

TOWN OF PRINCETON MA  
Princeton Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
November 7, 2018

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**AC members in attendance:** Bill Lawton, Mary Jo Wojtusik, Wayne Adams, George Handy, Judy Dino, Krista Penning

**AC members absent:** none

**Advisory Committee (AC) Agenda**

- Review draft Town Code of Conduct
- Assign roles for projects: Financial Policy, Budget Calendar, Town Insurance review
- Assign roles for department operating budget formation
- Prepare questions and statements for WRSD 2020 Budget Roundtable
- Refine Upcoming AC Meeting Agendas, for Nov 14th and Nov 28th
- Approve Minutes from previous AC meeting(s)

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Started at 6.05PM**

**Agenda modifications**

- Other topics
  - MMA workshop recap
  - Nina- training - ethics and OML
  - AC Contact list

**WRSD 2020 Budget Roundtable**

**Prep - Questions/statements**

Wayne will be attending the WRSD Budget Roundtable meeting with the purpose of gathering information for budget preparation.

George gave a brief primer on the foundation budget indicating that any shortfall coming to the region from the State (foundation budget) goes into the operating budget. To assist with comparing the District's budget with the foundation budget, George would like to ask if the 14 line items on the District budget could line up with the foundation budget.

Another question – Are there any trends (for example, declining enrollment) that are impacting the budget? (Wayne)

Other discussion related to WRSD budget:

- Thomas Prince is rated among the highest in test scores in the State. Our district is efficiently managing the district and producing good test scores.
- It was noted that other towns in the District offer students different programs, e.g. music and sports, so there is a discrepancy in what is offered in each town.

## **Review draft of Town Code of Conduct**

During review and discussion of the draft Town Code of Conduct several concerns and questions were raised.

- The guidelines in the draft seem very specific and there was a question as to whether more general guidance might be better.
- For the AC to fulfill its charge, information is needed. There is concern that the ability to get information may be hindered.
- While the draft covers how a Board interacts with the public and Town staff, it does not address how Boards interact with each other.
- The draft does not include consequences of not adhering to the guidance in the Code of Conduct.

The AC was curious as to what other towns have Codes of Conduct and what is the scope/depth of other guidelines.

An email was drafted by Wayne and sent to the TA on November 26<sup>th</sup>. This email is included with the reference documents.

## **Roles for projects: Financial Policy, Budget Calendar, Town Insurance review**

Town Insurance review (Krista)

Financial Policy (Mary Jo, Wayne)

Budget Calendar (Judy, Wayne)

### Discussion – Financial Policy

Guidance from the facilitator at the MMA – Financial Policy workshop is that for a town our size, a 4 – 5 page document is adequate and that we do not need to have a policy as detailed at Northborough or Arlington, both of which are award-winning policies. The workshop stressed that a town that has a strong fiscal policy will receive more favorable bond ratings. Other towns published financial policies include Ayer, Shirley, Westminster, and Littleton.

### Discussion – Budget calendar

The budget calendar is tied in with the financial policy. The MMA financial handbook has an example of a calendar. Items that would be part of budget calendar include Schedule A, bond disclosure statements, and audits/audit reports and letters. It will be helpful to look at what other towns have put together for budget calendars.

## **Assign roles for department operating budget formation**

Roles will be assigned as we approach December when meetings are to be scheduled.

## **Upcoming AC Meeting Agendas, for Nov 14th and Nov 28th**

There will be no meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>. November 28<sup>th</sup> will be the next AC meeting when we anticipate having the budget guidance letter from the SB. The initial indication is that guidance will include level funding budget formation.

### **Other topics**

- MMA workshop recap
- Nina- training - ethics and OML
- AC Contact list

MMA workshop – Wayne and Mary Jo attended sessions on Budgeting 101 and Financial Policies. We will share the information when it is available. The next MMA workshops are part of the annual meeting that is to be held in Boston in January.

TA passed along a free training on “Responsibilities of Governing Boards” that is being held in Milford. Krista and Mary Jo to send Wayne their contact information to update contact list.

**Minutes:** Approve Oct 17 AC meeting minutes, approved 5-Y, 0-N, 0-A

Note: Krista left the meeting at 7:00.

### **Upcoming AC meetings**

- Regular meeting schedule: 28 Nov at 6:00 pm

### **Reference Documents**

- Email from TA, Code of Conduct Boards, Commissions, and Committees
- Draft Town Code of Conduct document
- Email from AC to TA with AC feedback on Code of Conduct
- Training – Responsibilities of Governing Boards

Minutes recorded by Mary Jo Wojtusik, AC Member

## **APPOINTED BOARD, COMMISSION, AND COMMITTEE MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **1. Appointed members of a Board, Commission, or Committee ("Board"), in relation to the community shall:**

- Realize that you are one of a team and should abide by and carry out Board decisions once they are made.
- Be well informed concerning the duties of the Board on both local and state levels.
- Remember that you represent the entire community at all times.
- Accept the role of a member is a means of unselfish service, not to benefit personally or politically from your Board activities.

### **2. A member of the Board, in his or her relations with the Town Administrator should:**

- Endeavor to use best practices that will direct and support the administrator and that benefit the staff and residents of the community.
- Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- Give the Town Administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her disposition and/or solutions.
- Not give instructions to or request assistance from Town departments heads, but rather channel all such activities through the full board and the Town Administrator.

### **3. A member of the Board in relations with fellow Board members, should:**

- Recognize that action at official legal meetings is binding and that he or she alone cannot bind the Board outside such meetings.
- Not make statements or promises of how he or she will vote on matters that come before the Board until he or she has had an opportunity to hear the pros and cons of the issue during a Board meeting.
- Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.
- Refrain from communicating the position of the Board to anyone unless the Board has previously agreed on both the position and the language of the statement conveying the position.
- Treat with respect all Board members and their rites, despite differences of opinion.

### **4. A member of the Board in his or her relations with Town Staff should:**

- Treat all staff as professionals that respects the abilities, experience and dignity of each individual.
- Limit contact to specific town staff. Questions to town staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed only to the Town Administrator or department head. The office of the Town Administrator should be copied on all requests or correspondence.
- Never publically criticize an individual employee. Concerns about staff performance should only be made to the Town Administrator through private conversation.
- Ensure that any materials of information provided to a Board member from a staff member be made available to all your Board members.

## Code of Conduct for Boards, Commissions & Committees

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From: Nina Nazarian (townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us)

To: asst.tc@town.princeton.ma.us

Date: Thursday, October 18, 2018, 12:28 PM EDT

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Dear Appointed Boards, Commissions and Committees:

At their meeting yesterday evening, the Selectboard agreed upon the attached draft Code of Conduct for Board, Commission, and Committee ("Board") members. Before adopting this Code of Conduct, the Selectboard and I would be interested in any suggestions that Boards may have.

The Selectboard anticipates finalizing the Code of Conduct at its November 28th meeting, therefore **the deadline for comments will be Tuesday, November 20th. Please send comments to Executive Assistant Amy Drumm via email to [attc.tc@town.princeton.ma.us](mailto:attc.tc@town.princeton.ma.us).**

Kindly review this Code of Conduct and discuss the subject at one of your upcoming meetings. If the Board feels that comments should be submitted, kindly vote the comments to be submitted and send us a copy of your vote. Wherever possible, if making a comment to modify language, please identify the proposed language to change.

**Chairpersons & Staff** - Please distribute this information to all members of your board. Apologies if you receive this email more than once.

Sincerely,

Nina

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Nina Nazarian  
Town Administrator  
6 Town Hall Drive  
Princeton, MA 01541  
PH: 978-464-2102  
FX: 978-464-2106  
[townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us](mailto:townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us)  
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2018-10-17\_CodeofConduct\_BoardsCommissionsCommittees\_Draft.docx

15.8kB

# Greetings from the MCPPO Program!

The Office of the Inspector General will be presenting a three-hour, tuition-free class on the responsibilities of governing boards. Although this class is geared towards governing board members, all public employees and concerned citizens are encouraged to attend. This class is hosted by Milford Housing Authority.

The following topics will be discussed:

- Fiduciary duties and responsibilities
- Tools for effective oversight
  
- Essential terms for executive-level employment contracts
- Preventing and detecting fraud, waste and abuse
- Ethics requirements for members of boards and commissions
- Public Records Law and Open Meeting Law

**What:** *Are you a Member of a Public Board or Commission?  
Know Your Responsibilities*

**Where:** **Milford Housing Authority**

45 Birmingham Court  
Milford, MA 01757

**When:** Tuesday, November 27, 2018  
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**Cost:** No cost to attend

Please register for this class by completing the following form found <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/11/05/regmcpo.pdf> here:  
and email it to [Ashley.nelson@state.ma.us](mailto:Ashley.nelson@state.ma.us) as soon as possible.

**We look forward to seeing you in class!**

*Ashley Nelson*

Division Coordinator

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Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General

One Ashburton Place, Room 1311

Boston, MA 02108

[Ashley.nelson@state.ma.us](mailto:Ashley.nelson@state.ma.us)

Office: 617-722-8889



## Fwd: AC feedback on code of conduct

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From: wayne adams (waynemadams@gmail.com)

To: lawtonw877@aol.com; ghandy131@hotmail.com; onidju@aol.com; kpenning0117@gmail.com; mjwojtusik@yahoo.com; waynemadams@gmail.com

Date: Monday, November 26, 2018, 7:02 PM EST

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Summarized AC feedback for the draft Code of Conduct.  
Wayne

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **wayne adams** <[waynemadams@gmail.com](mailto:waynemadams@gmail.com)>

Date: Mon, Nov 26, 2018 at 7:01 PM

Subject: AC feedback on code of conduct

To: <[attc.tc@town.princeton.ma.us](mailto:attc.tc@town.princeton.ma.us)>

Cc: Nina Nazarian Town Administrator <[townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us](mailto:townadministrator@town.princeton.ma.us)>

Hi Amy

This is Wayne Adams, chair of the Advisory Committee.

Our committee reviewed the Code of Conduct at our November 7th meeting and have the following feedback:

1)

We did not see a need for the town to adopt one. We already follow and adhere to policies that regulate OML and Conflict of Interest. However, if there is a lot of other towns that have codes of conduct...and we are just catching up to others, we would want to see other town's codes to understand what others have adopted.

2)

Given the nature of the Advisory Committee is to ask questions and obtain information, and form opinions that may not align with other boards/committees/dept heads, the nature of the Code of Conduct can become subjective as to a code violation vs just doing our work when there can differing view points and healthy/clarifying debate.

3)

Typically codes of conduct in other settings such as professional societies, etc...also have lengthy sections in a policies and procedures document on violations, how a violation is reported/assessed/reviewed, the ramification of a violation, a review and appeals process, etc.... with only the Town of Princeton code of conduct as the only document, the town is only thinking through a part of a process and not the complete process of adherence, confirming reading/adhering, and non-conformance. However, aside from a professional societies code of conduct and ethics, and their adhering to local/state/national law, there are not other governing documents such as what the state of MA has for municipal COI, OML, etc... hence why a society's code are further elaborated on with policies and procedures. With the town adopting a code of conduct, it is not clear how state policies and regulations complement or conflict with a code and be recognized a condition of volunteering.

4)

The code of conduct document does outline certain cross-discipline interactions, e.g.. a board with TA/Dept head or a board/committee with the public. One set of interactions missing is board/committee to board/committee interaction. However, adding such a section would not eliminate the 3 points listed above.

Wayne