

# Town of Halfmoon Ethics Committee

## New Ethics Legislation - Draft

A Local Law relating to a code of ethics and a board of ethics for the Town of Halfmoon superseding and replacing Local Law No. 2-1970.

Prepared and Presented by the Town of Halfmoon Ethics Committee

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# The past 13 months...

- The Ethics committee has developed this legislation through objective review of several resources related to municipal ethics.
- In reviewing these resources, the committee has been diligent to carefully consider all information in a search for best practices.
- The overall objective of the committee is to provide a comprehensive, all-inclusive, practical set of updated ethics laws that may be easily understood and implemented by the Town of Halfmoon.

# Key Goals of New Ethics Legislation

- Public Trust and Integrity
- To recognize and prevent potential conflicts before they arise through training.
- To define what a conflict of Interest is and what it is not.
- Provide Town personnel and officials with guidance on issues of ethics.

# Resources

- Mark Davies, Expert in Municipal Ethics Laws
- New York State Comptroller's Office
- Saratoga County Ethics Legislation
- The Town of Clifton Park Ethics Legislation
- New York City Board of Ethics
- New York State General Municipal Law
- Town of Halfmoon Employee Manual

# Ethics Legislation

Intent/Mission Statement

Definition of Terms

Prohibited Activities

Disclosures

Training

Inducement and Penalties for Offenses

Structure of the Committee

# Key Topics

## Prohibited Activities

- Gifts – Over \$75 Annually
- Political Activities - No elected official of the Town Board may hold the office of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, or Secretary of a political party simultaneously.
- Use of Position to gain personal privilege.

# Key Topics

## Financial Disclosure Forms

- Who fills them out?
- Transactional Updates
- Annual Submissions
- Review of Disclosure Forms

# Key Topics

## Advisory Opinions

- What are they, how do they work?
- Town Official & Town Employee request
- Advisory opinions submitted in writing directly to the Ethics Committee.
- Pro-active approach to encourage the avoidance of a potential conflict of interest before it occurs.



# Key Topics

## Bi-Annual Training

- The ethics committee will actively participate in training and providing guidance to town officials and employees on issues regarding ethics.

# Key Topics

## Structure of the Ethics Board

- 3-5 Members – Appointed by the Town Board.
- 3 Year Term – Staggered
- Ethics Board selects Chair annually

# References

- Mark Davies, Expert in Municipal Ethics Laws

[law.fordham.edu/faculty/2393](http://law.fordham.edu/faculty/2393)

[www.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/downloads/pdf2/municipal\\_ethics\\_laws\\_ny\\_state/Enacting\\_Local\\_Ethics\\_Law01.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/downloads/pdf2/municipal_ethics_laws_ny_state/Enacting_Local_Ethics_Law01.pdf)

- New York State Comptroller's Office

[www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/training/modules/protecting/two/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/training/modules/protecting/two/)

- Saratoga County

[www.saratogacountyny.gov/index.asp](http://www.saratogacountyny.gov/index.asp)

- The Town of Clifton Park Ethics Legislation

[www.cliftonpark.org/townhall/ethics.asp](http://www.cliftonpark.org/townhall/ethics.asp)

- New York City Conflicts of Interest Board [www.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/html/home/home.shtml)

- New York State General Municipal Law – Article 18

[home2.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/downloads/pdf2/municipal\\_ethics\\_laws\\_ny\\_state/art\\_18\\_article.pdf](http://home2.nyc.gov/html/conflicts/downloads/pdf2/municipal_ethics_laws_ny_state/art_18_article.pdf)

- Town of Halfmoon Employee Manual