

Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

The Town of Pelham Public Library (Library) recognizes that sound, ethical standards of conduct serve to increase the effectiveness of the Library's Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers, and promote public confidence.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of adopting a code of ethics to guide ethical decision making of Library Trustees and staff. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations:

- We shall observe ethical standards with truth, integrity and honor.
- We must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the situation.
- It is incumbent upon any trustee or employee to disqualify himself/herself from any matter in which there is a conflict or the appearance of a conflict.
- We must distinguish clearly between personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the Board even if we personally disagree.
- We must respect library business that is confidential in nature and be in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.
- We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.

The Board of Trustees is committed to avoid any situation in which the existence of conflicting interests of any Trustee or employee may call into question the integrity of the management or operation of the Library, and affirms its commitment to adhere to all applicable provisions of law regarding material conflicts of interest:

1. Gifts: No Trustee or employee shall solicit or receive any gift (whether cash, loan, services, entertainment, or any other form) having a value of \$75 or more, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence or reward the performance of official duties. The Board welcomes and encourages letters or notes expressing appreciation to staff members.

2. Confidential Information: No Trustee or employee, current or former, shall disclose confidential information acquired in the course of his/her official duties or use such information to further any personal interest. In addition, he/she shall not disclose information regarding matters discussed in an executive session of the Board of Trustees regardless of whether or not such information is deemed confidential.

3. Disclosure of Interest: A Trustee or employee shall disclose the nature and extent of any financial or other private interest that he/she has in matters before the Board of Trustees. Employees shall disclose to the Director who shall report the same to the Board of Trustees.

Disclosures shall be recorded in the minutes of Board meetings. The term “interest” means a pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a Trustee or employee.

4. Certain Real Property Interests Prohibited: No Trustee or employee who has an interest in any property, either individually or in association with a company, shall participate in any planning or acquisition of said property by the Library.

5. Prohibited Conflicts of Interest: No Trustee or employee shall have an interest in any contract between the Library and a company of which he or she is a part, when such Trustee or employee has the power, or the power to appoint another, to negotiate or approve the contract or authorize payments there under; and no treasurer or financial officer shall have an interest in a financial institution designated as a depository paying agent or for investment of Library funds. The provisions herein shall not be construed to preclude the payment of lawful compensation and necessary expenses of any Trustee or employee in one or more positions of public employment, the holding of which is not prohibited by law.

6. Certain Prohibited Actions: No employee shall hire, evaluate, promote, or discipline any other employee who is a member of the same family. The Board of Trustees will take appropriate action on a case-by-case basis in the event that marriage or other circumstances results in a situation not in compliance with this policy.

7. Private Employment: No Trustee or employee shall solicit or engage in private employment that creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his/her official duties.

8. Use of Library Property: No Trustee or employee shall use or permit the use of Library property for anything other than official purposes or for activities not otherwise officially approved by the Board of Trustees.

9. Duty to Disqualify: It is incumbent upon any Trustee or employee to disqualify himself/herself from any matter in which there is a conflict or the appearance of a conflict.

10. Duty to Report Conflicts of Interest: A Trustee or Director shall report any known or perceived conflict of interest to the Board of Trustees. Employees shall disclose to the Director who shall report the same to the Board of Trustees.

11. Duty to Report Policy Violations: A Trustee or Director shall report any violation of this policy to the Board of Trustees.

The Library Director shall cause a copy of the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy to be distributed to every Trustee and employee. Each Trustee and employee elected or appointed thereafter shall be furnished a copy before entering office or employment.

Adopted April 7, 2010