§ 23-1. Purpose.

A. The continuation of free and representative government depends in great measure upon public servants who are motivated by moral and ethical concepts predicated on rational and spiritual grounds. Public officials and employees of a free government are entrusted with the welfare, prosperity, security and safety of the people they serve. In exchange for this trust, the people are entitled to know that no conflict between private interests and official duties exists in those who serve them.

B. The powers, duties, prohibitions and responsibilities of public officials of the Town government are defined in various laws of the state. To this legal framework, public officials and employees must add a personal commitment of honesty and moral and ethical conduct. Such standards must be founded upon personal integrity and community vigilance. No law, no ordinance, no code can, in itself, create a moral pattern of conduct. To act morally and in accordance with accepted standards and principles is an obligation of public servants, as well as the people they serve. As the public officials and employees of the Town have the duty to act always in accordance with legal mandate and ethical standards, they also have the right to expect that the people they serve will help in the accomplishment of the objective and promote a healthy civic conscience.


As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

FAMILY MEMBER -- A spouse, child, brother, sister, parent or dependent of a municipal officer or employee.

INTEREST -- A direct or indirect pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a municipal officer or employee as the result of a contract with the municipality which such officer or employee serves. For the purpose of this chapter, municipal officers or employees shall be deemed to have an interest in the contract of:

A. A family member, except a contract of employment with the municipality which such an officer or employee serves.
B. A firm, partnership or association of which such officer or employee is a member or employee.

C. A corporation of which such officer or employee is an officer, director or employee.

D. A corporation, any stock of which is owned or controlled directly or indirectly by such officer or employee.

MUNICIPAL OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE -- An officer or employee of the Town, whether paid or unpaid, including members of any administrative board, commission or other agency thereof. No person shall be deemed to be a "municipal officer or employee" solely by reason of being a volunteer fireman or civil defense volunteer, except a Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief.

PUBLIC OFFICIAL -- The Town Supervisor, the Deputy Supervisor, the members of the Town Board, the Town Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk, the Town Tax Receiver, the Deputy Town Tax Receiver, the Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, the Commissioner of Enforcement and Security, the Commissioner of Environmental Control, the Commissioner of General Services, the Commissioner of Human Resources, the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, the Commissioner of Planning and Development, the Deputy Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, the Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Control/Incinerator, the Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Control/Sanitation, the Deputy Commissioner of General Services, the Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources, the Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources/ Senior Citizens, the Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, the Deputy Commissioner of Planning and Development, the Animal Shelter Supervisor, the Assessor, the Chief Fire Marshal, the Chief Ordinance Enforcement Officer, the Director of the Consumer Protection Board, the Director of Handicapped Services, the Director of Labor Relations, the Director of Streetlighting, the Drug and Alcohol Program Coordinator, the East Farmingdale Water District Superintendent, the Executive Director of the Youth Bureau, the Public Information Officer, the Secretary to the Board of Appeals, the Senior Citizens Program Supervisor, the Special Services Manager, the Town Attorney, the Town Budget Officer, the Town Comptroller, the Town Engineer, the Deputy Town Attorney, the Deputy Town Comptroller, the Administrative Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, the Executive Assistant to the Comptroller, the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Supervisor, the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of Environmental Control, the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of General Services, the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of Human Resources, the Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, the Executive Assistant to Planning and Development, the Executive Assistant to the Supervisor, the Executive Assistant to the Town Attorney, the Executive Assistant to the Town Board, all Assistant Town Attorneys,
members of the Board of Assessment Review, Bingo Inspectors, members of the Board of Ethics, members of the Industrial Development Council, members of the Planning Board, members of the Plumbing Board, members of the Sanitation Commission, members of the Two-Family Review Board, members of the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Recycling Coordination Aide, the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and the Safety Compliance Officer. [Amended 12-4-1990 by L.L. No. 9-1990; 9-7-1994 by L.L. No. 26-1994]

§ 23-3. Conflicts of interest.

A. Except as provided in § 802 of the General Municipal Law:

(1) No municipal officer or employee shall have an interest in any contract with the municipality of which he/she is an officer or employee when such officer or employee, individually or as a member of a board, had the power or duty to:

(a) Negotiate, prepare, authorize or approve the contract or authorize or approve payment thereunder.

(b) Audit bills or claims under the contract.

(c) Appoint an officer or employee who has any of the powers or duties set forth above.

(2) No chief fiscal officer, treasurer or his/her deputy or employee shall have an interest in a bank or trust company designated as a depository, paying agent, registration agent or for investment of funds of the municipality of which he/she is an officer or employee.

B. The provisions of this section shall in no event be construed to preclude the payment of lawful compensation and necessary expenses of any municipal officer or employee in one or more positions of public employment, the holding of which is not prohibited by law.

§ 23-4. Disclosure of interest required.

A. Any municipal officer or employee who has, will have or later acquires an interest in any actual or proposed contract with the municipality of which he/she is an officer or employee shall publicly disclose the nature and extent of such interest in writing to the governing body thereof as soon as he/she has knowledge of such actual or prospective interest. Such written disclosure shall be made part of and set forth in the official record of the proceedings of such body, and a copy shall be forwarded to the Town Clerk to be kept in a separate file. Once disclosure has been made by an officer or employee with respect to an interest in a contract with a particular person, firm, corporation or association, no further disclosures need be made by such officer or employee with respect to additional contracts with the same party during
the remainder of the fiscal year.

B. Any municipal officer, member of any board or employee, agent or representative of the Town who has, will have or later acquires an interest in any actual or proposed transaction or matter with the Town shall disclose the nature and extent of such interest in writing to the Town Board as soon as he/she has knowledge of such actual or prospective interest. Such written disclosure shall be referred by the Town Board to the Board of Ethics for opinion and decision in writing, and a copy shall be forwarded to the Town Clerk to be kept in a separate file.

§ 23-5. Additional provisions included by reference.

A. In addition to the foregoing regulations, Article 18 of the General Municipal Law, entitled "Conflicts of Interest of Municipal Officers and Employees," is deemed a part of this chapter as if the same had been set forth in full. Any amendments of or additions to said Article hereafter adopted by the Legislature are also deemed part of this chapter.

B. In accordance with § 807 of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law, the Supervisor shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that every municipal officer and employee receives a copy of the Article and any amendments thereto.

§ 23-6. Standards of conduct established.

Consistent with § 806 of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law, standards of conduct are established and are set forth in §§ 23-7 through 23-22 of this chapter.

§ 23-7. Outside employment impairing independent judgment.

No municipal officers or employees shall accept other employment which will impair their independence of judgment in the exercise of their official duties.

§ 23-8. Outside employment requiring disclosure of confidential information.

No municipal officers or employees shall accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which will require them to disclose confidential information which they have gained by reason of their official position or authority.

No municipal officers or employees shall disclose confidential information or information not generally available to the public, acquired by them in the course of their official duties nor use such information to further their personal interests, either while officers or employees of the Town or after they have left Town service.


No municipal officers or employees shall use or attempt to use their official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for themselves or others.

§ 23-11. Transactions as Town agent.

No municipal officers or employees shall engage in any transaction as representatives or agents of the Town with any business entity in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest that might reasonably tend to conflict with the proper discharge of their official duties.


Municipal officers or employees shall not, by their conduct, give a reasonable basis for the impression that any person can improperly influence them or unduly enjoy their favor in the performance of their official duties, or that they are affected by kinship, rank, position or influence of any party or person.


Municipal officers or employees shall abstain from making personal investments in enterprises which they have reason to believe may directly be involved in decisions to be made by them or which will otherwise create conflicts between their duty in the public interest and private interest.

§ 23-14. Course of conduct.

Municipal officers or employees shall endeavor to pursue a course of conduct which will not raise suspicion among the public that they are likely to be engaged in acts that are in violation of the public trust.
§ 23-15. Sales to Town.

No public official employed on a full-time basis nor any firm or association substantially controlled by such public official or a family member of such public official nor any corporation which has a substantial portion of its stock owned or controlled directly or indirectly by such public official or his/her family member, shall sell goods, services, real property or personal property to the Town. Notwithstanding the foregoing however, a public official shall be permitted to serve on the Board of Directors or as an officer of any not-for-profit corporation which sells goods, services, real property or personal property to the Town, provided that said officer derives no pecuniary benefit from his/her position with said corporation.


A. Filing requirements. All public officials shall, on an annual basis, file a financial disclosure statement with the Babylon Board of Ethics. Said statement shall be filed in the manner specified thereon, no later than April 15 of each year or within 30 days after taking office, whichever later occurs, except if an exemption or extension is granted. The Board of Ethics shall have the authority to promulgate rules and regulations sufficient to enforce the filing requirement and any and all provisions of this chapter. [Amended 12-17-1991 by L.L. No. 7-1991]

B. Exemption from filing requirement.

(1) Any public official who has not been determined by the Babylon Town Board to hold a policy-making position may request from the Board of Ethics an exemption from any or all reporting requirements set forth on the financial disclosure statement which pertain to said official's spouse or unemancipated child(ren). Such an exemption may be granted upon a majority finding of the Board of Ethics that the reporting individual's spouse or unemancipated child refuses to provide the subject information and that such information will have no material bearing on the discharge of the reporting individual's official duties.

(2) The following public officials have been determined to be policy-makers and may not request an exemption from the reporting requirements set forth on the financial disclosure statement: the Town Supervisor, the Deputy Supervisor, the members of the Town Board, the Town Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Works, the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk, the Town Tax Receiver, the Deputy Town Tax Receiver, the Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, the Commissioner of Enforcement and Security, the Commissioner of Environmental Control, the Commissioner of General Services, the
Commissioner of Human Resources, the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, the Commissioner of Planning and Development, the Deputy Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, the Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Control/Incinerator, the Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Control/Sanitation, the Deputy Commissioner of General Services, the Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources, the Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources/Senior Citizens, the Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, the Deputy Commissioner of Planning and Development, the Animal Shelter Supervisor, the Assessor, the Chief Fire Marshal, the Chief Ordinance Enforcement Officer, the Director of the Consumer Protection Board, the Director of Handicapped Services, the Director of Labor Relations, the Director of Streetlighting, the Drug and Alcohol Program Coordinator, the East Farmingdale Water District Superintendent, the Executive Director of the Youth Bureau, the Public Information Officer, the Secretary to the Board of Appeals, the Senior Citizens Program Supervisor, the Special Services Manager, the Town Attorney, the Town Budget Officer, the Town Comptroller, the Town Engineer, the Deputy Town Attorney, the Deputy Town Comptroller and the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator. [Amended 9-7-1994 by L.L. No. 26-1994]

(3) An exemption request may be made by a public official on his/her own behalf or on behalf of persons who share the same job title or employment classification. Such an exemption may be granted upon a majority finding of the Board of Ethics that the public interest does not require disclosure and the public official's duties do not involve the negotiation, authorization or approval of:

(a) Contracts, leases, franchises, revocable consents, concessions, variances, special permits or licenses;

(b) The purchase, sale, rental or lease of real property, goods or services or contracts therefor;

(c) The obtaining of grants of money or loans; or

(d) The adoption or repeal of any rule or regulation having the force and effect of law.

C. Additional time to file. Any public official may request from the Board of Ethics an additional period of time within which to file the financial disclosure statement Such an extension may be granted upon a majority finding of the Board of Ethics that the extension is warranted on the basis of justifiable cause or undue hardship. In no event may the filing time be extended more than 90 days from the mandatory filing date of April 15. [Amended 12-17-1991 by L.L. No. 7-1991]

D. Request deadline. All requests for exemptions and extensions shall be submitted no later than
March 15 of the subject year or within 30 days after a public official takes office, whichever later occurs. [Amended 12-17-1991 by L.L. No. 7-1991]

E. Final determination. A denial of an exemption or extension request shall be deemed to be a final determination of the Board of Ethics.

F. Public inspection.

(1) The financial disclosure statement of any public official who holds a position with the Town at the time the inspection request is submitted shall be available for public inspection, except as otherwise provided in this section. No photocopies of the requested information shall be made. The following information however, must remain confidential and shall not be subject to public inspection:

(a) Categories of value or amount set forth on the financial disclosure statement.

(b) Any information properly deleted from the copy of the statement available for public inspection.

(2) A request to inspect a financial disclosure statement shall be submitted to the Board of Ethics, in writing, and shall be signed by the individual making the request. The public official whose statement is being sought shall be notified that a request to inspect has been received within 10 days from the date on which the Board of Ethics receives the request. The identity of the individual requesting the statement shall not be revealed. The notification to the public official shall be made by certified mail, return receipt requested. The financial disclosure statement will not be available for inspection until at least 15 days after the date of the request.

(3) Any public official whose financial disclosure statement is being sought may request the Board of Ethics to delete from the copy made available for public inspection one or more items of information contained in the statement. Such a request may be granted upon a majority finding of the Board of Ethics that the information requested has no material bearing on the discharge of the reporting individual's official duties. The Board of Ethics shall make a determination regarding a deletion request within 30 days from the date on which it receives the deletion request.

(4) A denial of a deletion request shall be deemed to be a final determination of the Board of Ethics.

(5) Upon a denial by the Board of Ethics of a deletion request, the reporting individual may request and, upon such request, the Board of Ethics shall provide that any information which is the subject of the application shall remain confidential for the period between the date of deletion request until 30 days from the date of the denial.
G. Review and maintenance. The Board of Ethics shall review and index by name and date all financial disclosure statements. Each statement shall be maintained by the Board of Ethics for a period of not less than five years.

H. Failure to file. If a public official has failed to file a financial disclosure statement in a timely manner or has filed an incomplete statement, the Board of Ethics shall notify the public official, in writing, of the failure to file or specify which portions of the statement are incomplete. The notice, which shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, shall provide the public official with a fifteen-day period in which to cure the failure or deficiency and shall set forth the penalty for failure to comply with the reporting requirements. If the reporting individual fails to make the filing or fails to cure the deficiency within the fifteen-day period, the Board of Ethics shall send a notice of delinquency to the reporting individual and to the Babylon Town Board.

I. Referral to District Attorney. If the Board of Ethics determines that there is reasonable cause to believe that a public official has knowingly and willfully failed to file an annual financial disclosure statement or has knowingly and willfully, with intent to deceive, made a false statement or given information which such individual knows to be false on a financial disclosure statement, the Board of Ethics may refer the matter to the District Attorney. After such referral and upon a conviction, such a violation shall be punishable as a Class A misdemeanor.

J. Matters to be disclosed. Matters to be disclosed by all public officials, as they pertain to the reporting individual, his/her spouse and his/her dependent children, shall include:

(1) A list of any position as an officer, trustee, director or partner in any business, association or not-for-profit organization. The reporting individual must indicate whether this/these organization(s) is/are involved with the Town of Babylon. A disclosure of the category of the amount of money earned while holding such position during the reporting year must be made.

(2) A description of any contract, promise or other agreement between the reporting individual and anyone else with respect to the reporting individual's employment after leaving his/her Town office or position.

(3) An identification of the source and nature of any income in excess of $1,000 per year from any prior employer, including deferred income, profit sharing plan, severance pay or payments under a buy-out agreement. A disclosure of the category of the amount of money received during the reporting year must be made.

(4) A list of any investments having a current value of $5,000 or more, including stocks, bonds, loans and other investments. A disclosure of the category of the amount of
investments held during the reporting year must be made.

(5) A list of any business(es), corporation(s) or partnership(s) in which more than 5% of the current value is owned. A disclosure of the category of the amount of investment held during the reporting year must be made.

(6) A list of any real estate owned, either wholly or partially.

(7) Trusts from which income in excess of $2,000 has been derived. A disclosure of the category of money received during the reporting year must be made.

(8) An identification of the source and nature of any other income in excess of $1,000 per year from any source not described above, including teaching income, lecture fees, consultant fees, contracted income or other income of any nature. A disclosure of the category of the amount of money received during the reporting year must be made.

(9) A list of the source of all gifts aggregating in excess of $1,000 received during the last year, excluding gifts from a relative. The term "gifts" includes gifts of cash, property, personal items, payments to third parties on one's own behalf, forgiveness of debts and honorariums. A disclosure of the category of the amount of money received during the reporting year must be made.

(10) An identification and description of the source of any reimbursement for travel expenses related to official Town duties, other than that reimbursement paid for by the Town. A disclosure of the category of money received during the reporting year must be made.

(11) A description of all debts in excess of $5,000. A disclosure of the category of money owed during the reporting year must be made.

(12) A description of any interest in any contract involving the Town or any municipality located within the Town.

(13) A list of any position held within the last five years as an officer of any political party, political committee or political organization. The term "political organization" includes any independent body or any organization that is affiliated with or is a subsidiary of a political party.

§ 23-17. Use of Town funds and property.

No municipal officers or employees shall use Town funds, property or a Town facility for political purposes or for the personal advantage of themselves or a member of their family.

No municipal officer or employee or their family members shall directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift having a value of $75 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or in any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift is intended to influence said municipal officer or employee or could reasonably be expected to influence him or her in the performance of his or her official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action on his or her part.


Any person engaged by the Town Board or other department of the Town for the appraisal of any real or personal property shall have no interest, directly or indirectly, in the property which is the subject of the appraisal.


No municipal officers or employees shall participate in any transaction, proceeding or decision or appear before any board where they or any member of their immediate family shall have any direct or indirect, present or future interest in the subject matter or in the result of any action taken therein.

§ 23-21. Town members restricted from certain businesses.

No municipal officers or employees of the Building Department, Department of Planning and Development, Zoning Board of Appeals or Planning Board shall engage in the real estate, insurance, building contracting or building material business within the Town of Babylon during the course of his or her employment.

§ 23-22. Attorneys to avoid conflict of interest.

Any attorney engaged by the Town Board or any department of the Town for a specific purpose or assignment or on a continuous basis shall, in all instances, observe the canons of ethics of the legal profession. Such attorney shall refrain from representing any client before the Town Board or any other board, department or agency where there will arise a conflict of interest or any knowledge of Town affairs and business gained through the employment which will benefit the
cause of the client.

§ 23-23. Board of Ethics created; membership; terms.
A. The Town Board shall establish a Board of Ethics and appropriate moneys for maintenance and personal services in connection therewith. The members of such Board shall be appointed by the Town Board.

B. The Board of Ethics shall consist of at least three members and shall include at least one member who is not a municipal officer or employee and may include a clergyman as one of the members. The Town Attorney or such attorney designated by the Town Board shall be a member, ex officio, of the Board of Ethics. The members of such Board shall be appointed for terms of two years and may receive compensation not to exceed $50 per meeting. [Amended 12-3-2002 by L.L. No. 34-2002]

A. Powers of Board of Ethics. If a public official has wholly or partially failed to file a financial disclosure statement or has filed a financial disclosure statement which reveals a possible violation of the Babylon Code of Ethics or a possible false filing, the Board of Ethics may, on a majority vote, investigate the failure to file, possible violation or false filing on its own motion. If the Board of Ethics receives a complaint that a public official has wholly or partially failed to file a financial disclosure statement, has filed a financial disclosure statement which reveals a possible violation of the Code of Ethics or has made a possible false filing or that any municipal officer or employee has violated the Babylon Code of Ethics, it shall investigate the alleged violation. The Board of Ethics shall have all the powers and duties bestowed on the Temporary State Commission on Local Government Ethics by § 813 of the General Municipal Law in order that the Board of Ethics may administer and enforce those provisions of this chapter which relate to the financial disclosure statement, as more fully set forth in the rules and regulations of the Board of Ethics. The Board of Ethics shall also have the power to assess a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed $10,000 if it determines that there is reasonable cause to believe that a public official has knowingly and willfully failed to file an annual financial disclosure statement or has knowingly and willfully, with intent to deceive, made a false statement or given information which such public official knows to be false on a financial disclosure statement. The assessment of a civil penalty for such a violation shall be made in lieu of a referral to the District Attorney, which remedy is provided for in Section § 23-161 of this chapter. A civil penalty for false filing may not be imposed in the event that a category of value or amount reported in a financial
disclosure statement is incorrect, unless such reported information is falsely understated.

B. Duties of Board of Ethics.

(1) All complaints must be properly submitted on the official Board of Ethics complaint form. The Board of Ethics shall notify the municipal officer or employee, in writing, of the investigation. Such notification shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall describe the possible or alleged violation. The notice shall also set forth the date on which the Board of Ethics proceeding shall be held and shall inform the municipal officer or employee of the rules regarding the conduct of the Board of Ethics proceeding.

(2) The Board of Ethics shall render advisory opinions to municipal officers and employees of the Town with respect to Article 18 of the General Municipal Law and the Babylon Code of Ethics adopted by the Town Board. Such advisory opinions shall be rendered pursuant to the written request of any such municipal officer or employee, under such rules and regulations as the Board of Ethics may deem advisable, and shall have the approval of counsel employed by the Board or, if none, the Town Attorney or such attorney designated by the Town Board. The Board, on its own motion or at the request of the Town Board, may make recommendations with respect to amendments to this Code of Ethics.

C. Determination of Board of Ethics. If the Board of Ethics makes a final determination that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of this chapter exists or that a false filing has been made, it shall send a notice of reasonable cause to the municipal officer or employee in question, the complainant, if any, and the Babylon Town Board.


All proceedings of the Board of Ethics shall be confidential, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 7 of the Public Officers Law. Proceedings shall be conducted in a manner consistent with Article 3 of the New York State Administrative Procedure Act and as more fully set forth in the rules and regulations of the Board of Ethics.


Any municipal officer or employee of the Town who willfully and knowingly violates any provision of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law and this Code of Ethics may be fined, suspended or removed from office or employment in the manner provided by law.

The Town Board, on its own motion or upon receipt of a notice of reasonable cause from the Board of Ethics, may require any municipal officer or employee to appear before it, be sworn and be examined and heard with respect to any alleged violation of Article 18 of the General Municipal Law and/or this Code of Ethics. The municipal officer or employee appearing before the Town Board shall have the right to be represented by counsel. A written report shall be filed with the Town Clerk within 60 days after the completion of the hearing.
Endnotes

1 (Popup - Popup)

Editor's Note: This local law also repealed former Ch. 23, Code of Ethics, adopted 10-22-1965.