

August 4, 2023

Honorable Mark Trimmer
President – Town of Richmond

The Definition of Respect:

- Respect is an attitude that develops through mature and mutually enriching interpersonal relationships. Moreover, respect is the attitude of accepting others' differences; you need respect in order to coexist with others without conflict. To respect someone is to put aside our differences. It helps us avoid judging others for their individual choices and opinions.

How you treat residents and town employees in a public meeting is a sign of respect and shows an understanding that the job of an elected official is to represent (all of) their community. It was disappointing to witness Mr. Colasante's disrespectful demeanor of shouting on Friday, July 21, 2023. It was unacceptable and embarrassing for the Town of Richmond Leadership and it was not the first time Mr. Colasante has used a derogatory tone towards others in a meeting.

The expectation of the' RDTC and the Richmond Community is that we show respect towards each other even when we disagree. Having a variety of opinions and perspectives is part of robust discussions. It is vitally important for the council to address the repeated issue of Town Council behavior standards.

The Town Council President's responsibility is to manage meetings and manage behaviors. President Trimmer, we request that you place an item on the agenda that would begin a public discussion that would address and set the expectations of all Town Councilors behavior in meetings.

Thank you for your consideration and here are some excerpts from state and local law to support our request on behalf of the residents of the Town of Richmond.

From the Charter:

Section 7 – Direction of Town employees.

Individual Town Council members shall not assign or direct the responsibilities of Town employees, either directly or through the Town Administrator. The Town Council shall assign or direct the responsibilities of Town employees only by a majority vote and through the Town Administrator.

B. The Town Administrator shall be the chief administrative officer of the Town.

ARTICLE 6 – Deportment of public officials.

> a person's behavior or manners.

The people of the Town believe that public officials should be held to a high standard of behavior and should, at minimum, adhere to the following standards:

1. The business of the Town must be conducted in an open, efficient, fair, and

honorable manner that enables the citizens to make informed decisions.

2. Public officials should be accountable for their own actions. They should observe both the letter and the spirit of the law. They should take whatever steps are necessary to prevent other public officials from engaging in improper conduct.

3. Every public official has a duty to improve the way government works by suggesting reforms that will increase efficiency, economy, and accountability.

4. Public officials are trustees of the public's funds. They should hold, invest, and spend those funds with integrity and for the purpose of obtaining the greatest public benefit.

5. Public officials should conduct their personal and professional lives in a manner that shows they are worthy of public confidence and respect.

From the Rules of Procedure regarding Conduct at

Meetings: <https://www.richmondri.com/DocumentCenter/View/1878/Rules-of-Procedure?bidId=>

C. A person who wishes to speak may do so only after being recognized by the presiding officer. After being recognized, the person shall identify himself or herself by name and, if the speaker's address is relevant to the matter being discussed, by address. The person shall direct his or her remarks to the presiding officer, not to any other town council member or any other person present.

RIGL 42-46-5(d) - from the OMA

"(d) This chapter shall not prohibit the removal of any person who willfully disrupts a meeting to the extent that orderly conduct of the meeting is seriously compromised."

s/ B. Joe Reddish, III – Chair
Richmond Democratic Town Committee

Cc: Erin Liese- Richmond Town Clerk
Karen Pinch – Richmond Town Administrator

TOWN OF RICHMOND, RHODE ISLAND

REGULATIONS ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

A. Authority. These regulations are adopted pursuant to § 2.20.020 of the Code of Ordinances to implement the fair employment provisions of Ch. 2.20 of the Code of Ordinances.

B. Policy. Every employee and official of the Town of Richmond has the right to a working environment in which he or she is treated fairly and is not subject to discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment. The policy of the Town of Richmond is to prohibit any conduct directed at any person because of his or her race, color, country of ancestral origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or age.

C. Definitions. When used in this document, the following words or phrases have the following meanings.

Discrimination. Inequitable treatment based on a person's race, color, country of ancestral origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or age.

Gender identity or expression. A person's actual or perceived gender or a person's gender identity, gender-related self image, gender-related appearance, or gender-related expression, whether or not that identity, self image, appearance, or expression is different from that traditionally associated with the person's sex at birth.

Harassment. Any behavior that disrespects the dignity or self-esteem of another person, including but not limited to physical acts, written words, and spoken words or expressions.

Retaliation. Harassment or discrimination that is a) directed toward a person who has filed a complaint or otherwise articulated a concern about discrimination or harassment, or b) directed toward a person who has cooperated with or is cooperating with an investigation of a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Sexual harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, or oral conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's employment, or b) submission to or rejection of such conduct is a basis for employment decisions affecting that person, or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. For the purpose of illustration, conduct constituting sexual harassment may include, without limitation, sexual assault or battery or an attempt to commit sexual assault or battery; touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, or brushing against another person's body; sexually-oriented jokes, remarks, gestures, or sounds; display of sexually-oriented pictures or objects; or transmitting sexually suggestive or offensive messages or material by telephone, electronically, or otherwise.

D. Prohibited conduct.

1. No elected or appointed official or employee shall engage in discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, or retaliation directed at another employee or at any person with whom the official or employee has contact in the course of his or her duties.
2. No elected or appointed official or supervisory employee shall permit any employee to engage in discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, or retaliation directed at another employee or at any person with whom the employee has contact in the course of his or her duties. An elected or appointed official or supervisory employee who becomes aware of such conduct shall take appropriate corrective action immediately.
3. No elected or appointed official or supervisory employee shall permit any non-employee to engage in discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, directed at an employee who is carrying out his or her duties. An elected or appointed official or supervisory employee who becomes aware of such conduct shall take appropriate corrective action immediately.
4. No elected or appointed official or employee shall refuse to cooperate with an investigation of an allegation of discrimination or harassment.
5. No elected or appointed official or employee shall retaliate against a person who has made a complaint allegation of discrimination or harassment.

E. Procedure for reporting, investigating and resolving complaints.

1. Any employee who is the object of discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, in the course of his or her duties, or has witnessed discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, directed at someone else, shall make a complaint to the Town Administrator. The complaint may be made in person, in writing, by telephone, or by e-mail to Town Administrator, Richmond Town Hall, 5 Richmond Townhouse Road, Wyoming, RI 02898; (401) 539-9000 ext. 28; or townadiminstrator@richmondri.com. The person making the complaint is not required to identify himself or herself, but it may be difficult for the Town Administrator to thoroughly investigate an anonymous complaint.
2. A person alleging that the Town Administrator has engaged in discrimination or harassment of any type, including sexual harassment, shall direct the complaint to the Town Council President.
3. If the complaint is made in writing, rather than in person or by telephone, the Town Administrator shall inform the person making the complaint within five (5) working days of the day the complaint was made that the complaint has been received and will be investigated.
4. The Town Administrator shall investigate the complaint as expeditiously as possible and in a way that protects the privacy of the persons involved to the greatest extent possible.

Within ten (10) business days after an investigation is complete, the Town Administrator shall inform the person who made the complaint, in writing, of the outcome of the investigation, including a description of any action taken to resolve the complaint.

F. Penalties.

1. An employee who violates this policy may face disciplinary action, suspension, or termination pursuant to Section 2.20.080 of the Code of Ordinances.
2. An appointed official who violates this policy may be removed from his or her position.

Date of adoption: 21 August 2012