at the standard mileage rate as annually set by the Internal Revenue Service. The employee should promptly request reimbursement on the forms supplied by the Town.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE**

The purpose of the workers' compensation law is to provide financial assistance to you if you are injured on the job. On-the-job injuries are covered by workers' compensation insurance. How much you will be paid, for how long, and when benefits become payable may vary. While absent from work on Workers' Compensation, the employee will not continue to accumulate sick and vacation time. This insurance becomes effective on your first day worked and protects you if you

are injured on the job. To be sure to protect yourself under this insurance, **REPORT ALL INJURIES, HOWEVER SLIGHT, TO YOUR SUPERVISOR IMMEDIATELY.**

Neither the Town nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the Town, or during an employee's employment by another Employer.

## **PAID LEAVE TIME**

### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

In the event of death in an employee's or employee's spouse's immediate family, any employee shall be granted up to five (5) working days of leave without loss of pay. For the purposes of this section, immediate family is defined as: spouse, mother, father, brother, sister, daughter, son, mother-in-law, father-in-law. Three (3) working days with pay shall be allowed for the death of grandparent, grandchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law and daughter-in-law, stepmother, stepfather. One (1) working day with pay for aunt, uncle. If more time is needed, personal or vacation time may be taken.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Regular full-time employees, who have completed their introductory period (See Employee Categories/Glossary of Employment Terms) shall receive the following paid holidays:

New Year's Day	Columbus Day
Presidents' Day	Veterans' Day
Martin Luther King Day	Thanksgiving Day
Day After Thanksgiving	
Memorial Day	Yom Kipper or Good Friday
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	Day after Christmas

Holiday pay is calculated based on the employee's straight-time pay rate (as of the day of the holiday) times the number of hours the employee would have otherwise worked on that day.

To be eligible for holiday pay, employees must work the last scheduled day immediately before and following the holiday.

Employees requesting to take time off from work for any religious or ethnic holiday not considered a Town paid holiday, may utilize personal leave time, accrued vacation time or may take the day without pay.

A holiday occurring when an employee is on vacation or sick leave shall be counted as a holiday and not charged as a vacation or sick leave day.

- (a) Any holiday which occurs on a Saturday will be celebrated the proceeding Friday.
- (b) Any holiday which occurs on a Sunday will be celebrated the next day (Monday).
- (c) For Town Hall employees who do not work on Fridays, any holiday which occurs on a Friday will be celebrated on Thursday.

## **MILITARY LEAVE AND JURY DUTY**

The Employer will comply with the provisions of the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Act of 1994.

Any employee called to report for jury duty will be allowed the necessary time off. The employer shall make up the difference between the pay received for jury duty and the employee's regular pay, if any.

## **LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

Both the federal **Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993** (29 USC §2601) and Conn. §31-51kk-qq require certain employers to grant unpaid leave of absence to qualified workers in case of birth or adoption of a child, or serious health condition of a child, spouse, parent, or the employee. These laws work in parallel, i.e., the section of the law that affords the greatest benefit to the worker is the one that will be followed. In most cases, this will be the federal law.

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

The Town complies with the provisions of the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 ("USERRA"). If an employee enlists in the military, he/she will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for the duration of the enlistment. The employee will not receive benefits during the leave of absence

When the employee returns from military service, he or she will have the right to reapply for his/her job, or a similar one, pursuant to the requirements set forth in the USERRA. The Town will count military service as time worked for the purpose of benefits.

If an employee is required to serve in the military reserve or national guard, he or she will be granted an unpaid leave of absence for the period of that duty in accordance with federal law.

Employees are requested to provide reasonable notice, when possible, to ensure adequate coverage.

## **SICK LEAVE**

The Town provides sick time off with pay to all full-time employees for periods of temporary absence due to illnesses or injuries. Sick leave is a privilege, not a right. It is to be used for illness of the employee. It is not intended as extra vacation time. Sick leave may be used for the following reasons:

Personal illness or injury, except where directly traceable to employment other than with the Town.

When the employee is required to undergo medical, optical or dental treatment which cannot be accomplished on off-duty time.

When the illness of a member of the employee's immediate family requires the employee's personal attention.

All full-time employees accrue sick leave benefits in accordance with these provisions:

Each employee shall earn sick leave with pay at the rate of fourteen (14) days per contract year. Unused sick days may be accumulated to one hundred (100) days.

An employee shall elect to receive full compensation for each unused sick day up to a maximum of five (5) days per year or to add the five (5) days to the employee's bank in lieu of compensation. IF the employee elects compensation, he/she shall be paid on or about July 1 of each year for the previous contract year and the second nine (9) days per year shall accumulate in the employee's bank if they are not used in the earned year.

The following basic guidelines for sick leave are observed by the Town:

Sick leave compensation will begin on the employee's first day of absence. Employees may be required to provide medical verification of an illness at any time.

Part-time employees shall receive pro-rated sick leave benefits.

## **VACATION**

The following vacation with pay shall be granted to all full-time employees who are on the payroll and who have completed the following period of aggregate full-time employment.

<b><u>Length of Service</u></b>	<b><u>Entitlement</u></b>
Year One – Four	Ten (10) days
Year Five – Nine	Fifteen (15) days
Year 10	Twenty (20) days

The Town provides vacation time off with pay to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Accordingly, vacation pay will not be granted in lieu of taking the actual time off.

The following basic guidelines for vacations are observed by the Town:

Vacation time off is paid at the employee's per diem base rate. It does not include overtime or any special forms of compensation such as incentives, bonuses or shift differentials.

A holiday occurring when an employee is on vacation shall be counted as a holiday and not charged as a vacation day.

To take vacation leave time, employees should request vacation leave as soon as possible, but no later than four weeks in advance, to have seniority impact on the request. Employees not selecting their vacation by the deadline will relinquish their right of seniority in selecting their vacation.

All requests for time off must be approved in advance, in writing, by the First Selectmen. Requests will be reviewed and either granted or denied based on a number of factors, including the operational and staffing requirements of the Town and the employee's seniority.

Vacation time shall be used during the fiscal year with five (5) days available for carryover. Additional days may be carried over only with the written approval of the First Selectman or when operational needs of the town prevent an employee from using all their vacation in the year it was earned. Accumulated vacation time shall not exceed ten (10) days.

Part time employees shall receive prorated vacation benefits.

## **PAY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **HOURS OF WORK**

The normal workweek for full time employees consists of five (5) days, eight (8) hours per day, Monday through Friday. Supervisors will advise employees of their individual work schedules. Starting times and the length of the workday can vary depending upon employee classification job or individual station. Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week. Should you have any questions concerning your work schedule, please see your supervisor.

There will be one fifteen (15) minute paid coffee break prior to noon.

Part-time Town Hall employees shall work those hours, between 8:30 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., as scheduled by the First Selectmen Monday Through Thursday.

## **OVERTIME**

Overtime will be paid to nonexempt employees (see Glossary of Employment Terms) who work in excess of forty (40) hours in a seven (7) day work cycle. Overtime will be paid at the rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular hourly rate of pay.

The Town reserves the right to require overtime work and employees may not refuse overtime assignments. Failure to work scheduled overtime or overtime worked without prior authorization from the First Selectman may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Further overtime rules may be required of the Public Works Department based on the Union contract between the Town and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

## **PAY DEDUCTIONS**

The law requires that the Town make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal, state and local income taxes. The Town also must deduct Social Security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." The Town matches the amount of Social Security taxes paid by each employee.

The Town offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, the Assistant to the Board of Selectmen can assist in having your questions answered.

## **PAY PERIODS**

All employees are paid bi-weekly on Tuesday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the previous two weeks.

Employees are encouraged to have pay directly deposited into their bank accounts. To do so, they must provide advance written authorization to the Town. Employees will receive an itemized statement of wages when the Town makes direct deposits.

## **TIMEKEEPING**

We want to make sure that you are paid correctly. You will be given Time Cards/Sheets on which to record your work time. It is your responsibility to keep your Time Cards/Sheets secure. Should

you lose your Time Card/Sheet, please report it immediately to the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen. The Time and Attendance Policy below must be adhered to.

Federal and State labor laws require that you maintain an accurate record of your working hours. You will do this using your Time Card/Sheet.

1. Record on your own Time Card/Sheet (and only yours) the days worked, and the hours worked.
2. No one is allowed to fill in another employee's time card without the authorization of the First Selectman.
3. If there is a problem with your time keeping, have the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen correct the error immediately.
4. No one is to work overtime without authorization.

Working Off the Clock. Hourly employees must record all time worked. No one is permitted to work unless the work time is recorded on their time and attendance record. There is no such thing as working "off the clock."

If you falsify time records for yourself or another employee, continually forget or lose your Time Sheet or work "off the clock," you may be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

## **WAGE GARNISHMENTS**

Whenever court-ordered deductions are to be taken from your paycheck, you will be notified. According to the Federal Wage Garnishment Act, seven (7) or more garnishments in a calendar year may be cause for dismissal.

## **W-2 FORM**

At the end of each calendar year, we will give you a W-2 Form. If you are no longer employed by us, we will mail it to your last known address. The form shows your total gross pay for the calendar year and the taxes deducted from it.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction in the event there is a closing of the Town of Voluntown offices due to severe weather.

## **II. RESPONSIBILITY:**

It shall be the responsibility of all Town personnel to comply with these provisions.

## **III. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN:**

It is the Town's policy to make every effort to remain open for business on scheduled work days. However, severe weather may prevent the Town from doing so. In all cases, employee safety is the primary consideration in determining the Town's ability to stay open for business. The following procedures will set forth Town and employee obligations regarding reporting to work, use of leave, and pay issues when severe weather impacts the Town's ability to be open for business.

A. The Town of Voluntown will follow the guidance of the Office of the Governor's determination and the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection regarding an early release/delayed opening/full day closing for non-essential employees. However, the First Selectman will make the final determination to close Town offices.

B. Department Heads are responsible for determining which, if any, of their employees will be required to work in the event of a closure of Town offices. All others will be designated as non-essential for purposes of this policy.

C. If it is determined that Town offices are open, employees are expected to report to work at their regularly scheduled time. Non-essential employees who are absent, late for work, or leave early during a delayed opening or early closing must charge such absence to accumulated vacation leave, personal leave, compensatory time, or leave without pay.

D. If it is determined that Town offices are closed, employees who were scheduled to work will be paid as a normal work day. If an employee was previously scheduled for a day off during a partial or full-day closing, they will not be compensated for this time.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

The success of this Town depends on your good attendance. Absenteeism detracts from our high quality of service and causes an unfair burden for those employees who must fill in for absent employees. Most people will be late or sick at one time or another, but when short-term absences become frequent, they often signal personal or job-related problems.

Whatever the reasons for absenteeism and lateness, share them with your Supervisor. Once your Supervisor knows the reasons, perhaps he or she can help you decide on the best way to correct the problem. In regard to attendance, employees are expected to:

1. Maintain good personal health standards which will allow them to perform their work in a competent manner on a regular basis.

2. Avoid letting minor inconveniences keep them from performing their jobs. At the same time, good judgment should be used with respect to contagious ailments which might have an adverse effect on other employees.
3. Attend to personal affairs during nonworking hours.

If you are absent for three (3) days without notifying the Town, it is assumed that you have voluntarily abandoned your position with the Town, and you will be removed from the payroll.

### Types of Absenteeism and Tardiness

The following are excused absences:

1. Absences because of illness, verified by a doctor's note identifying the illness and need for absence.
2. Absence approved by the First Selectman in advance.
3. Absence because of death in the immediate family.
4. Absence or delayed arrival because of extreme weather conditions.
5. Absence or delayed arrival because of a bona fide personal emergency as determined by the First Selectman.
6. Absence because of a work-related injury.  
The absence of an employee from work, including an absence for a single day, or portion of a day, that is not authorized, shall be deemed as absent without leave. Any absence without leave is cause for disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

### **CARE OF EQUIPMENT**

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using Town property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Please notify your Supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. Your Supervisor can answer any questions about your responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

It is the policy of the Town that the public and fellow employees have the absolute right to expect that persons employed by the Town will be free from the effects from drugs and alcohol. The Town, as the employer, has the right to expect its employees to report for work fit and able for duty, and not impaired by alcohol or drugs.

All employees are forbidden from consuming alcohol or using illegal drugs at any time during or just prior to the beginning of the work day (including lunch breaks) or anywhere on the Town's premises or sites including site buildings, properties, vehicles and the employee's personal vehicle while engaged in Town business. In addition:

1. Employees are prohibited from selling, purchasing or delivering any illegal drug at any time and at any place.
2. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance on Town premises or while conducting Town's business off the Town's premises is absolutely prohibited.
3. Off-the-job illegal drug activity or alcohol abuse that could adversely affect an employee's job performance or that could jeopardize the safety of other employees, the general public, Town equipment, or the Town's relations with the public will not be tolerated.

Prescription Drugs. Employees who use a prescription drug which causes adverse side effects (e.g., drowsiness or impaired reflexes or reaction time) must inform the First Selectman that they are taking such medication on the advice of a physician. Employees are responsible for informing the First Selectman of the possible effects of the drug on performance and expected duration of use. If prescription drug use causes service or safety problems, the First Selectman may have to grant the employee sick leave.

Drug Testing. Where the Town has reasonable suspicion to believe that a current employee (1) is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which at that time, adversely affected or could adversely affect the employee's job performance; (2) has abused prescribed drugs; or (3) has used illegal drugs, the Town may require the employee to submit to alcohol or drug testing. The Town also may conduct drug tests for individuals seeking employment (prior to the date of their hire) or upon promotion to another position within the Town.

The Town requires that an employee notify the First Selectman within five (5) days after a conviction of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring outside the workplace.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with the First Selectman **without fear of reprisal**. All inquiries will be held in the strictest confidence.

## **GOOD HOUSEKEEPING**

Good work habits and a neat place to work are essential for job safety and efficiency. You are expected to keep your place of work organized and materials in good order at all times. Report anything that needs repair or replacement to your Supervisor.

## **SMOKING**

Due to the harmful effects and discomforts which smoking produces in the workplace, and out of concern for the well-being of our employees, no smoking is allowed at any time in the Town Hall or within twenty five feet of the building.

## **USE OF COMPUTERS, E-MAIL AND PHONE SYSTEMS**

Computers. Computers, computer files and software furnished to employees are the Town's property intended for business use. Employees should not use a password, access a confidential file or retrieve any stored confidential communication without authorization.

The Town purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, the Town does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer.

Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. The Town prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.

1. E-Mail. Employees should be aware that e-mail is not private, and messages can be retrieved even after they are "deleted." Most e-mail systems instantly make backup copies of files, and copies may be easily retrieved by computer experts. The following are guidelines to follow when utilizing e-mail:
  - (a) The electronic mail system is not to be used in ways that are disruptive or offensive to others, or in ways that could be harmful to workplace moral.
  - (b) There shall be no display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons, or any transmission or use of cartoons and/or e-mail communications containing ethnic slurs, racial epithets or anything that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, or religious or political beliefs.
  - (c) The information systems at the Town are to be used for the business of the Town. The e-mail system should not be used to solicit or address others regarding commercial, religious, or political causes, or for any other solicitations that are not work-related.

- (d) All e-mail messages are records of the Town. The Town reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over its electronic mail system for any purpose.
- (e) For reasons of privacy, employees should not attempt to gain access to another employee's personal file of e-mail messages without the latter's express permission. However, the Town reserves the right to enter an employee's e-mail files whenever there is a need to do so.
- (f) Any violation of the Town's policy on e-mail use will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge.

2. Internet Access. The Town may implement software and/or systems that can monitor and record all Internet usage. Security systems are capable of recording (for each and every user) each World Wide Web site visit, each chat, news group or E-Mail message, and each file transfer into and out of our internal networks, and we reserve the right to do so at any time. Additionally, the Town may utilize independently supplied software and data to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. We may block access from within our networks to all such sites that we know of.

- (a) We reserve the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of our network and/or an employee's personal computer in order to assure compliance with policy.
- (b) This Town's Internet facilities and computing resources must not be used knowingly to violate the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, Town or province or other local jurisdiction in any material way.
- (c) Any software or files downloaded via the Internet into the Town network and/or employee's personal computer become the property of the Town.

Telephones. It is important to keep our telephone lines free for customer calls. Although the occasional use of the Town's telephones for personal emergencies may be necessary, routine calls should be kept to a minimum and should be made during breaks and/or lunch periods. To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use an appropriate greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy establishes guidelines for the creation and use by the Town of Voluntown, its departments, boards, commissions, appointed and elected officials and employees, of the Town's social media sites for Work Related Purposes as a means of conveying Town information to its citizens.

The intended purpose behind establishing social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens.

The town has an overriding interest and expectation in how it is represented on the Town's social media sites.

Government agencies, officials and employees are held to a higher standard and this applies to social media as it would in any other town business.

The town recognizes social media has a direct connection to freedom of speech. This policy is intended to respect the first amendment and to provide guidance for appropriate administration.

For purposes of this policy, "Social Media" is understood to be content, including but not limited to social networks, blogs, picture and video sharing, podcasts, wikis, wall postings, message boards and online forums, published on the internet. Examples of Social Media sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Flickr.

### **II. General Policy**

A. The establishment and use by any Town department, division, appointed or elected official, or employee of Town Social Media sites are subject to approval by the Board of Selectmen or its designee as the Town's Information Technology Overseer. Town Social Media Sites shall be administered and monitored by individual department site administrators approved by the individual department heads with notification to the Town's IT Overseer and the First Selectman.

B. Town Social Media sites shall make clear that they are maintained by the Town and that they follow the Town's Social Media Policy.

C. Wherever possible, Town Social Media sites should link back to the official Town website or department webpages for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town.

D. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable laws, rules, or policies. Any Content remove based on this Social Media Policy will be e-mailed to the department supervisor along with information about the section of the policy that was violated, time, date, and identity of the violator.

- E. The Social Media Policy must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink at [www.voluntown.gov](http://www.voluntown.gov).
- F. The Town will utilize social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.
- G. The Town's website at [www.Voluntown.gov](http://www.Voluntown.gov) will remain the Town's primary internet presence. Any town related information should be posted here before shared to social media.
- H. All Town Social Media pages shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and policies.
- I. Town social Media Sites are subject to Connecticut public records and record retention laws, rules, regulations, and policies. Any content maintained in a Social Media format that is related to town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public subject to public disclosure. The department site administrator will maintain records in accordance with Connecticut public records and record retention laws, rules, regulations, and policies.
- J. The Social Media Policy may be updated from time to time and amended at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen.

### **III. Content Policy**

- A. As a public entity the Town should abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
- B. If there has been no content added within 90 days, or there is a lack of administration, the page will be removed.
- C. Content perceived as inappropriate shall not be permitted on Town Social Media sites and is subject to removal and/or restriction by site administrators. Examples of inappropriate content are:
1. Content not related to the original topic or Town business
  2. Random or unintelligible comments
  3. Profane, obscene, offensive, violent, or pornographic content and/or language
  4. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination of any kind
  5. Defamatory or personal attacks
  6. Threats to any person or organization
  7. Content in support of, or opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot items
  8. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law, rule, or regulation
  9. Solicitation of commerce of any kind
  10. Encouragement of illegal activity

11. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
12. Content that violates a legal ownership interest
13. Content that could be determined as hate speech
14. Content that is not public under the freedom of information
15. Any other content deemed inappropriate by the Town

D. Content posted by a member of the public on any Town Social Media site shall be the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of content does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town, nor does such content necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town.

E. The town reserves the right to deny access to Town Social Media sites to any person who violates the Town's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.

F. Site administrators shall monitor Town Social Media sites for content requesting responses from the Town. Site administrators may direct such requests to appropriate Town department for response.

G. Site administrators shall monitor content posted on Town Social Media Sites for content in violation of this Social Media Policy.

H. When a Town employee responds to a comment, in his/her Town CAPA Town as a Town employee, the employee should do so in the name of the Town department and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees except as required for Town business.

I. Content posted to any Town Social Media site must comply with that site's terms and conditions, and the Town reserves the right to report any violation of those terms to the site administrator so that the site administrator may take appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

J. Appointed and Elected Officials and Employees posting to Social Media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Town in accordance with all Town rules, regulations, and policies.

K. If possible, the public should be limited to only respond to posts made by the Town and not create their own threads.

L. Social Media administrators are not to debate or provide lengthy responses. Refer to the appropriate person to discuss.

M. While employees may engage in any lawful activities through social media (including exercising any rights they may have to engage in protected concerted activity or political activities), any employee who chooses to use social media should be aware of the following Town policies in this regard:

1. Any conduct, which under the law or Town Policy is impermissible if expressed in any other form, is impermissible if expressed through social media.
2. Appointed and Elected Officials and Employees are held responsible for their own content expressed through social media and will be expected to communicate in a professional and lawful manner at all times.
3. The personal use of social media is not allowed during working time, on Town computers.
4. Appointed and Elected Officials and Employees who use social media shall not post any proprietary Town data, documents, or photographs, or any information which would violate any privacy laws applicable to the Town, regardless of whether the posting is done during working or non-working time. Any information that cannot be disclosed through a conversation, a memo, or an email also cannot be disclosed through social media.
5. Unless authorized in writing by their immediate supervisor and/or the First Selectman such as when an Employee or Appointed or Elected Officials job or responsibility, Employees do not have permission to speak on behalf of the Town via social media.
6. While communicating through social media, if an employee posts any content that has something to do with the work they perform for the Town or subjects associated with the business of the Town, employees must make clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Town by accompanying their posts with a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the Town’s positions or opinions.”

When an employee's use of any social media violates the law or any Town policies, including policies pertaining to employee misconduct or job performance, appropriate discipline up to and including termination of employment will be imposed, regardless of when the information was posted or sent and regardless of the tools or site used to post or send such information. Nothing in this policy, or any other Town policy, will be implemented or should be interpreted in any manner as to prohibit employees from engaging in any lawful activities through social media including exercising any rights they may have to engage in protected concerted activity or political activity.

*Approved at Board of Selectmen’s Meeting, April 10, 2018. Copies will be distributed to employees, elected officials, and board, commission volunteers, who will sign the Town of Voluntown Social Media Policy Acknowledgement Form. Forms will be kept on file in the Board of Selectmen’s Office. Each Board, Commission, Committee, Department representing the Town of Voluntown will provide a list of Town use social media profiles, websites, and approved social medial administrators. This list will be kept on file in the Board of Selectmen’s Office.*

## **SAFETY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town seeks to provide safe working conditions for all employees, to provide instructions concerning safe working methods, and to make available the necessary equipment required to protect employees against particular hazards. It is the obligation of each employee to observe the safety regulations, to use the safety equipment provided and to practice safety at all times.

Employees who refuse to use the safety equipment provided, or fail to practice safety at all times, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork. Everyone must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

Please observe the following precautions:

1. Notify your Supervisor of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slightly, you must inform either your Supervisor or the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen immediately.
2. The use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drug substances, or the abuse of legal prescription drugs during working hours will not be tolerated. The possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal drug substances on Town property is forbidden.
3. Use, adjust and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified.
4. Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
5. Understand your job fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safe procedure, don't guess . . . ask your Supervisor.
6. Know the locations, contents and the use of first aid and firefighting equipment.
7. Wear personal protective equipment in accordance with the job you are performing.

A violation of a safety precaution is in itself an unsafe act. A violation may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT (OSHA)**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the agency that enforces OSHA. OSHA was enacted in 1970 to ensure “safe and healthful working conditions for “every working man and woman in the nation.” OSHA imposes on employers a “general duty” to provide a workplace free

from recognized safety and health hazards. Employers covered by OSHA include any organization that has employees and is engaged in a business affecting commerce.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration protects employee health and safety in two main ways: 1) by promulgating standards or regulations that specify procedures for the safe use of specific chemicals, equipment, or procedures, and by enforcing the standards and the Act's "general duty" requirement that each employer furnish work and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that cause or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

Generally, the specific requirements include maintaining "clean and orderly" rooms, passageways, and other places of employment. Also included in the maintenance of guardrails, floors, roofs, stairways, and other specific workplace areas and equipment.

### **HAZARD COMMUNICATION/RIGHT TO KNOW**

The Federal worker "right to know" regulation, known as the Hazard Communication Standard or HCS is intended to give employees access to certain information about the physical and health hazards of chemical substances produced, imported, or used in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's rule applies to employers in all industries. The hazard communication standard gives workers the right of access to information about hazardous substances to which they are or may be exposed; it does not require employers to control exposures.

In an effort to ensure the safety of its employees, the Town has developed, implemented, and maintains a comprehensive, written hazard communication program that describes how the HCS will be implemented. The program includes cover container labeling and other warnings, material safety data sheets (form communicating information on the identity of a chemical hazard, its manufacturer, its safety and health hazards, and precautions for use), and employee training. Also included is a list of hazardous chemicals in each work area. Under the Town of Voluntown's hazard communication program, information is available about the chemicals in the Town garage and in the utility closet located in the Town Hall. There are two sources of information about the products: the label on the product itself and, for the offices supplies, an information notice known as the Material Safety Data Sheet that the manufacturer sent to the Town when the product was ordered.

### **REPORTING AN INJURY**

If you are injured during working hours and on the job site, be sure to notify the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen as soon as possible. We will need all papers, reports and/or bills relating to the incident and a detailed description of such to report any claims for compensation to the insurance company.

If you have been injured away from the Town's premises and off Town time, we require that you submit a doctor's release form to the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen prior to your resuming your regular duties.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE AND DISMISSAL**

No employee shall be discharged or otherwise disciplined without just cause.

Disciplinary actions shall generally follow this order for each offense:

- (a) verbal warning
- (b) written warning
- (c) suspension
- (d) discharge

It is understood that deviation from the above order for disciplinary actions may be warranted depending upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the infraction, its pervasiveness and the employee's history of discipline.

All disciplinary actions including (a) above may be subject to the grievance procedure.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the discipline and/or discharge of an employee who is on probationary status shall not be a violation of this Agreement and/or subject to the grievance and/or arbitration provisions provided herein.

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **EXIT INTERVIEWS**

The Town will generally schedule exit interviews at the time of employment termination. The exit interview will afford an opportunity to discuss such issues as employee benefits, conversion privileges, or return of Town owned property. Suggestions, complaints and questions may also be voiced.

Employees who are discharged by the Town will have their wages paid in full not later than the next succeeding business day after the employee's last day of employment. Employees who retire or resign will have their wages paid in full not later than the next regular pay day.

### **RETURN OF PROPERTY**

Employees are responsible for all property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Employees must return all Town property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment.

## **RESIGNATION**

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with the Town. The Town requests at least two (2) weeks written resignation notice from all employees to be in good standing.

Prior to an employee's departure, an exit interview will be scheduled to discuss the reasons for resignation and the effect of the resignation on benefits.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION**

The purpose of Connecticut's unemployment compensation law is to protect you and your family by providing financial assistance if you are out of work. How much you will be paid and for how long may vary according to current law and your particular situation.

To qualify for unemployment compensation, you must be out of work through no fault of your own (e.g. You were laid off) and actively looking for another job. If you were fired for cause or voluntarily quit, you may not be able to collect benefits.

The Town pays the full cost of your unemployment compensation, and the government pays for the administrative cost.

## CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I understand that Town records, including, but not limited to, financial information and data, to which I have knowledge and access, in the course of my employment with Town, are to be kept confidential, and this confidentiality is a term and condition of my employment. This information and any and all other information of a confidential nature shall not be disclosed to anyone under any circumstances, except to the extent necessary to fulfill my job requirements. I must first obtain the approval of the First Selectman before any disclosure is made.

I hereby agree to avoid any activity that results in a real or apparent conflict of interest. I will not accept any fee or payment from anyone seeking to do business with the Town. I will not take advantage of any business opportunity learned of at work, and I will not use confidential information for personal gain under any circumstances whatsoever.

I understand and agree that any violation of this Agreement is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Selectman

**RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

. Please sign the original form and return it to the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen.

I have this day received a copy of the Town of Voluntown's (the "Town") employee handbook, and I understand that I am responsible for reading the personnel policies and practices described within it. I understand that this handbook replaces any and all prior handbooks, policies and practices of the Town.

I agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained therein. I understand that the policies contained, and benefits described in this employee handbook may be added to, deleted or changed by the Town any time. I understand that neither this manual nor any other written or verbal communications by a Town representative are intended to, in any way, create a contract of employment.

If I have any questions regarding the content or interpretation of this handbook, I will bring them to the attention of my supervisor, the First Selectman or a member of the Board of Selectmen.

**I UNDERSTAND THAT MY EMPLOYMENT CAN BE TERMINATED WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE, AND WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE, AT EITHER MY OPTION, OR THE OPTION OF THE TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN.** Only the Board of Selectmen has the authority to enter into agreement for employment for any specified period of time.

**THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK TAKES EFFECT ON \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.**

**Please sign and return this form to the Assistant of the Board of Selectmen.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMPLOYEE'S NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE

Board of Selectmen's Office



## **TOWN OF VOLUNTOWN SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I acknowledge that I have received and understand the Town of Voluntown Social Media Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE