



TOWN OF BRISTOL, VERMONT

1 South Street, P.O. Box 249, Bristol, VT 05443

PERSONNEL POLICY

Consolidated Revision

DRAFT FOR SELECTBOARD AND LEGAL REVIEW

July 2026

Adopted by the Bristol Selectboard pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 1121-1122
Supersedes the Town of Bristol Personnel Policy adopted April 3, 2017 (amended June 26, 2017)
Effective date: _____

About This Draft

This document is a full consolidated revision of the Town of Bristol Personnel Policy. It preserves the structure and substance of the 2017 adopted policy, updates sections where Vermont or federal law or Town operations have changed, and adds new sections for policy areas that previously had no written coverage. Interns and temporary and seasonal employees are addressed in dedicated sections.

This is a working draft for Selectboard and legal review. It has not been adopted and does not take effect until the Selectboard votes to adopt it. A companion Summary of Changes memo accompanies this draft and identifies, section by section, what changed from the 2017 policy and which items still require a Selectboard decision or confirmation from municipal counsel.

Bracketed text in [square brackets] marks a value or decision that the Selectboard or Town Administrator must confirm before adoption.

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Addendum A: Personnel Policy Acknowledgement

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Section 1. Title and Authority

This policy shall be known as the Town of Bristol Personnel Policy. It has been adopted by the Town of Bristol Selectboard pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 1121 and 1122.

This Personnel Policy does not constitute a contract of employment. Employment with the Town of Bristol is at-will, unless otherwise provided by statute, and not for any definite period or succession of periods of time unless an employee has an employment contract with the Town. The Town or the employee may terminate employment at any time, with or without notice. The Selectboard reserves the right to amend any provision of this Personnel Policy for any reason and at any time, with notice.

This Personnel Policy will be administered by the Selectboard or its authorized representative, the Town Administrator.

Section 2. Persons Covered and Employee Classifications

This Personnel Policy applies to full-time employees, part-time employees, full-time school-year employees, paid on-call personnel, and temporary and seasonal employees of the Town of Bristol, herein referred to as "employees." Except by separate written agreement, elected officers and their statutory assistants, members of Town boards and commissions, and persons who provide the Town with services on a contract basis are not covered by this policy.

For purposes of this policy, a full-time employee is an employee who works at least 32 hours per week on a regular and continuing basis. A part-time employee is an employee who works fewer than 32 hours per week on a regular and continuing basis. Paid on-call personnel are defined in Section 3. Temporary and seasonal employees are defined in Section 47. Interns are addressed in Section 46.

A full-time school-year employee is an employee who works at least 32 hours per week for 37 weeks per year and whose schedule is determined by the Department Head.

Eligibility for specific benefits is governed by Section 20 and may use hour thresholds that differ from the full-time definition in this section. For example, health insurance eligibility begins at 30 hours per week and mandatory VMERS retirement enrollment begins at 24 hours per week. The full-time definition in this section governs classification; Section 20 governs benefit eligibility.

Where a conflict exists between this policy and any collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract, the latter will control.

Section 3. Paid On-Call Firefighters

A paid on-call firefighter is a volunteer homeowner or other resident of the Town of Bristol who has an interest in helping his or her neighbors during an emergency. As a paid on-call department, the Bristol Fire Department depends upon the timely and determined response of these citizen members who serve their community.

Paid on-call firefighters will be paid a stipend of at least the current State of Vermont minimum wage for all calls attended, per 29 CFR Part 553, § 553.106. The salaries for the appointed Fire Chief and First Assistant Fire Chief will be set by the Selectboard during the budgeting process.

Paid on-call firefighters are required to go through the same current Town hiring practices and are subject to criminal records checks. They will be provided a job description, which includes training standards and requirements.

Paid on-call firefighters are not entitled to the same benefits and privileges of employment afforded to Town employees (for example, health insurance, short-term and long-term disability insurance, retirement, and paid time off). Paid on-call firefighters will be given a copy of this Personnel Policy and are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with it. Sections 22 through 27 of this policy do not apply to paid on-call firefighters.

Section 4. Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Town of Bristol to provide equal opportunity to all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, disability, veteran's status, HIV status, pregnancy, genetic information, crime-victim status, or any other category protected under State or federal law.

Consistent with Vermont's CROWN Act (Act 105 of 2024, effective July 1, 2024), the prohibition on race and ancestry discrimination includes discrimination based on traits historically associated with race, including hair type, hair texture, and protective hairstyles such as braids, locs, twists, and knots.

Section 5. Hiring

The Selectboard retains final appointment authority for Department Head positions and for any other position the Selectboard designates. For all other positions, the Selectboard delegates to the Town Administrator responsibility for recruitment, advertising, application forms, screening, the interview process, selection, and internal promotion, consistent with the budget approved by the Selectboard and the voters. The Town Administrator keeps the Selectboard informed of hiring activity and presents Department Head candidates to the Selectboard for final appointment.

Recruitment and hiring for elected officials and their statutory assistants are governed by statute and are not covered by this section.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Positions

Any applicant required to carry a CDL must pass a pre-employment drug test before beginning work or receiving an offer of employment. Refusal to submit to testing will result in disqualification from further employment consideration. Any employee required to carry a CDL, as outlined in their job description, must maintain a current CDL to remain employed. If necessary, the Town may allow up to ninety (90) days for an employee to regain current status with the DMV.

As required by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (49 CFR Part 382), the Town will query the FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse before hiring any driver who will operate a commercial motor vehicle, and will conduct an annual query for every current CDL driver. The Town Administrator, working with the Public Works Department, is responsible for maintaining the Town's Clearinghouse registration and for completing all required queries and reporting.

Positions Working With Children or Accessing Confidential Records

Any applicant who will work with children will be fingerprinted and undergo a background check through the Vermont Crime Information Center and the Bristol Police Department before beginning work.

Section 6. Probationary Period

All new employees except elected officials and statutory employees are required to complete a 12-month probationary period. The purpose of the probationary period is to determine whether the employee is suited for the position. During the probationary period, an employee may be terminated at any time at the sole discretion of the Town, and a probationary employee terminated during this period has no right to appeal the termination. Probationary employees are eligible to use earned leave time with the approval of the Department Head.

Section 7. Conduct of Employees

All employees are considered representatives of the Town and are expected to conduct themselves professionally by acting in a courteous, helpful, and respectful manner in all interactions with the public, other employees, and elected and appointed officials.

All employees are expected to faithfully execute the duties and responsibilities of their position to the best of their ability and in compliance with this Personnel Policy and State statute.

The chain of command should be adhered to. Communication should go through immediate supervisors before being submitted to a higher authority. If communication with an immediate supervisor is not possible, or an issue is unresolved by the supervisor, and communication with the next higher authority is made, the employee shall notify the immediate supervisor of that action.

Section 8. Conflicts of Interest

Every employee of the Town shall carry out his or her job in a way that ensures that neither the individual employee nor any other employee of the municipality will gain a personal or financial advantage from work for the municipality, so that the public trust is preserved. Decisions made by municipal employees shall be based on the safety of the employee and the best interest of the community at large rather than the interests of any particular individual or employee.

An employee shall not participate in any official action if the employee has a conflict of interest in the matter under consideration. A "conflict of interest" means a direct or indirect personal or financial interest of the employee, or of the employee's spouse, household member, child, stepchild, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, aunt or uncle, brother- or sister-in-law, business associate, employer, or employee, in the outcome of a cause, proceeding, application, or other matter pending before the employee or the municipality.

Employees may not directly or indirectly ask, demand, exact, solicit, accept, or receive any gift, gratuity, act, or promise beneficial to the individual or another that could influence any action or inaction associated with their official duties, or create the appearance of impropriety. (See also the Town of Bristol's Conflict of Interest Policy.) Exemptions include gifts of food that arrive during the holidays or other traditional gift-giving times, and items offered equally to all members of the public at an event, trade show, or similar occasion.

Section 9. Hours of Service

Regular office hours for persons employed at the Town Offices are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, with 30 minutes of unpaid time allowed for lunch. Regular hours for other offices and departments are set by the Department Head, after consultation with the Town Administrator. The standard is for all departments to be open for service at similar times.

Regular work hours for the Public Works (Highway) Department are 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, with 30 minutes of unpaid time allowed for lunch, unless the Road Foreman sets other hours with the agreement of the Town Administrator. Summer work hours for the Public Works Department are set by the Department Head with the agreement of the Town Administrator.

Regular work hours may be set or changed by the Department Head, and employees may be expected to work additional hours that exceed forty hours in a given week, as circumstances require.

Regular full-time and part-time employees of the Police Department and Public Works Department have a minimum three-hour call-out time unless the call-out runs into their normally scheduled shift. Public Works call-outs are approved by the Department Head or designee. Police Department call-outs are at the on-call officer's discretion; an officer will use good judgment to determine whether an immediate response is warranted. Regular full-time and part-time wage employees of the Police Department receive on-call pay of ten percent of their hourly rate for every hour on call.

All employees are expected to be in attendance during their regular work hours or when scheduled. Employees who will be absent are expected to notify their Department Head or designee in advance whenever possible. Employees calling in sick are expected to notify their Department Head or supervisor as soon as possible. Town Offices will be closed during the holidays outlined in Section 22.

Section 10. Resignation

An employee intending to resign from employment with the Town of Bristol shall be deemed to have resigned in good standing if at least two (2) weeks' notice is given to the Town Administrator or appropriate Department Head or supervisor, and if other circumstances of the resignation justify good standing. An employee who is terminated or who fails to provide two weeks' notice shall forfeit accrued benefits, except compensatory time off.

Section 11. Outside Employment

The primary occupation of all full-time employees shall be with the Town. Employees may not engage in outside business activities during their scheduled shift, or, for Police Officers who are on call, during on-call hours set by their Department Head. Employees are prohibited from undertaking outside employment that interferes with their job performance.

Prior to accepting any outside employment, employees will disclose their intent to do so in writing and obtain prior clearance from their Department Head, who in turn shall notify the Town Administrator. Employees in a supervisory role may be permitted to work at other employment, but if needed for supervisory advice, they must be available by phone.

If interference exists, the employee will be required to correct the cause of the interference and may be required to cease the outside employment or terminate employment with the Town.

Section 12. Political Activity

Employees are prohibited from using Town facilities, equipment, or resources for political purposes and from pursuing political activities while working.

This Personnel Policy shall not be construed to prevent employees from becoming or continuing to be members of any political party or organization, from attending political meetings or events, or from expressing their views on political matters, so long as those views are clearly articulated as being those of the individual and not of the Town, and these activities take place or are expressed during non-working hours and do not interfere with the individual's ability to perform their duties. This Personnel Policy shall not be construed to limit an individual's right to vote with complete freedom in any election.

Section 13. Alcohol and Drug Use

The Town of Bristol is committed to a safe, drug-free workplace. The following conduct is prohibited for all employees, paid on-call firefighters, elected officers, and their statutory assistants during working hours, while using municipal equipment, and while on municipal property:

- The use or possession of alcohol.
- The use of drugs, except in the manner prescribed by a duly licensed physician or dentist.
- Being under the influence of, or impaired by, drugs or alcohol.
- The possession, sale, transfer, or purchase of illegal drugs, unless in the direct performance of official duties.

An employee who engages in any of the above conduct will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, subject to the drug-testing and rehabilitation provisions of Vermont law described below.

Cannabis

Although Vermont law permits adults 21 and older to use and possess limited amounts of cannabis off duty, this does not permit the use, possession, or impairment of cannabis during working hours, while using municipal equipment, or while on municipal property. Vermont law does not require the Town to accommodate cannabis use, on duty or off duty. Consistent with Vermont law, the Town will not discipline an employee solely for lawful off-duty cannabis use unless the Town can demonstrate that the use impairs the employee's job performance or poses a safety risk, or unless testing is required for a safety-sensitive or federally regulated position.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

The Town conducts drug and alcohol testing consistent with Vermont's employee drug-testing law, 21 V.S.A. §§ 511-520. The Town may require a pre-employment test only after extending a conditional offer of employment and providing written notice of the testing procedure. The Town may require testing on probable cause or reasonable suspicion that an employee is impaired or is using drugs in the workplace, and following a workplace accident where permitted by law. Except where required by federal law, the Town does not conduct random or company-wide testing. For a first positive test in a position that is not safety-sensitive, the Town will offer the employee the opportunity to participate in an approved rehabilitation program before termination, as required by Vermont law.

Safety-Sensitive and CDL Positions

Employees who operate commercial motor vehicles for the Town, and other employees in safety-sensitive positions subject to federal requirements, remain subject to mandatory drug and alcohol testing, including random testing, and to the Town's CMV Drug and Alcohol Policy and the FMCSA Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse requirements described in Section 5. Nothing in this section limits the Town's testing or disciplinary obligations for these positions under federal law.

Section 14. Tobacco Use

In recognition of the hazards that tobacco poses to the health of employees, and in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 1421 et seq. and § 1741 et seq., the Town prohibits employees' use of tobacco in any form, including electronic cigarettes and vaping devices, in all publicly owned, rented, or leased buildings, offices, and enclosed areas, and in all Town vehicles.

Section 15. Performance Evaluations

Employees other than elected officials and their statutory assistants are subject to annual performance evaluations. The Town Administrator will conduct or oversee a performance evaluation of each covered employee at least once per year, normally completed by [June 30] each year, using the Town's standard supervision templates for line staff and mid-management maintained by the Town Administrator. Department Heads assist in evaluating the employees they supervise.

The results of each evaluation will be discussed with the employee and will become part of the employee's personnel file. If an employee disagrees with an evaluation, the employee may submit a letter stating why to the Town Administrator. The letter will be reviewed by the Town Administrator and attached to the original evaluation as part of the personnel file. The Town Administrator will determine whether further action is needed.

Section 16. Personnel Records

Personnel records will be maintained for each employee of the Town. In accordance with Vermont's Public Records Law, an employee or the employee's designated representative may inspect or copy the employee's personnel file at a mutually agreeable time during regular office hours. The Town reserves the right to have its representative present when its files are examined or copied. Personnel records are considered confidential and are kept at the Town Offices in a secure location.

Section 17. Release of Employee Information

Requests for information concerning a current or former employee's job history, job performance, circumstances of job termination, and access to personnel records (other than by the Selectboard, Department Heads, or legally designated agents who need such access for bona fide Town purposes) shall be denied, except as follows.

Department Heads may access personnel files at the Town Offices as needed. Upon receipt of a bona fide inquiry regarding the job history of a current or former employee, the Town will provide only the following information: confirmation of employment; dates of employment; positions held; and commercial driver's

license records, if applicable. A personal reference discussing non-employment-related topics may be given after consultation with the Town Administrator.

Upon receipt of a written waiver and consent to a full release of information executed by the current or former employee, or by a legally designated agent (executor, guardian, or similar), requests for further information may be answered by the Town Administrator, current or former Department Head, supervisor, or designated official.

Section 18. Use of Town Equipment

The use of Town equipment or property for personal use is prohibited unless authorized by the Department Head, Town Administrator, or Selectboard. Employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding anything stored in or on Town-owned property or equipment, including desks, filing cabinets, lockers, and vehicles. Employees should expect that such areas may be searched at any time to retrieve work-related materials or to investigate violations of workplace rules with cause.

Section 19. Use of Town Computer System

Town-owned computers are to be used by employees primarily for conducting Town business. Occasional, brief, and appropriate personal use is permitted, provided it is consistent with this policy and does not interfere with the employee's duties. Employee use of social media and personal devices is also governed by Section 44.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding anything created, sent, or received on Town computers. The Town may monitor computer transactions, communications, and transmissions to ensure compliance with this policy. All files, documents, data, and electronic messages created, received, or stored on Town computers are open to review by the Town and may be subject to Vermont's Public Records Law.

Employees may not introduce software from any outside source onto the Town's computers without prior authorization from their Department Head, and may be held responsible for damages caused by unauthorized software or viruses they introduce. A confidential password does not make the computer system a place for personal confidential communication, nor does it make the computer the property of the employee.

Transmission of electronic messages on Town computers shall be treated with the same propriety, professionalism, and confidentiality as written correspondence. The following uses are prohibited unless directly related to an employee's job function or department:

- Communications that may be construed as disruptive, offensive, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, or threatening.
- Communications of sexually explicit images or messages.
- Transmission of chain letters or solicitations for personal gain, commercial or investment ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-job-related solicitations.
- Access to internet resources, including websites and newsgroups, that are inappropriate in a business setting.
- Any other use that may compromise the integrity of the Town and its business.

Employees who conduct Town business via personal cell phones or email accounts must remember that Vermont's Public Records Law and Section 7 (Conduct of Employees) still apply. For purposes of this section, "computer" means all smartphones, computer-related components and equipment, host computers, file servers, workstation terminals, laptops, software, internal or external communication networks, the internet, commercial online services, backup systems, and internal and external email systems accessed via Town-owned computer equipment.

Section 20. Eligibility for Benefits

All Town of Bristol employees are eligible for training authorized by the Selectboard, Town Administrator, or Department Head. Employees authorized to travel using their own personal vehicle shall be reimbursed at a standard mileage rate periodically set by the Selectboard.

The Town shall pay for full-time Public Works employees' two-year renewals of their Commercial Driver's Licenses and the cost of the physical required to keep the CDL. Further testing required due to the results of the CDL physical shall be covered by the employee or the employee's health insurance.

Police Officers are required to attend yearly in-service training as prescribed by Vermont statute. The cost of such training is paid by the Police Department and must be approved by the Chief or designee.

Health Insurance

The Town makes health insurance coverage available to all employees who work over 30 hours per week, effective the first of the month after their date of hire. The Selectboard determines annually the amount of the Town's contribution. Employees are responsible for the balance of the premium through payroll withholdings. Retiring employees who have completed ten years of service and reached at least age 55 may continue coverage under the retiree section of the Town's group plan, at their full cost, until they reach Medicare eligibility.

Other Insurance

The Town offers full-time employees short-term disability insurance, long-term disability insurance, and life insurance, in coverage amounts and terms periodically approved by the Selectboard. The total cost of these programs is paid by the Town for each enrolled employee, subject to the regulations of the insurer. Employees hired to work less than 52 weeks per year may be required to pay the entire cost of their health insurance premiums during the weeks they are not working. The Town reserves the right to change carriers or to add, delete, or amend benefit programs, and to change its contribution, in its sole discretion, with advance notice of any change to the contribution rate.

Retirement

The Town requires employees working 24 or more hours per week to enroll in the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System (VMERS), Plan C, subject to the regulations of that plan. Both the Town and the employee contribute a percentage of pay determined by VMERS; employee contributions are withheld through payroll. Participation is mandatory for eligible employees. The Town also offers participation in a voluntary deferred compensation plan under Internal Revenue Code Section 457.

Lactation Accommodation

The Town provides reasonable break time and a private space for employees who need to express breast milk, as described in Section 41.

Sections 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 do not apply to paid on-call firefighters.

Section 21. Shift Differential Pay for Police Department

Night Shift: All officers working between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. will receive a differential for scheduled hours worked, at a rate periodically set by the Selectboard.

Weekend Day Shift: All officers working between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays will receive a differential for scheduled hours worked, at a rate periodically set by the Selectboard.

Officers attending the Vermont Police Academy for basic full-time or part-time certification, or any other training or working details, will not receive shift differentials.

Section 22. Holiday Leave

The Town of Bristol does not recognize Town Meeting Day as a paid holiday. An employee is entitled under 21 V.S.A. § 472b to take unpaid leave to attend the annual town meeting, provided the employee notifies the Department Head or designee at least seven days in advance and the leave does not interrupt the essential operation of Town government. The employee may also choose to use vacation leave or sick time for this purpose.

Full-time employees receive the following paid holiday leave:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Presidents Day (third Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- Veterans Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November)
- Day after Thanksgiving (fourth Friday in November)
- December 24 (close at noon, 4 hours)
- December 25

Employees receive holiday leave pay for the number of hours in the employee's typical workday on which the holiday falls, at the regular rate of pay. Employees required or scheduled to work on a holiday receive time and one-half pay for 8 hours; any overtime after 8 hours worked on a holiday is paid at time and one-half. A Public Works employee normally scheduled to have the holiday off receives 8 hours of pay at the regular rate, but if called in, is paid time and one-half for hours worked or the three-hour minimum call-out, whichever is greater.

Day in Lieu for Working a Holiday

An employee who is required to work on a Town-recognized holiday earns a day in lieu, equal to the number of holiday hours in the employee's typical workday, in addition to the holiday premium pay described above. The day in lieu is scheduled and used at a time approved by the Department Head that does not unduly disrupt operations, and must be used within ninety (90) days of the holiday worked. If it is not used within

that period, it will be paid out at the employee's regular rate. Except for a day in lieu earned under this provision, employees may not bank holidays for later use. This provision applies most often to Public Works staff who perform winter operations on a holiday. [Town Administrator to confirm the 90-day window and the pay-out-if-unused rule.]

For employees not normally scheduled to work weekends, holidays falling on a Saturday are observed the preceding Friday, and holidays falling on a Sunday are observed the following Monday. Holidays that fall during an employee's vacation leave are not charged as vacation leave. Holiday pay is not counted as hours worked when calculating overtime.

Section 23. Vacation Leave

Full-time employees accrue vacation at the following annual rates:

- 1 to 12 months of service: 40 hours per year
- 13 to 60 months of service: 80 hours per year
- 61 to 120 months of service: 120 hours per year
- 121 to 240 months of service: 160 hours per year
- 241 months of service and beyond: 200 hours per year

Full-time employees working less than 40 hours per week accrue vacation at the rate of their scheduled work week (for example, an employee working 32 hours per week accrues 32 hours of vacation per year). Vacation accrual begins on the date of hire on a monthly basis. Vacation time is front-loaded on July 1, allowing it to be used before it is accrued. An employee may not take vacation during the probationary period without Department Head approval.

Full-time employees receive vacation leave pay at the regular rate of pay. Leave must be taken in a minimum of 15-minute increments. Employees are strongly encouraged to take an annual vacation. Requests should be submitted to the Department Head as far in advance as possible and will not be denied unless the request unduly disrupts Town operations.

An employee may carry unused, accrued vacation leave forward to the next year up to a maximum of eighty (80) hours. Any unused, accrued vacation leave exceeding eighty (80) hours is forfeited unless otherwise approved by the Selectboard. An employee who resigns in good standing will be compensated for unused, accrued vacation leave, except that an employee who terminates during the probationary period is not entitled to compensation for accrued vacation time.

Vacation Buy-Back

An employee may sell up to forty (40) hours of accrued but unused vacation time back to the Town in any one fiscal year. For employees below the Department Head level, the buy-back is paid at 80 percent of the employee's regular rate of pay. Department Heads and the Town Administrator (Director level and above) are paid 100 percent of their regular rate of pay for vacation bought back, in recognition that senior staff are frequently unable to use accrued leave because of operational demands. [Town Administrator and Selectboard to confirm the exact positions this covers and whether the 40-hour annual limit still applies at the Director level.]

Section 24. Sick and Personal Leave

Eligible full-time employees accrue fifty-six (56) hours of paid sick leave per year and eight (8) hours of personal leave per year. Sick leave is taken in increments of no less than fifteen minutes.

An employee is eligible for earned sick time under Vermont's Earned Sick Time Act (21 V.S.A. § 481 et seq.) if the employee works an average of at least 18 hours per week and is scheduled to work more than 20 weeks during the year. Eligible part-time employees accrue one hour of sick leave for every 52 hours worked. As permitted by 21 V.S.A. § 483, the Town caps the annual accrual and use of earned sick time at 40 hours in a 12-month period. Eligible part-time employees may carry over unused, accrued sick time from one year to the next, up to 40 hours.

An employee may use sick leave to attend the following appointments that cannot be held outside normal working hours: a medical or dental appointment; an appointment eligible for short-term family leave under 21 V.S.A. § 472a; or any other appointment authorized in advance by the Department Head. Accrued paid sick leave may also be used when:

- The employee is ill or injured.
- The employee obtains professional diagnostic, preventive, routine, or therapeutic health care.
- The employee cares for a sick or injured parent, grandparent, spouse, child, sibling, parent-in-law, grandchild, or foster child, including helping that person obtain care or accompanying them to a long-term-care appointment.
- The employee is arranging social or legal services, or obtaining medical care or counseling, for the employee or a family member who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, as those terms are defined in 15 V.S.A. § 1151.
- The employee cares for a family member because the school or business where that person is normally located is closed for public health or safety reasons.

Full-time employees may carry over, from fiscal year to fiscal year, up to 120 hours of combined sick and personal leave. As of the first of each July, sick leave accrued over 120 hours is exchanged at the rate of 16 hours of sick leave for 8 hours of vacation leave. Full-time employees receive sick leave pay at the regular rate; part-time employees receive prorated sick leave pay based on scheduled hours. Upon separation, a full-time employee in good standing hired on or before July 1, 2017 will be compensated for unused, accrued sick leave on a pro-rated basis. Any employee hired after July 1, 2017 accrues sick time as outlined above but will not be paid for it at separation.

Section 25. Bereavement Leave

Employees may be provided up to twenty-four (24) hours of paid bereavement leave per year related to the death of a close family member or serious illness in the immediate family. Hours in excess of twenty-four may be charged against the employee's accumulated leave time or taken as unpaid family leave. In the event of a death or serious illness of other family members, leave will be granted subject to Department Head approval and may be charged to accumulated vacation, compensatory, or sick and personal leave.

If additional time off is needed, or if time off is needed for the funeral of a friend or a relative who is not a close family member, the Department Head may grant, on a case-by-case basis, a reasonable amount of

accrued sick leave, if available, or unpaid leave. Paid bereavement leave does not accrue and, when not used, is not carried forward or compensated upon separation.

Section 26. Parental and Family Leave

The Town of Bristol complies with the Vermont Parental and Family Leave Act (VPFLA), 21 V.S.A. §§ 471-474. VPFLA parental leave applies to employers with 10 or more employees, and VPFLA family leave applies to employers with 15 or more employees. Based on its current workforce, the Town is covered by both parental and family leave provisions of VPFLA.

An employee who has worked for the Town for at least twelve months, for an average of at least 30 hours per week, is eligible to take up to twelve weeks of VPFLA leave during a rolling 12-month period for a qualifying reason. The rolling 12-month period begins with the date of the first qualifying absence and rolls forward. For example, an employee who takes four weeks of leave beginning September 1 and another five weeks beginning January 1 (nine weeks total) would have three weeks of allotment available until the following September 1.

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), 29 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq., applies only to employers with 50 or more employees within 75 miles of the worksite. If and when the Town meets that threshold, FMLA will apply and will run concurrently with VPFLA leave, and the Town will follow the law that provides the most benefit to the employee. Unless and until the Town meets the 50-employee threshold, FMLA does not apply and leave is governed by VPFLA and this policy. [Municipal counsel to confirm current FMLA applicability.]

During VPFLA leave, the Town continues employment benefits at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued working, and the employee contributes to the cost of benefits at the existing employee rate. If an employee does not return at the end of the leave, the employee will be required to reimburse the Town for benefit costs, except where the leave was for the serious illness of the employee. Paid leave is earned during VPFLA leave only for the period the employee uses paid sick or vacation leave and returns to work at the end of the leave. A request for leave must be made to the Department Head.

Vermont Family and Medical Leave Insurance (Optional Program)

Separately from VPFLA, the State of Vermont offers an optional Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FMLI) program administered by a private insurer. Participation is voluntary for employers and, in later phases, for individual workers. This program is a wage-replacement insurance benefit; it is not a mandatory payroll tax and does not replace the Town's obligations under VPFLA. Whether the Town elects to offer FMLI coverage is a benefit decision reserved to the Selectboard, and any such coverage will be communicated to employees separately. [Selectboard to determine whether to offer FMLI.]

Section 27. Short-Term Family Leave

In accordance with 21 V.S.A. § 472a, eligible employees may take unpaid leave not to exceed four hours in any thirty-day period and not to exceed twenty-four hours in any twelve-month period for the following purposes:

- To participate in preschool or school activities directly related to the academic advancement of the employee's child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee, such as a parent-teacher conference.
- To attend or accompany the employee's child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee, or the employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law, to routine medical or dental appointments.
- To accompany the employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law to other appointments for professional services related to their care and well-being.
- To respond to a medical emergency of the employee's child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee, or the employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law.

Before taking leave under this section, an employee shall make a reasonable attempt to schedule appointments outside of regular work hours and shall provide the earliest possible notice, but in no case later than seven days before the leave, except in the case of an emergency.

Section 28. Leave of Absence Without Pay

Requests for leaves of absence without pay for any reason other than those covered by federal or State law must be submitted in writing to the Department Head and must set forth the purpose of the leave. All leave requests must be for a definite period and include a specified date of return. The Selectboard has the sole authority to grant an unpaid leave request.

If an unpaid leave of absence is granted, the employee may, at the Town's sole discretion, continue group health plan coverage by paying the required premium on the Town's schedule. Other employee benefits (sick leave, vacation, seniority) will not accrue during an unpaid leave period that exceeds ten (10) days.

Section 29. Leave for Police Officer Involved Shooting

Administrative leave and counseling will be authorized by the Police Chief and Town Administrator for police officers involved in officer-involved shootings or use-of-force situations where serious bodily injury or death results. The Police Chief and Town Administrator may recommend leave and counseling durations on a case-by-case basis. See the post-shooting procedure in the Bristol Police Department procedure manual.

This leave will not be deducted from the officer's vacation, compensatory, or sick and personal leave. This paid administrative leave is intended for the well-being of the officer and is not a disciplinary action. This section does not waive the Town's right to take disciplinary action as the result of a deadly-force incident, including placement on unpaid leave, in cases it deems appropriate under the employee discipline section of this policy.

Section 30. Military Leave

The Town will comply with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. § 4301 et seq., and 21 V.S.A. § 491 et seq. Employees who take military leave subject to these laws will be granted leave without pay. At the employee's option, any paid leave accrued prior to the commencement of the leave may be used.

Section 31. Jury Leave

The Town will compensate employees for service as jurors or witnesses when unrelated to their status as a Town employee, at their regular base salary. In accordance with 21 V.S.A. § 499, employees will otherwise be considered in the service of the Town for purposes of seniority, benefits, credit toward vacation, sick leave, and other rights and benefits of employment.

When Town employees are called to serve as a witness in a court proceeding due to their status as a Town employee, the Town will compensate the employee for the difference between their regular rate of pay and their compensation as a witness, and only when the regular rate exceeds the witness compensation.

Section 32. Overtime and Compensatory Time Off

In accordance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the Town compensates nonexempt employees at the rate of one and one-half hours for each hour worked outside their regular work schedule (over 40 hours per week). Hours worked outside regular work hours, or unscheduled Saturday and Sunday work, are calculated at the overtime rate.

An employee is exempt from overtime only if the employee is paid on a salary basis of at least the federal threshold (as of 2026, \$684 per week, or \$35,568 per year) and the employee's actual duties meet the applicable executive, administrative, or professional test. The Town reviews any salaried position against this standard, and against the current federal threshold in effect at the time of review, to confirm no employee is misclassified. Most Town positions are nonexempt and paid hourly.

Compensatory Time Off (Public Works and Police)

Compensatory time off is a substitute for cash overtime and is therefore available only to nonexempt employees, and among those, only to nonexempt employees of the Public Works and Police Departments. As permitted for public employers under 29 U.S.C. § 207(o), comp time may be provided only pursuant to an agreement or understanding reached with the employee before the overtime work is performed. All other nonexempt employees are paid cash overtime for hours worked over 40 in a workweek and do not accrue comp time. Exempt salaried employees are not entitled to overtime and therefore do not accrue compensatory time. Compensatory time off is subject to the following:

- Comp time is earned at one and one-half hours for each overtime hour worked.
- An employee may accrue a maximum of 60 hours of comp time.
- The Town may, at its discretion, pay cash in lieu of comp time off, at the regular rate of pay in effect when payment is made.
- Upon separation, an employee will be paid for unused comp time at a rate not less than the average regular rate of pay received by the employee.

An employee who has accrued comp time and requests its use will be permitted to use it if the use does not unduly disrupt Town operations. Requests must be submitted to the Department Head, who has sole discretion to grant or deny the request; requests will not unreasonably be withheld. The 60-hour accrual cap in this section is well within the federal limits for both general and public-safety employees.

Section 33. Uniforms

Employees of the Public Works, Police, and Fire Departments will be provided uniforms as deemed reasonably necessary by their respective Department Head. Employees issued uniforms are responsible for lost uniform items. Public Works employees are issued pagers as part of the uniform, to be worn or kept nearby at all times unless the employee is on approved leave. Public Works employees will be reimbursed for boots or other approved footwear each fiscal year up to an amount authorized by the Selectboard.

Section 34. Light Duty and Modified Duty Assignment

Purpose and Definitions

This section governs the temporary assignment of modified or light-duty work to an employee who is medically unable, for a limited time, to perform the essential functions of their regular position. "Light duty" or "modified duty" means a temporary assignment of alternative tasks, reduced hours, or restricted physical demands consistent with an employee's documented medical restrictions. Light duty is a temporary bridge back to full duty. It is not a permanent position, and it is separate from a permanent reasonable accommodation under Section 40, which is governed by the ADA and Vermont law and follows the interactive process described in that section.

Work-Related and Non-Work-Related Conditions

The Town may offer light duty for both work-related injuries (those covered by workers' compensation) and, at the Town's discretion, non-work-related temporary conditions. For a work-related injury, a light-duty offer is coordinated with the Town's workers' compensation carrier (VLCT PACIF), and an employee receiving workers' compensation who refuses a suitable light-duty offer within their restrictions may have benefits affected under 21 V.S.A. § 643a. Nothing in this section requires the Town to create a light-duty assignment where none is operationally available.

Request and Medical Documentation

An employee seeking light duty, or who is placed on restrictions by a treating provider, will notify the Department Head in writing of the nature and expected duration of the limitation and provide a health care provider's report stating the diagnosis, current treatment, specific work restrictions, and the anticipated date for return to full duty. The Department Head forwards the request and documentation to the Town Administrator. The Town may require an examination by a Town-designated medical provider, at Town expense, to verify the diagnosis, restrictions, and expected duration.

Approval, Duration, and Return to Full Duty

Whether to offer light duty, and the specific tasks assigned, is at the discretion of the Department Head and Town Administrator, based on the employee's restrictions and the operational needs of the department. Light-duty assignments are temporary and will not generally exceed six months. The assignment, the restrictions it is based on, and its expected end date will be confirmed in writing to the employee. Assignments are reviewed regularly and may be modified or ended at any time, including if the employee's restrictions change, the medical documentation is not maintained, or the operational need ends. Before returning to unrestricted duty, an employee must provide a health care provider's release confirming the ability to perform the essential functions of the position without restriction. The Town will not require an employee who is otherwise qualified for protected leave to accept a light-duty assignment in place of that

leave. Consistent with the August 24, 2015 Selectboard action, any Town employee injured on the job will be allowed to accrue leave time based on this policy.

Section 35. Employment Harassment and Discrimination

The Town is committed to providing a work environment free from unlawful harassment and discrimination. Vermont and federal law prohibit employment discrimination or retaliation based on race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, HIV status, crime-victim status, veteran status, disability, or any other category protected under State or federal law. Consistent with Vermont's CROWN Act, protection against race and ancestry discrimination includes hair type, hair texture, and protective hairstyles. It is unlawful to retaliate against employees or applicants who have alleged harassment or discrimination.

Examples of harassment include insulting comments or references based on a protected characteristic; aggressive bullying behaviors; inappropriate physical contact or gestures; and physical assaults or contact that substantially interfere with an individual's work performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Retaliation against an employee for complaining about such behavior, or for participating in an investigation, is also prohibited. Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents generally do not rise to the level of illegality; to be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people.

All employees, including Department Heads and other management personnel, are required to abide by this policy. Employees found to have engaged in harassment or discrimination may face disciplinary action up to and including termination.

How to Report

An individual who believes they have experienced or witnessed harassment or discrimination may, but is not required to, first tell the offending person that the conduct is unwelcome and must stop. In all cases, the individual is encouraged to report the conduct to any of the following, in any order: their immediate supervisor, their Department Head, or the Town Administrator. If the complaint involves the Town Administrator, or if the employee is not comfortable reporting through the usual channel, the report may be made directly to the Selectboard Chair. A report may be made verbally or in writing; the Town will reduce a verbal complaint to writing. No employee is required to report to the person who is the subject of the complaint.

Supervisor Duty to Act

Any supervisor, Department Head, or manager who witnesses conduct that may violate this section, or who receives a complaint or otherwise becomes aware of possible harassment or discrimination, must promptly report it to the Town Administrator (or, where the Town Administrator is involved, to the Selectboard Chair). Supervisors may not ignore or attempt to resolve such matters informally without notice to the Town Administrator.

Investigation and Interim Measures

The Town will conduct a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation, which normally includes interviewing the complainant, the respondent, and relevant witnesses, and reviewing relevant records. Where appropriate, the Town may put interim measures in place during the investigation, such as a schedule or

reporting-line change, so that the parties are separated without penalizing the complainant. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable, consistent with a fair investigation and the Town's legal obligations; complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The parties will be informed, in general terms, of the outcome. If a violation is found, the Town will take immediate and appropriate corrective action, up to and including termination of the responsible party.

No Retaliation

No person will be adversely affected in employment for making a good-faith complaint, for participating in an investigation, or for opposing conduct they reasonably believe violates this section. Retaliation is itself a violation of this policy and is also addressed in Section 42. A complaint that is knowingly false is not protected and may be grounds for discipline; a complaint that is not substantiated but was made in good faith is not a false complaint.

Complaints may also be filed with the Vermont Attorney General's Office, Civil Rights Unit, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05609-1001, (802) 828-3171; or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, JFK Federal Building, 475 Government Center, Boston, MA 02203, (617) 669-4000.

Section 36. Sexual Harassment and Training

Sexual harassment in the workplace is illegal under federal and Vermont law and is strictly prohibited. The Town is committed to providing a workplace free from this unlawful conduct. In accordance with 21 V.S.A. § 495h, the Town has adopted this sexual harassment policy, and all employees are required to read it before signing the employee acknowledgement form.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to the conduct is made a term or condition of employment; submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions; or the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Examples include conditioning any term of employment on sexual favors; unwelcome touching; persistent unwelcome social or sexual attention; displaying or transmitting sexually suggestive materials; sexually vulgar or explicit language; and retaliation for filing or supporting a complaint.

How to Report and Investigation

An individual who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment, or who has experienced retaliation, is encouraged to report it to any of the following, in any order: their immediate supervisor, their Department Head, or the Town Administrator. If the complaint involves the Town Administrator, or if the employee is not comfortable using the usual channel, the report may be made directly to the Selectboard Chair. Reports may be verbal or written. Any supervisor or Department Head who receives a complaint or observes possible sexual harassment must promptly notify the Town Administrator (or the Selectboard Chair where the Town Administrator is involved). The Town will promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigate, may put interim protective measures in place during the investigation so the complainant is not penalized, and will maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable. If sexual harassment is found, the Town will take appropriate action ranging from a verbal warning up to and including dismissal.

Third Parties and Retaliation

This policy protects employees from sexual harassment by anyone in the workplace, including coworkers, supervisors, elected officials, vendors, contractors, and members of the public; it also prohibits Town employees from harassing those individuals. The Town will take reasonable steps to address harassment by or against a non-employee. Retaliation against a person for reporting sexual harassment, supporting a complaint, or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited and is itself grounds for discipline. Complaints may also be filed with the Vermont Attorney General's Civil Rights Unit or the EEOC at the addresses listed in Section 35.

Training and Information Sheet

Consistent with Vermont Act 183 of 2018, the Town will provide each employee with the State's sexual harassment prevention information sheet at the time of hire, will provide sexual harassment prevention training to all employees and refresher training on a periodic basis (the Town's practice is annual training), and will document each employee's receipt of the information sheet and completion of training in the personnel file. Supervisors and Department Heads receive additional guidance on their obligation to receive and report complaints. Training materials and the required information sheet are available at no cost through the Vermont Attorney General's Office.

Section 37. Employee Discipline

The Town of Bristol has adopted a progressive discipline process to identify and address employee and employment-related problems. The process applies to any employee conduct that the Town, in its sole discretion, determines must be addressed by discipline. An employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for violating this Personnel Policy or failing to maintain an acceptable level of performance. The Town may take prior disciplinary action into consideration, and violations of different rules may be treated as repeated violations for purposes of progressive discipline. All disciplinary actions are issued by the Department Head or the Town Administrator.

The Town also reserves the right to impose discipline for off-duty conduct that adversely impacts the legitimate interests of the Town, and to bypass any or all steps of progressive discipline when it determines that deviation is warranted. The Town will normally adhere to the following process but reserves the right to bypass steps: (1) verbal warning; (2) written warning; (3) suspension, with or without pay; and (4) termination. Officers of the Bristol Police Department who are negligent or derelict in their official duties, or guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer, will be disciplined according to 24 V.S.A. § 1932.

Employees are prohibited from engaging in the conduct listed below and may receive discipline, up to and including termination. This list provides examples and is not exhaustive:

- Engaging in any illegal activity.
- Refusing to do assigned work or failing to carry out the reasonable lawful assignments of a supervisor, Department Head, Town Administrator, or Selectboard.
- Being inattentive to duty, including sleeping on the job.
- Intentionally falsifying a time card or other record, or giving false information to anyone whose duty is to make such a record.

- Being repeatedly or continuously absent or late, absent without notice or satisfactory reason, or leaving a work assignment without authorization.
- Conducting oneself in a manner that is offensive, abusive, or contrary to reasonable community standards and expectations of public employees.
- Engaging in any form of harassment, including sexual harassment.
- Misusing, misappropriating, or willfully neglecting Town property, funds, materials, equipment, or supplies.
- Unlawfully distributing, selling, possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs when on the job or subject to duty.
- Fighting, engaging in horseplay, or acting in any manner that endangers the safety of oneself or others, including acts or threats of violence.
- Stealing or possessing without authority any Town property, or removing it from the premises without permission.
- Marking, defacing, or willfully damaging Town property.
- Willful violation of Town rules or policies.

Appeal of Disciplinary Action: An employee subject to disciplinary action may request a hearing before the Selectboard. Such a request must be in writing and presented to the Town Administrator and Selectboard Chair within ten (10) days after the action. The Selectboard will hear the appeal within thirty (30) days of receipt.

Section 38. Employee Termination Process

The Town of Bristol has adopted an employment termination process. Most often, conduct that warrants termination results from unacceptable behavior, poor performance, or violation of Town policies, but termination may result from conduct outside those areas. The Town need not utilize this termination process and may take whatever action it deems necessary. The Town also retains the right to eliminate a position or reduce work hours due to economic conditions, shortage of work, organizational efficiency, changes in departmental functions, or reorganization; in such a case, this termination process does not apply. Probationary employees are not subject to this termination process and have no right to appeal a termination during the probationary period.

An employee being considered for termination will be provided written notice containing a brief statement of the reasons and the date, time, and place of a pre-termination meeting with the Department Head, Town Administrator, or Selectboard member. At the meeting, the employee may present a response; if the employee declines to attend, the employee may submit a written response by the scheduled meeting date.

Within seven calendar days of the meeting, the Department Head and Town Administrator will provide the employee with written notice of whether the employee has been terminated. If terminated, the notice will provide the general reasons and inform the employee of the opportunity to request a post-termination hearing before the Selectboard by giving written notice to the Town Administrator within seven days. Failure to make a timely request waives the hearing.

If a post-termination hearing is requested, the Selectboard will provide notice of the date, time, and place, and inform the employee of the right to be represented by counsel, to present and cross-examine witnesses,

and to offer supporting documents. At the hearing, the employee may address the basis for termination, examine the evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and present evidence. When the hearing is adjourned, the Selectboard, under 1 V.S.A. § 312(e), will consider the evidence in deliberative session and render a written decision within fourteen calendar days after the close of the hearing, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.

Section 39. Severability

If any provision of this Personnel Policy, or its application to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. For this purpose, this Personnel Policy is severable.

New Policy Sections (Added 2026)

The following sections address policy areas that were not covered in the 2017 policy. They reflect current Vermont and federal law and standard municipal practice, and are recommended by the 2026 HR Policy Audit.

Section 40. Reasonable Accommodation (ADA and Pregnancy)

The Town of Bristol complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Vermont Fair Employment Practices Act, and Vermont's pregnancy accommodation law (21 V.S.A. § 495k). The Town provides reasonable accommodations to qualified employees and applicants with disabilities, and to employees with limitations arising from pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on Town operations.

An employee or applicant who needs an accommodation should submit a request to their Department Head or the Town Administrator. A request does not need to use any special words or forms. Upon receiving a request, the Town will engage in a timely, good-faith interactive process with the employee to identify the limitation and possible accommodations. The Town may request reasonable documentation from a health care provider to confirm the limitation and the need for accommodation. The Town will keep medical information confidential and separate from the general personnel file. The Town will not require an employee to take leave if another reasonable accommodation would allow the employee to continue working, and will not retaliate against any person for requesting an accommodation in good faith.

Section 41. Lactation Accommodation

Consistent with the federal PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act (2022) and Vermont law (21 V.S.A. § 305), the Town provides reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for one year after the child's birth, and a private space, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion. The Town will make reasonable efforts to provide a space in close proximity to the employee's work area. An employee who needs this accommodation should notify their Department Head or the Town Administrator so appropriate arrangements can be made. The Town will not retaliate against any employee for exercising these rights.

Section 42. Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation

The Town of Bristol encourages employees to report, in good faith, any conduct they reasonably believe violates a law, rule, or regulation, or that constitutes fraud, gross mismanagement, gross waste of public funds, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. Reports may be made to the employee's Department Head, the Town Administrator, or the Selectboard Chair. Where a report concerns one of those individuals, it may be made to any of the others or to the Selectboard as a body.

The Town prohibits retaliation against any employee for making a good-faith report under this section, for participating in an investigation, or for refusing to carry out a directive that the employee reasonably believes is unlawful. Retaliation includes discharge, demotion, discipline, reduction in pay or hours, or other adverse employment action taken because of protected activity. An employee who believes they have experienced retaliation should report it promptly using the process above. This section supplements, and does not limit,

the anti-retaliation protections in Sections 35 and 36 and any protections available under Vermont or federal law. A knowingly false report is not protected and may itself be grounds for discipline.

Section 43. Workplace Violence Prevention

The Town of Bristol is committed to a workplace free from violence, threats, and intimidation, consistent with the general duty to provide a safe workplace under the Occupational Safety and Health Act and Vermont VOSHA. The Town has zero tolerance for acts or threats of physical violence, intimidation, harassment, or coercion involving employees, officials, contractors, or members of the public on Town property or in connection with Town business.

Prohibited conduct includes physical assault or the threat of assault; menacing or intimidating behavior; stalking; and the intentional destruction of property to intimidate. Except for sworn law enforcement officers acting in the course of their duties, and except as otherwise permitted by law, employees may not carry or store weapons while conducting Town business or on Town premises where prohibited by the Town. Employees who witness or experience workplace violence, or who receive a threat, should remove themselves from danger, call 911 if there is an immediate threat, and report the incident to their Department Head or the Town Administrator as soon as possible. The Town will investigate all reports promptly, take appropriate corrective and protective action, and will not retaliate against anyone who reports a concern in good faith.

Section 44. Social Media

This section governs employees' use of social media as it relates to their employment with the Town. It applies to all social media activity, whether conducted on Town or personal equipment and whether during or outside working hours, to the extent the activity concerns the Town.

Only employees authorized by the Town Administrator or a Department Head may post on behalf of the Town or on official Town social media accounts. Employees may not represent that their personal views are those of the Town. When an employee's connection to the Town is apparent and the employee comments on Town matters, the employee should make clear that the views expressed are the employee's own. Employees may not disclose confidential Town information, personnel information, information protected by the Public Records Act exemptions, or law enforcement information through social media. The Town's anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and conduct standards (Sections 7, 35, and 36) apply to social media activity that affects the workplace.

This section is not intended to, and will not be applied to, restrict any employee's rights under the First Amendment to speak as a private citizen on matters of public concern, rights under the National Labor Relations Act to engage in protected concerted activity, or any other legally protected activity. Because employees of a public body have constitutional speech protections, the Town will apply this section consistent with those protections.

Section 45. Remote and Telework

Not an Entitlement; Eligibility

Remote work is a privilege, not a right or an employee benefit, and is not available for all positions. Many Town functions, including counter service, public safety, and public works, require an on-site presence.

Whether a position is eligible for occasional or regular telework depends on whether the essential functions can be performed remotely without reducing service to the public, the employee's performance and reliability, and the operational needs of the department. Remote work is not a substitute for dependent care or personal obligations during scheduled work hours.

Approval Process

A telework arrangement may be approved only in advance and in writing by the Town Administrator; for a Department Head, remote work must be approved by the Selectboard. The employee and the Town Administrator will complete a written telework agreement specifying the work location, the schedule and core hours of availability, the equipment to be used, the expected duration, and any review or trial period. The arrangement may be modified, suspended, or ended by the Town at any time and for any reason, and is not a term of employment.

Hours, Availability, and Overtime

Teleworking employees must be reachable and responsive during their scheduled hours and must attend on-site when directed for meetings, coverage, or operational needs. Nonexempt employees must accurately record all hours actually worked and may not work overtime without advance written approval from their supervisor. Working through breaks or beyond scheduled hours without approval is prohibited.

Equipment, Security, and Records

Town-owned equipment provided for remote work remains Town property, is provided for Town business, and must be used consistent with Sections 18 and 19. Employees must protect the confidentiality and security of Town data, personnel information, and law enforcement information when working remotely, must not store Town records solely on personal devices or accounts, and must follow the Town's records-retention practices. All public records created or received while teleworking are Town records subject to Vermont's Public Records Law regardless of the device or account used.

Workspace, Workers' Compensation, and Expenses

A teleworking employee is expected to maintain a safe and adequate designated work area. Workers' compensation coverage while teleworking applies only to injuries arising out of and in the course of employment within the designated work area during scheduled work hours; the employee must report any work-related injury immediately, as with any other injury. The Town is not responsible for costs associated with an employee's home workspace, utilities, or personal equipment unless approved in advance in writing.

Section 46. Interns

The Town of Bristol may engage interns, paid or unpaid, to support municipal operations and provide educational experience. An internship is not a substitute for a regular position, and interns may not perform work that displaces a Town employee or that would otherwise require the Town to fill a vacant position. This section applies to all persons engaging with the Town in an intern capacity, whether placed through an academic institution, a state or federal program, or recruited directly by a department.

Paid and Unpaid Internships

Paid interns are compensated at no less than the current Vermont minimum wage for all hours worked and receive overtime at one and one-half times the regular rate for hours worked over 40 in a workweek. Paid interns are Town employees for purposes of workers' compensation coverage, payroll tax withholding, and

VMERS enrollment if they meet the applicable threshold. Paid interns are not eligible for health insurance, disability or life insurance, vacation, or personal leave unless required by law or approved by the Selectboard; earned sick time under Vermont law applies if the intern meets the eligibility threshold in Section 24.

An internship may be unpaid only if the placement satisfies the U.S. Department of Labor's seven-factor primary-beneficiary test, under which the intern, not the Town, is the primary beneficiary of the relationship. The Town Administrator must document the analysis before approving any unpaid internship. Any placement that does not meet the test must be treated as paid. Unpaid interns are not Town employees and are not covered by VMERS, Town insurance, or most personnel benefits; workers' compensation coverage for unpaid interns will be confirmed with the Town's VLCT PACIF contact before the placement begins.

Approval, Agreement, and Supervision

All internship placements require prior written approval from the Town Administrator; paid internships also require Selectboard approval through the budget process or by separate vote. A Department Head requesting an intern submits a written request to the Town Administrator at least 30 days before the proposed start date, including proposed dates and hours, a description of the work and learning objectives, the proposed Intern Supervisor, the compensation classification with rationale, and, for unpaid placements, the academic sponsor and confirmation that credit will be awarded.

Before any work begins, the intern and the Town execute a written Internship Agreement identifying the parties, dates, maximum weekly hours, compensation status, learning objectives, applicable Town policies, confidentiality requirements, and grounds for early termination, and confirming that the intern has received this Personnel Policy. Every intern must have a designated Intern Supervisor who is a regular Town employee; a single employee may not supervise more than two interns at once, and an intern may not be supervised by a family member. Interns assigned to work with children, to access confidential records, or in a law enforcement setting are fingerprinted and background-checked through the Vermont Crime Information Center and the Bristol Police Department before beginning work.

Conduct, Duration, and Termination

Interns are subject to the Town's conduct standards, acceptable-use rules, and anti-harassment and anti-discrimination requirements, and must maintain the confidentiality of non-public information during and after the placement. A placement has a defined start and end date and normally does not exceed 12 months without Town Administrator approval. The Town may end a placement at any time for cause or operational necessity, and will notify the academic sponsor of any early termination of a for-credit placement. Wages earned by a paid intern through the last day of work are paid in accordance with Vermont law. The Town Administrator maintains a log of all internship placements and reviews this section annually. [Several open questions, including the Selectboard approval threshold for paid interns, whether to limit unpaid placements to academic-credit programs, workers' compensation confirmation, and a weekly-hours cap for unpaid interns, are identified in the companion memo for Selectboard direction.]

Section 47. Temporary and Seasonal Employees

A temporary employee is an employee hired for a limited period or for a specific project, and a seasonal employee is an employee hired to work during a particular season or program, such as Recreation Department summer programs, camps, and events. Temporary and seasonal employees are at-will and are

hired and supervised consistent with Section 5. Their appointment does not create an expectation of continued or year-to-year employment.

Town Administrator Approval Required

Every temporary and seasonal appointment requires the final approval of the Town Administrator before an offer of employment is made or work begins. A Department Head, including the Recreation Director, may recruit and recommend candidates but may not hire, set the rate of pay for, or start a temporary or seasonal employee without the Town Administrator's approval. This applies to returning seasonal staff each season as well as to new hires.

Temporary and seasonal employees are paid at least the current Vermont minimum wage and receive overtime at one and one-half times the regular rate for hours worked over 40 in a workweek. They are covered by the Town's workers' compensation insurance and are subject to payroll tax withholding. They accrue earned sick time under Vermont's Earned Sick Time Act (21 V.S.A. § 481 et seq.) if they work an average of at least 18 hours per week and are scheduled to work more than 20 weeks in the year, as described in Section 24. Except as required by law, temporary and seasonal employees are not eligible for health insurance, disability or life insurance, paid vacation, holiday pay, or bereavement leave, and are enrolled in VMERS only if they meet the 24-hour-per-week threshold in Section 20.

Background Checks for Staff Working With Children

No temporary or seasonal employee, volunteer, or coach who will work with, supervise, or have unsupervised access to children, including all Recreation Department program, camp, and event staff, may begin work until fingerprinting and a background check through the Vermont Crime Information Center and the Bristol Police Department are completed and the results are reviewed and cleared by the Town Administrator. This check is a condition of employment and must be completed before the first day of work; it may not be waived or deferred due to seasonal timing or staffing pressure. For returning staff, the Town Administrator determines the interval at which checks are refreshed.

Conduct and Contractor Classification

Temporary and seasonal employees are subject to all conduct, safety, anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and acceptable-use provisions of this policy. Independent contractors engaged by the Town on a contract basis are not employees, are not covered by this policy, and must be classified consistent with Vermont and federal law; questions of classification are resolved in consultation with the Town Administrator and, where needed, municipal counsel.

Addendum A: Personnel Policy Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Town of Bristol Personnel Policy. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policy and any revisions made to it. I understand that this policy is not a contract of employment, that my employment with the Town is at-will unless otherwise provided by statute or written agreement, and that the Town may amend the policy at any time with notice.

Employee Signature

Date

Employee Name (printed)

Addendum B: Agreement by Independently Elected Officer to be Bound by Personnel Policy

As an independently elected officer of the Town of Bristol (or a statutory assistant to such an officer), I voluntarily agree to be bound by the provisions of the Town of Bristol Personnel Policy to the extent permitted by law, and to conduct myself in accordance with its standards of conduct, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination provisions.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Office Held

Adoption

This Personnel Policy was adopted by the Bristol Selectboard on the date set forth below and supersedes the Town of Bristol Personnel Policy adopted April 3, 2017 and amended June 26, 2017.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 20____.

SIGNATURES OF THE BRISTOL SELECTBOARD:
