

ARTICLE 2 –BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Adopted/Re-adopted March 30, 2004 and March 2019

Introduction

The provisions set forth in this Article shall apply to Boards and Committees (B/Cs) established by the Select Board, and to any B/C established by Charter, to which volunteers are appointed solely by the Select Board. The Code of Conduct provisions of Section 2.2 shall also apply to individual members of any B/Cs who are appointed by the Select Board. The Remote Participation provisions of Section 2.1 shall apply to all Boards and Committees of the Town.

The purpose of this Article is to describe the responsibilities of volunteers appointed by the Select Board, including:

- Their general responsibilities;
- Their Code of Conduct; and
- Their specific responsibilities to B/Cs that have been established by the Select Board.

Section 2.1 - General Provisions for all Boards and Committees

There are a number of Home Rule Charter and Bylaw provisions common to all B/Cs. The provisions, and the associated Charter or Bylaw citations, are listed below. In order to learn their responsibilities, volunteers are encouraged to use this list as a reference guide and to read the cited provisions.

2.1.1 Procedures of Boards or Committees (Home Rule Charter Section 8.8)

- ◆ Meetings
- ◆ Rules and Minutes
- ◆ Voting
- ◆ Quorum

2.1.2 General Provisions (General Bylaw Section 3.3.1)

- ◆ Recording Secretary
- ◆ Election of Officers
- ◆ Residency Required
- ◆ Removal for Absence
- ◆ Term of Office

2.1.3 Annual Town Report (General Bylaw Section 5.1.1)

2.1.4 Rules and Regulations (General Bylaw Section 5.3)

- ◆ Procedure for Adoption
- ◆ Requirement for Public Hearing
- ◆ Filing of Approved Rules and Regulations
- ◆ Inhabitant Proposal of a Rule or Regulation

◆ Notification to Inhabitant of Non-Adoption

2.1.5 Remote Participation

All appointed and elected Boards and Committees are hereby authorized to allow Remote Participation of their members in any duly posted public meeting, subject to the requirements of The Massachusetts *Open Meeting Law*, *M.G.L. c.30A*, §20(d), the regulations set forth in 940 CMR 29.10, and the Additional Regulations set forth below.

Additional Regulations:

- (1) Remote participation is limited to members of the Board or Committee, and is not available to the general public;
- (2) A member of a Board or Committee requesting remote participation must notify the Chair or acting Chair in writing and in advance of the meeting, stating the reasons for the request;
- (3) The remote audio must be clearly heard in the public meeting space by all participants. If the Chair or acting Chair determines that visual inspection of objects or documents to be presented at the meeting will be required, remote participation authorization may be withheld or withdrawn;
- (4) The Chair or acting Chair shall announce the presence of any remote participants at the start of the meeting;
- (5) If technical difficulties arise and persist during a meeting, the remote participant shall be declared to have left the meeting, and the Chair or Acting Chair may decide to continue with the Agenda;
- (6) A quorum of the Board or Committee, including the Chair or Acting Chair, shall be physically present at the meeting location, as required by [M.G.L. c.30A, §20\(d\)](#);
- (7) All votes must be by roll call if there is a remote participant in the meeting;
- (8) All handouts or presentations that are considered public records must be made available to remote participants in advance. If used during the meeting, such documents shall be part of the official record of the meeting, and shall be listed in the meeting minutes and retained in accordance with [M.G.L. c.30A, §22](#)
- (9) A member participating remotely may participate in an executive session, but shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present or able to hear the discussion at the remote location, unless the presence of that person is approved by a simple majority vote of the public body;
- (10) Any costs associated with remote participation shall be borne entirely by the remote participant.

Adopted 12-13-94, Revised 1-2-96, Revised March 30, 2004, Revised November 5, 2013, Revised August 12, 2014, Revised March 2019

Section 2.2 - Code of Conduct

Each member of the Select Board, as well as every B/C member appointed by the Select Board, is expected to comply with the following Code of Conduct.

2.2.1 Responsibilities

- A member's function is to follow the mission statement of the B/C.
- A member is one of a team and, without restricting any rights of free expression, each member should abide by all decisions of the B/C once they are made.
- A member should be well informed concerning the duties and responsibilities of the B/C.
- A member shall perform all actions specified by the Reading Home Rule Charter, Town Bylaws, or B/C policy.
- The role of a member is to engage in unselfish service to the community.

2.2.2 Laws and Regulations Governing Action

- A member shall abide by the ethics guidelines established by the State, including all applicable state statutes, the Reading Home Rule Charter, Town Bylaw requirements, and all applicable policies established by the Select Board,

2.2.3 Decision Making

- Members should request assistance from Town staff or consultants only through the staff person assigned to the B/C. If no staff person is assigned, the member should consult the Town Manager. Any request for assistance must copy the Town Manager. The request should not be onerous and the staff member has the right to defer action to the Town Manager. It should be made clear staff are not managed by or report to the Select Board.
- A member should not make statements or promises about future votes on matters that will come before the B/C until there has been an opportunity to hear the merits of the issue during a public meeting of the B/C.
- A member should make decisions only after the relevant facts on a question have been presented and discussed in a public meeting.
- A member should refrain from communicating the position of the B/C (as opposed to the member's personal position) to reporters or state officials unless the full B/C has previously agreed on both the position and the language of the relevant communication.

2.2.4 Treatment of Public, Staff, and Other Members

- B/C members, all applicants who come before the B/C and all staff and consultants working with the B/C are entitled to be treated with respect, despite differences of opinion.
- Appointed B/C members who do not attend B/C meetings on a regular basis should consider resignation.

2.2.5 Enforcement

If a B/C member's conduct is inconsistent with this Code of Conduct, the Select Board may determine whether action needs to be taken. Action may include:

- A discussion with the Chair of the B/C and the Select Board liaison(s) to try to address the conduct;

- Consideration by the Select Board relative to reappointment when that consideration comes before the Select Board;
- Removal of the B/C member from office by the Select Board, pursuant to Sec. 8.12 of the Home Rule Charter.

If a Select Board member's conduct is inconsistent with this code of conduct, the Chair of the Select Board will discuss the conduct with the member. If the member continues with the conduct in question, the Select Board may reproach the member.

Adopted by the Select Board 6/9/09; Revised March 2019

Section 2.3 - Boards and Committees Not Created in the General Bylaws or Charter

Pursuant to Section 4.14 of the Home Rule Charter, the Select Board may establish and appoint or dissolve Boards or Committees not otherwise provided for in the Charter. Section 4.14 further provides that, in advance of the first meeting of each Board or Committee established by the Select Board and annually thereafter, the Select Board shall report the purpose, membership and contact information of said board or committee to the Town Clerk.

In addition to the provisions of Section 2.1 of these policies, the following provisions shall apply to all Boards and Committees, not otherwise provided for in the Charter, that are appointed by the Select Board:

1. The Select Board may appoint one of its own members as a liaison to the B/C. The liaison will not be a voting member of the B/C and will not be included in the number of members authorized.
2. In accordance with the Reading Home Rule Charter Sec. 4.15 and General Bylaw 3.3.1.6, the Select Board may appoint Associate members when specified by Charter, Bylaw or Statutory authorization in addition to the regular members. It is the intent of the Select Board in appointing Associate members that the expertise of a greater number of interested citizens may be utilized in the deliberations of the body, and that Associate membership may serve as a training ground for new members.
3. The Chair of each B/C shall be elected from the membership annually.

2.3.1 Human Relations Advisory Committee (HRAC)

There is hereby established a Human Relations Advisory Committee. The Human Relations Advisory Committee shall provide advice to the Select Board on how the community can encourage an environment of tolerance, understanding and harmonious racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and gender relations within the Town and among its citizens, prevent discrimination or the perception of discrimination on the basis of color, age, gender, religion, disability, culture, national origin, ancestry or sexual orientation within the Town or among its inhabitants, and enhance its ability to mediate differences arising from the aforesaid relations.

In addition to its advisory capacity, the Human Relations Advisory Committee shall:

- ◆ Engage in out-reach to such groups which may have suffered from or been the object of such discrimination, or may perceive themselves to have been the object of the same;
- ◆ Provide a safe place where individuals or groups may air their concerns or complaints as to the existence of such discrimination, or where concerns as to the potential existence of such discrimination within the Town or community at large or the perception thereof may be discussed;
- ◆ Identify perceived problems of such discrimination or human relations conflicts within the Town, and be a resource or referral agency to assist the parties or mediate among the parties so as, to the extent possible, permit the resolution of the same at the local level;
- ◆ Promote and encourage understanding, tolerance and diversity and the recognition of human and civil rights in the Town and community, and sponsor educational programs and the celebrations of events for that purpose.

The Human Relations Advisory Committee shall consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Select Board, unless another means of appointment is indicated. Members shall reside in the Town or have their place of business in the Town. Membership on the Human Relations Advisory Committee shall include the following:

- ◆ One member shall be a member of the Select Board or its designee,
- ◆ One member shall be the Chief of Police or a designee thereof,
- ◆ One member shall be designated by the School Committee,
- ◆ The remaining four members shall be appointed by the Select Board and, to the extent possible, shall be a diverse group which may include representatives from the following fields:
 - ◆ A business owner other than the real estate business or a business association;
 - ◆ A representative of a real estate business or association;
 - ◆ A representative of the Reading Clergy Association.

The Committee may invite to serve as non-voting members such voluntary consultants in the field of human relations or human rights as it may choose from time to time. The Town Manager may assign a staff liaison representative to the Human Relations Advisory Committee and arrange for staff support.

The Committee shall report at least annually to the Select Board on policy issues.

Adopted 2-13-01, Revised 7-22-0, Revised 12/14/04, Revised 4/10/12

2.3.2 Reading Climate Advisory Committee (CAC)

The Reading Climate Advisory Committee is an official town advisory committee of concerned citizen volunteers seeking to achieve environmental, economic and societal sustainability by raising public awareness and influencing the community, including its government, to reduce energy use and foster environmental stewardship in a cost effective manner.

Specific Goals include:

- ◆ Minimize Reading's contribution to climate change by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.
- ◆ Reduce Reading's dependence on fossil fuel by promoting energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy purchase and generation and alternative modes of transportation.
- ◆ Ensure the longevity of our local and global ecosystem by fostering responsible stewardship.
- ◆ Enhance public health by improving air quality and protecting the earth's natural resources.

Adopted 11-22-05, Revised 4/10/12, Revised June 23, 2015

2.3.3 Reading Trails Committee (RTC)

Based on the recommendation of the former Northern Area Greenway Committee, there is hereby established a five (5) member Reading Trail Committee (RTC) which will assume the responsibilities of planning, developing, and maintaining present and future trails in the Town of Reading. The goal is for the Town to create and maintain a connected, well-coordinated system of trails to serve the residents of the community. The RTC will undertake the following responsibilities.

- ◆ Make recommendations to the Conservation Commission, Town Forest Committee, and Recreation Committee regarding development, operation, use, and maintenance of trails crossing lands under the jurisdiction of these bodies. The RTC shall have no rule-making authority itself.
- ◆ Act as a liaison between the Town of Reading and the Reading Open Land Trust, Friends of Reading Recreation, Walkable Reading, Scout groups, and other youth and community groups with respect to development, operation, use, and maintenance of trails.
- ◆ Coordinate and manage an Adopt-a-Trail program, if appropriate, for the maintenance of trails or portions there-of.
- ◆ Set trail construction, maintenance, use, accessibility, and signage standards.
- ◆ Oversee production of trail maps and guides.
- ◆ Provide advice and recommendations on the development of the Ipswich River Greenway and other trail initiatives arising from Town reports and studies.
- ◆ Approve volunteer trail projects before the volunteers seek approval for projects from the Conservation Commission, Town Forest Committee, or other Town or other cooperating organizations.
- ◆ Organize training, hikes, trail maintenance days, and trail construction projects.
- ◆ Foster working relationships with DPW, Police, Fire, Schools, or other agencies to carry out the mission of the RTC.
- ◆ Encourage cooperation and address problems and conflicts in trail areas.
- ◆ Identify grant opportunities to support trail initiatives.

- ◆ Make recommendations to the Select Board, the Town Manager, and other bodies of the Town on measures necessary and appropriate to implement the trails program.

The Committee shall be made up of five (5) members appointed by the Select Board for three-year terms, so arranged that as near an equal number of terms as possible shall expire each year. Associate members may also be appointed. In selecting the Committee membership, the Select Board shall give consideration to the recommendations of the following Committees:

- Conservation Commission;
- Town Forest Committee;
- Recreation Committee;

The Select Board shall consider for appointment:

- one or more residents of the community who has expertise in conservation, environmental affairs, trails operation and maintenance, or other areas of expertise which, in the opinion of the Board would be helpful in meeting the Committee's mission.

Subcommittees may be created by a vote of the Committee. Members of Subcommittee members do not necessarily have to be members of the Committee.

Adopted 3-25-08, Revised 4/10/12, Revised June 23, 2015

2.3.4 – Town Forest Committee

Pursuant to Article 4.11 of the Home Rule Charter, the Town Forest Committee shall have all the powers and duties given to Town Forest Committees by the Massachusetts General Laws, and such additional powers and duties as may be provided by the Charter, by Town Bylaw, by the Select Board or by Town Meeting vote.

Section 4.11 authorizes the Select Board to determine the number of members, appoint the members, and establish their term of appointment, not to exceed three (3) years. Pursuant to that authority, the Select Board hereby establishes a five-member Town Forest Committee with members appointed for three-year terms, so arranged that as near an equal number of terms as possible shall expire each year. In selecting the Committee membership, the Select Board shall give consideration to applicants with the following credentials:

- Knowledge of the community
- Familiarity with and interest in the Town Forest
- Experience with open space preservation and/or land use management
- Interest and knowledge in protection of wildlife habitats, forest ecosystems, wetlands, trails, outdoor recreation, and soil and water resources.

The Town Forest Committee shall serve as the stewards of the Town-owned Forest land. As stewards of the Town Forest, the Town Forest Committee shall undertake the following tasks with and in cooperation with appropriate Town staff:

- With staff and input by the community, coordinate the development of a Town Forest Stewardship Plan and a Town Forest Master Plan which will act as guides in future decision making.
- Maintain ongoing files of information pertaining to the Town Forest, using the most current available technology.
- Develop and adopt rules and regulations for the Town Forest.
- Coordinate scheduling as appropriate for the use of all or a portion of the Town Forest by various community groups

Adopted 6/22/10, Revised April 23, 201; Adopted 2-15-201, Revised 4/10/12, Revised 6/23/15

Section 2.4 – Ad Hoc Committees

The Select Board may, from time to time, appoint ad hoc Committees. In addition to the provisions of Section 2.1 of these policies, the following provisions shall apply to all ad hoc Committees appointed by the Select Board:

1. The Select Board may appoint one of their members as a full voting member of the Board, Committee or Commission.
2. The Select Board may select the Chair of the Committee if the policy establishing the Committee so provides.
3. The ad hoc Committee shall have a term of not longer than one year, unless extended by the Select Board.

2.4.1 Ad Hoc Committee to Help Establish a Human Rights Board

An ad-hoc committee is hereby created to help establish a Human Rights Board and explore the recommendations that resulted from the Stakeholders’ meeting on September 25, 2018. The following representatives shall be invited to participate in this ad hoc committee:

- Up to two members of the School Committee (pending School Committee approval), or their designee(s);
- Up to two members of the Select Board, or our designee(s);
- Up to two members of the Human Relations Advisory Committee; and
- Up to three members from non-governmental groups that focus of Human Rights
- Town Manager or designee
- Superintendent or designee
- Public Safety representative
- Board of Library Trustees representative
- METCO representative
- Clergy representative.

The ad-hoc committee will sunset on November 30, 2019.

Revised March 2019