



# Town of Pownal

## Select Board Bylaws

### **SECTION 1 – PURPOSE & SCOPE**

The purpose of these bylaws is to establish reasonable rules of procedure for Board meetings and to promote the fair, orderly, and efficient conduct of the Board's proceedings and affairs. These bylaws shall govern the Board's practices and procedures except as otherwise provided by law and shall be liberally constructed so as to accomplish their purpose. This policy is in compliance with the general law and shall be judiciously understood so as to accomplish its purpose.

### **SECTION 2 – OFFICERS & DUTIES**

- A) Officers of the Board shall consist of a Chairperson (Chair) to be chosen on or after July 1<sup>st</sup> of a year to serve until the following June 30<sup>th</sup>. The term of office of the Chair shall have no limits to the position.
- B) The Chair or his/her designee shall have the following responsibilities:
  - 1. Serve as the official spokesperson if the Board;
  - 2. Preside over all meetings of the Board to maintain order and determine the course of proceedings;
  - 3. Establish the schedule and agendas of the Board and
  - 4. Ensure that the Board develop and maintain these bylaws.
- C) In the event of an emergency requiring input from the Chair and they cannot be contacted, the most tenured Selectperson available will assume the role as Chair until the Chair is available.
- D) The Select Board retains authority to rule on questions of evidence and procedure. Any action as may be necessary and not inconsistent with these bylaws or other law to enable the Select Board to perform its duties and conduct its affairs shall be taken by vote of the Selectpersons present.
- E) In the event the Chair ceases to serve as a Selectperson, resigns as Chair or is otherwise unable to discharge his or her duties prior to the end of their term, the Board shall elect a new Chair as soon as practicable. In the absence of the Chair, the most tenured Selectperson shall preside and shall have the same authority.
- F) By an affirmative vote of not less than two (2) members, the Select Board may vote to remove a Chair prior to the expiration of their term and thereafter by an affirmative vote of no less than two (2) members, elect a replacement.
- G) The Town Clerk (or his/her designee) shall maintain a permanent record of all Board meetings and all correspondence of the Board, which shall be public record except as otherwise provided by law.
- H) Board members shall notify the Administrative Assistant (or his/her designee) prior to Board meetings if they are unable to attend.
- I) Contacting the Town Attorney shall be initiated through the Select Board or Administrative Assistant.
- J) Direct assignment requests of the Administrative Assistant shall be put forth by a consensus of the Board, and not on an individual basis.

### **SECTION 3 – MEETINGS**

- A) The Select Board shall hold regular meetings no less than monthly, and give notice of such meetings as required by law.
- B) The Select Board may call special meetings as are necessary, and must give notice as required by law.
- C) The Select Board may call emergency meetings as needed with notice as required by law, to meet public emergencies affecting life, health, property or the public peace.
- D) The Chair may cancel one (1) regular meeting of each month if there is not sufficient business. If a regular meeting is cancelled arrangements must be made for no less than two (2) members to convene for the purposes acting on the accounts payable. This meeting shall be publically announced as provided by law.
- E) Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chair, or upon the request of the majority of the Board, provided; however, that notice thereof shall be given to each member at least 24 hours in advance and that no business is conducted other than as specified in said notice.
- F) Notice of all Board meetings shall be given as required by law, and all such meetings shall be open to the public except as otherwise provided by law.
- G) No business shall be conducted by the Board except at a duly called and noticed meeting or without a quorum of members of the Board being present.
- H) The general order of business at regular meetings shall be as follows: For transparency purposes the bylaws should always contain a general outline of an agenda. Changes in the order of business are at the discretion of the Chair.
  - 1. Call to Order
  - 2. Public Hearings (when applicable)
  - 3. Special Presentations (when applicable)
  - 4. Meeting Minutes
  - 5. Accounts Payable
  - 6. Public Comment
  - 7. Department Head Reports
  - 8. New Business
  - 9. Old Business
  - 10. Other Business
  - 11. Adjournment

### **SECTION 4 – HEARINGS**

- A) Public Hearings of the Board shall be called as required by law or such other occasions, as a majority of the Board may deem appropriate. Notice of all such hearings shall be given as required by law and shall include the date, time, and place of the hearing and a general description of the subject matter.
- B) The Chair shall convene all hearings by describing the purpose of the hearing and the general procedures to be followed.

- C) The Board may receive any oral or documentary evidence, but shall exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence, provided, however that formal rules of evidence shall not apply. Every party shall have the right to present its case in the order determined by the Chair, and without interruption, provided, that the Chair may impose such reasonable time limits as may be necessary to insure that all parties have an adequate opportunity to be heard. In any adjudicatory proceeding, including proceedings on licenses, permits or other approvals, every party shall also have the right to submit rebuttal evidence and to conduct cross-examination or any other party through the Chair, provided, however, that the Chair may impose such other reasonable limitations as may be necessary to prevent an abuse of process.

#### **SECTION 5 – PARTICIPATION & VOTING**

- A) Any action of the Board, when a quorum of members are present, shall require the affirmative vote of the majority present and voting unless otherwise provided by law.
- B) No member shall participate or vote in any matter in which the member has a conflict of interest or other disqualifications as defined by law. Any question of whether a member has such a conflict of interest or other disqualification shall be decided by majority vote of the remaining members.
- C) No member shall participate or vote in any adjudicatory proceeding, including proceedings on license, permits or other approvals, unless the member was present during all hearings thereon.
- D) All members who are present and not disqualified as provided herein shall vote in every matter to be voted upon unless excused by the Chair for good cause.

#### **SECTION 6 – DECISIONS**

- A) All decisions of the Board shall be made within the time limits, if any, established by law.
- B) All final decisions shall be in writing, shall become a part of the Board's permanent record, and shall, where required by law, include a statement of findings and conclusions and the reasons or basis therefore.
- C) All such decisions, together with any tape recording or transcript of testimony and deliberations and any documents and exhibits, shall constitute a public record.
- D) The Board may reconsider any decision within 30 days of its original decision, provided, however, that both a vote to reconsider and any action taken pursuant thereto shall occur and be completed with said 30 days. Notice of any reconsideration shall be given to any party thereto a reasonable time in advance of the reconsideration. The Board may conduct additional hearings and receive additional evidence and testimony as provided herein.

#### **SECTION 7 – CONFLICT WITH LAWS**

Any conflict or inconsistency between these bylaws and any applicable law shall be resolved in favor of the law.

#### **SECTION 8 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- A) Conflicts of Interest – As a general rule, a conflict of interest occurs when an official has a pecuniary (i.e., financial) interest in a matter of official business.

- B) Appearance of Conflict of Interest – Even when a Town official’s conduct is not specifically prohibited by law, competing interests and personal relationships could create an appearance of wrongdoing that could undermine the public trust in the integrity and impartiality of local government. 30-A M.R.S.A. §2605 addresses this issue by providing that Town officials shall “attempt to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest by disclosure or by abstention.”

## **SECTION 9 – CODE OF CONDUCT**

Purpose and Scope – This section of the bylaws is to define the executive role and attendant duties of the Select Board in carrying out its policy functions as part of Pownal’s town government, and to clarify the separation of the Board’s executive role from the legislative role of the Town Meeting and the administrative role of the Administrative Assistant.

### A) Definitions

1. Town Meeting – Select Board – Administrative Assistant form of government the legislative and executive functions are divided:
  - a. The Town Meeting performs the election function and the legislative function of adopting governmental policy, levying taxes, raising and appropriating monies, and authorizing the contracting of debts, etc.
  - b. The Select Board is the executive body that interprets, processes, and sets the policies of the town and chooses the course of action between town meetings, has ultimate administrative responsibility to see that the governmental policies are carried out (but must deal with administration through the Administrative Assistant, and appoints and supervises the Administrative Assistant.
  - c. The Administrative Assistant executes and carries out the governmental and fiscal policies with guidance from the Select Board. The Select Board has direct responsibility for an authority over all administrative functions. The Administrative Assistant carries out the day-to-day operations of the town, and as defined by general law.

### B) Duties of the Select Board

1. A member of the Select Board, in relation to his or community should:
  - a. Understand that his or her basis function is to make policy, with administration and delegate to the Administrative Assistant.
  - b. Understand that he or she should abide by, stand by, and carry out all Board decisions once they are made.
  - c. Be well informed concerning the duties of a Board member on both local and state levels.
  - d. Remember that he or she represents the entire community but must make decisions based on their best judgement.
  - e. Accept the roles of member is a means of unselfish service, not to benefit personally or politically from his or her Board activities.

- f. Abide by the ethics guidelines established by the State and not use the position or Selectperson to obtain inside information on matters that may benefit someone personally.
2. A Member of the Select Board, in his or her relations with the Administrative Assistant, should:
  - a. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies that will direct and support the administration of or the benefit of the staff and residents of the community.
  - b. Refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside of Staff and the Department Heads.
  - c. Give the Administrative Assistant full responsibility for discharging his or her disposition and/or solutions.
  - d. When a situation comes to the attention of a Board member, convey that information to the Administrative Assistant for consideration and resolution of action as the Administrative Assistant may deem appropriate. Inform the other Board members of suggestions and information conveyed to the Administrative Assistant.
  - e. Not give orders of direction to the Administrative Assistant for action as an individual Board member.
  - f. Not give instructions or request assistance from Town department heads, but rather channel all such activities thought the full Board and the Administrative Assistant.
3. A member of the Select Board in his or her relations with fellow Board members, should:
  - a. Recognize that action at official legal meetings is binding and that he or she alone cannot bind the Board outside of such meetings.
  - b. Not make statements or promises of how he or she will vote on matters that will come before the Board until he or she has had an opportunity to hear the pros and cons of the issue during a Board meeting.
  - c. Uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive session.
  - d. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.
  - e. Refrain from communicating the position of the Select Board to anyone unless the full Board as previously agreed on both the position and the language of the statement conveying the position.
  - f. Treat with respect the rights of all members of the Board despite differences of opinion.
4. A member of the Select Board, in his or her relations with Town staff should:
  - a. Treat all staff as professionals that respects the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.

- b. Limit contact to specific Town staff. Questions of Town staff and/or requests for additional background information should be directed only to the Administrative Assistant.
- c. Never publicly criticize an individual employee. Concerns about staff performance should only be made to the Department Head through private conversations.
- d. Insure that all requests for staff support go through the respective Department Head.
- e. Insure that any materials or information provided to a Selectperson from a staff member be made available to all Select Board members.

## **SECTION 10 – WAIVER & AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws, or any provision thereof, may be waived on any occasion by majority vote of the Select Board unless others provided by State law. These bylaws may be amended at any time in writing by majority vote of the Select Board.