Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

As of July 1, 2019, every municipality in Vermont was required to adopt a conflicts of interest prohibition (policy) that must contain at least the following elements, which are found in 24 V.S.A. § 1984:

- a definition of "conflict of interest";
- a list of the elected and appointed officials covered by such prohibition;
- a method to determine whether a conflict of interest exists;
- actions that must be taken if a conflict of interest is determined to exist; and
- a method of enforcement against individuals violating such prohibition.

In general terms, a conflict of interest is an incompatibility between the private and public interests of a public official. It is up to each municipality to specifically articulate the types of conduct that constitute a conflict of interest. A municipality may also set certain behavioral standards for its public officials by broadening a conflicts of interest prohibition to address ethical behavior. 24 V.S.A. § 2291(20).

Our Model Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct can help municipalities comply with requirements set out in 24 V.S.A. § 1984 and take advantage of the authority granted in 24 V.S.A. § 2291 to regulate ethical conduct by public officials. It is up to each municipal legislative body to modify and adopt this model policy to suit local preferences.

While every effort is made to provide members with the most accurate information possible, these resources do not constitute legal advice.

If you have questions about this or any of our other municipal law topics, resources, and services, click here: