

Policy Six: Conflict of Interest and Property Ownership Disclosure

All Town Councilors are expected to be aware of and be in compliance with the State laws pertaining to Conflict of Interest. 30-A M.R.S.A. §2605 is the most applicable State Law (full text below). Furthermore, all Town Councilors are expected to complete and sign a form provided by the Town Clerk that identifies all real estate interests within the Town of Falmouth for him/herself and spouse/partner. Real estate interest shall include but not be limited to full or partial ownership in developed land, buildings, undeveloped land, easements, rights of way and other forms of real estate interest. Forms must be completed within 30 days of being sworn into office. Any changes in real estate interest by acquisition or disposition shall be updated within 30 days of such change.

30-A M.R.S.A. §2605. Conflicts of interest

Certain proceedings of municipalities, counties and quasi-municipal corporations and their officials are voidable and actionable according to the following provisions

1. Voting. The vote of a body is voidable when any official in an official position votes on any question in which that official has a direct or an indirect pecuniary interest.
2. Contracts. A contract, other than a contract obtained through properly advertised bid procedures, made by a municipality, county or quasi-municipal corporation during the term of an official of a body of the municipality, county or quasi-municipal corporation involved in the negotiation or award of the contract who has a direct or an indirect pecuniary interest in it is voidable, except as provided in subsection 4.
3. Restrain proceedings. The Superior Court may restrain proceedings in violation of this section on the application of at least 10 residents of the municipality, county or area served by the quasi-municipal corporation.
4. Direct or indirect pecuniary interest. In the absence of actual fraud, an official of a body of the municipality, county government or a quasi-municipal corporation involved in a question or in the negotiation or award of a contract is deemed to have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a question or in a contract where the official is an officer, director, partner, associate, employee or stockholder of a private corporation, business or other economic entity to which the question relates or with which the unit of municipal, county government or the quasi-municipal corporation contracts only where the official is directly or indirectly the owner of at least 10% of the stock of the private corporation or owns at least a 10% interest in the business or other economic entity.

When an official is deemed to have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest, the vote on the question or the contract is not voidable and actionable if the official makes full disclosure of interest before any action is taken and if the official abstains from voting, from the negotiation or award of the contract and from otherwise attempting to influence a decision in which that official has an interest. The official's disclosure and a notice of abstention from taking part in a decision in which the official has an interest shall be recorded with the clerk or secretary of the municipal or county government or the quasi-municipal corporation.

A. This subsection does not prohibit a member of a city or town council or a member of a quasi-municipal corporation who is a teacher from making or renewing a teacher employment contract with the municipality or quasi-municipal corporation for which the member serves.

5. Former municipal and county officials. This subsection applies to former municipal and county officials.

A. No former municipal or county official may, for anyone other than the municipality or county, knowingly act as an agent or attorney, or participate in a proceeding before a municipal or county government body for one year after termination of the official's employment or term of office with that government body in connection with any proceeding:

(1) In which the specific issue was pending before the municipal or county official and was directly within the responsibilities of that official; and

(2) Which was completed at least one year before the termination of that official's employment or term of office.

B. No former municipal or county official may, for anyone other than the municipality or county, knowingly act as an agent or attorney, or participate in a proceeding before a municipal or county government body at any time after termination of the official's employment or term of office with that government body in connection with any proceeding:

(1) In which the specific issue was pending before the municipal or county official and was directly within the responsibilities of that official; and

(2) Which was pending within one year of the termination of the municipal or county official's employment or term of office.

C. This subsection may not be construed to prohibit former municipal or county officials from doing personal business with the municipality or county. This subsection does not limit the application of Title 17-A, chapter 25.

For the purpose of this subsection, a municipal or county government body includes an agency, board, commission, authority, committee, legislative body, department or other governmental entity of a municipality or county.

6. Avoidance of appearance of conflict of interest. Every municipal and county official shall attempt to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest by disclosure or by abstention.
7. Municipal officers adopt ethics policy. In their discretion, the municipal officers may adopt an ethics policy governing the conduct of elected and appointed municipal officials.