

WARREN TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

The Warren Town Council, at its meeting of March 10, 2009, and by a unanimous, adopted the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the Warren Town Council that all Boards and Commissions appointed by the Warren Town Council maintain high standards of cooperation, efficiency and integrity in their work on behalf of the Town of Warren; and,

WHEREAS, the Warren Town Council believes that all persons who serve on a Board or Commission appointed by the Warren Town Council should observe order and decorum during Board or Commission proceedings; and,

WHEREAS, the Warren Town Council believes that members of Boards or Commissions appointed by the Warren Town Council should neither, by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings of a Board or Commission, nor disturb any member while speaking, nor refuse to obey the reasonable requests of the Chairperson of the respective Board or Commission; and,

WHEREAS, any member of a Warren Board or Commission who makes personal, defamatory or profane remarks or willfully utters loud, threatening or abusive language or engages in any disorderly conduct which disturbs or disrupts the orderly conduct of any meeting should be called to order by the Chairperson of the Board or Commission on which he or she sits; and,

WHEREAS, the Warren Town Council believes that if conduct such as described in the preceding paragraph continues, the Warren Town Council at its discretion, subject to the laws of the United States, the State of Rhode Island, and the Town of Warren, may sanction the offending members of the Boards or Commissions; it is hereby

RESOLVED, that the following code of conduct is adopted and shall be followed by all boards and commissions appointed by the Warren Town Council:

1. In public meetings, all Board or Commission members shall practice civility and decorum in discussions and debate.

Difficult questions, tough challenges to particular points of view, and criticism of ideas and information are legitimate elements of a free democracy in action. This does not allow, however, Board or Commission members to make belligerent, personal, impertinent, slanderous, threatening, abusive, or disparaging comments. No shouting or physical actions that could be construed as threatening will be tolerated.

2. The role of the Chairperson shall be respected in maintaining order.

It is the responsibility of the Chairperson of each Board or Commission to keep Board or Commission members on track during public meetings. Board or Commission members should respect and support the efforts by the Chair to focus discussion on current agenda items. If there is disagreement about the agenda or the Chair's actions, those objections should be voiced politely and with reason, following procedures outlined in parliamentary procedure.

3. Personal comments that could offend other Board or Commission members should be avoided.

If a Board or Commission member is personally offended by the remarks of another Board or Commission member, the offended Board or Commission member should make note of the actual words used and call for a "point of personal privilege" that challenges the other Board or Commission member to justify or apologize for the language used. The Chairperson of a Board or Commission will maintain control of this discussion.

4. Board or Commission members should demonstrate effective problem solving approaches.

Board or Commission members have a public stage to show how individuals with different points of view can find common ground and seek a compromise that benefits the Town of Warren as a whole.

5. Board or commission members should treat citizens appearing before them with courtesy.

Board or Commission members should keep in mind that decisions they make affect the lives of people appearing before them. Boards and Commissions should make every effort to minimize the stress sometimes endured by people appearing before a Board or Commission. A Board or Commission member shall be patient, dignified and courteous to all individuals with whom the Board or Commission member deals with in an official capacity.

6. Boards and Commissions should be fair and equitable in allocating public hearing time to individual speakers.

The Chairperson will determine and announce limits on speakers at the start of the public hearing process. Each speaker will be allocated the time they need to adequately present their matter. However, if many speakers are anticipated, the Chairperson may shorten the time limit and/or ask speakers to limit themselves to new information and points of view not already covered by previous speakers.

7. Members of Boards and Commissions will engage in active listening.

8. Personal attacks of any kind are not permitted.

A Board or Commission member shall respect and comply with the law and shall act at all time in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Board or Commission on which they sit. A Board or Commission member shall limit his or her comments to the matter being considered by the Board or Commission and shall not engage in ad hominem arguments.

9. Boards or commissions should follow parliamentary procedure in conducting public meetings.

Boards or commissions should follow Roberts Rules of Order in conducting their public meeting. Board and Commission members shall endeavor to dispose of all matters before their Board or Commission promptly, efficiently and fairly. Members of a Board or Commission shall cooperate with the other members so as to promote the satisfactory administration of that Board or Commission's business.

10. Sanctions.

The Warren Town Council shall monitor compliance with this Code of Conduct. The goal of enforcement of this Code of Conduct is corrective, rather than punitive, and the progressive approach to curing violations shall be employed, beginning with informal methods and proceeding to more formal methods as necessary. However, should the need arise and subject to all federal, state and municipal laws, the Warren Town Council may sanction violations of this Code of Conduct and such sanctions may include public reprimand and/or removal of a Board or Commission member from an appointed board or commission. Other sanctions may be applicable under the specific circumstances of a particular case.

11. This code of conduct may be amended by the Warren Town Council as it deems necessary.

Attest to:

Julie Coelho, Town Clerk

David S. Frerichs, President