

TOWN OF ASHLAND, NEW HAMPSHIRE
POLICY ON BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION:

This Policy serves to outline procedures regarding appointment to Town committees, commissions, and boards (hereinafter referred to collectively as “committee(s),” unless specific reference is being made to a public body whose title is different) and the conduct and responsibilities of Committees and their members. This policy applies to all committees whose members are appointed and which are created by, or under the purview of, the Board of Selectmen. This Policy also applies to all committees created by the Legislative Body (“Town Meeting”) and all committees governed by State Statute to the extent allowed by law.

This Policy is in place to assist the Board of Selectmen in making informed choices for committees and their members and to provide consistency in the committee creation and member selection and appointment process.

This Policy does not abrogate the prerogative of the Board of Selectmen to choose the citizens it feels are most qualified for appointment or to waive any procedures herein when it is judged by the Board of Selectmen to be in the best interest of the Town.

All terms shall expire effective April 30th therefore applications for appointment should be made to the Board of Selectmen by the first Board meeting in April.

II. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

A. RECRUITMENT:

PUBLIC NOTICE OF OPENINGS: public notice of all committee seats which are available shall be posted in at least two (2) public places, including the Town website and Town Office. This notice will include both vacant and expiring positions.

B. SELECTION: (Criteria to consider when selecting members)

1. Service on another Committee(s).
2. Life experience which interests him/her in serving on the Committee.
3. Is the Candidate able and willing to fulfill the time requirements of the committee and to regularly attend meetings?
4. Potential Conflict of Interest: Are there any possible business or personal conflicts of interest that may affect the Candidate’s ability to make decisions that are in the best interest of the Town as a whole.

C. APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR FIRST-TIME CANDIDATES:

1. The candidate for a committee must: Attend at least one (1) meeting of the committee before appointed.
2. Complete and return a Appointment form, available from the Office of Selectmen- Town Administrator; or on the website at <http://ashlandnh.org/> Forms will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for consideration during the first meeting in April.
3. Candidates will be interviewed by the Board of Selectmen the first time he/she applies for that Committee. These interviews may be conducted in a public meeting or non-public meeting session, as allowed by law. Current members seeking reappointment or Alternates seeking appointment as regular members may be asked to an interview.

4. Once appointed, all new committee members must be sworn in by the Town Clerk within ten (10) business days.

D. MEMBERS SEEKING REAPPOINTMENT AND MEMBERS SEEKING APPOINTMENT TO MULTIPLE COMMITTEES:

1. Current members of committees whose terms are about to expire may seek reappointment to the same committee, unless specified otherwise by a committee's bylaws or state or other law. Current members seeking reappointment should follow steps 2-4 above.
2. Members of one committee who want to join another committee must complete all steps for First Time Candidates, above. Committee members will not be allowed to be appointed on more than three (3) boards whose members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. However, anyone serving on more than three committees upon the date of adoption of this policy shall be allowed to complete his/her terms on those committees.

E. EMPTY OR VACANT POSITIONS WITHIN TERM:

If a seat on a committee becomes vacant between term expirations, the Board of Selectmen may fill these positions at any time during the year, following the guidelines outlined in this Policy, unless state law dictates a different manner of filling the vacancy.

F. ALTERNATES:

Alternate members are appointed to Committees to serve if a regular member is unable to take his/her seat at any given meeting. Alternate positions are an excellent method of allowing a citizen to become familiar with the requirements of the Committee, and to gauge his/her ability to assume regular membership. It also gives the Board of Selectmen an opportunity to assess the citizen's qualifications to serve as a regular member. Whenever feasible, first consideration for regular membership should be given to alternate members in good standing.

G. TERMS:

All committee members will be appointed to three (3)-year terms, unless otherwise decided by the Board of Selectmen or as otherwise provided by state law. Committee membership shall be appointed for staggered three (3)-year terms. Terms will expire by April 30th, however a member can still serve after that date, until he/she is reappointed or someone else is appointed to that seat.

H. DISBANDING AND REMOVAL:

The Board of Selectmen may, by majority vote, remove any member of a committee whom it has appointed and/or disband any committee at its discretion, except where not permitted by law, if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Town to do so.

III. ADMINISTRATION OF COMMITTEE

1. Once a committee is formed, it is the responsibility of the Members to assemble as soon as practicable to begin carrying out their mission, and to establish a regular schedule of meetings, or as prescribed by the Board of Selectmen or governing law.
2. At the first meeting of a newly-formed committee, or at the first meeting after the yearly appointment time, a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and minute taker must be chosen (the secretary and minute-taker can be one in the same).

3. Per NH RSA 91-A, meetings shall be open to the public and all committees shall post notice of every meeting in two appropriate places one of which may be the Town's website.
4. Per N.H. RSA 91-A:2 II, at each meeting of the committee, minutes must be taken, put in written form, and a copy submitted to the Office of the Selectmen by the deadlines required. A written draft is required to be made available to the public within five (5) business days after the meeting.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE/MEMBERS

1. Attend meetings: Any more than three unexcused absences within a period of six months, or six meetings, may be grounds for dismissal/removal as a committee member.
2. Attitude and conduct: While differences of opinion are anticipated and encouraged, and members must be allowed full voice, members are expected to be civil and observe recognized rules of order and procedures. Members who are quarrelsome, disruptive, use their authority inappropriately, either on the Committee, or with other Town officials should not be considered for reappointment and may be removed as a member before their term expires.
3. Effort: It is expected that members, particularly of the Town's land use boards, will become as familiar as possible in their committee's subject areas, are encouraged to participate in any training opportunities available to them (i.e., NHMA, Law Lecture series, OEP Conference, etc.).
4. All committee members will adhere to, and be conscious of, at all times while in service to standard ethical guidelines.
5. All Committee members are expected to educate themselves regarding relevant Town/State/Federal ordinances and laws, especially NH RSA 91-A, "The Right-to-Know Law."

V. AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

This Policy may, from time to time, be amended by a majority vote of the Board of Selectmen. In addition, the Board of Selectmen reserves the right to change or waive any of the provisions of this policy, except where contrary to State Statute provisions.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy shall take effect immediately following a majority vote of the Board of Selectmen at a regularly scheduled Selectmen's meeting.

Adopted on April 30th, 2018