

# TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

## Employee Manual



### *A Guide to Town Employment*

January 2016 edition

## Table of Contents

<b>I. ABOUT THE TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER .....</b>	<b>7</b>
101. Town of Bridgewater Statement of Mission, Vision and Commitment.....	7
102. Introductory Statement .....	7
103. Organization and Leadership .....	8
104. Organizational Chart .....	9
105. Departmental Policy.....	10
106. Administration and Responsibility .....	10
107. Personnel Objectives .....	10
108. Business Ethics and Conduct.....	11
<b>II. EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>13</b>
201. Employment-At-Will .....	13
202. Equal Employment Opportunity .....	13
203. Americans With Disabilities Act .....	13
204. Employment Applications .....	14
205. Background Checks .....	14
206. Criminal Offenders Records Information (CORI).....	14
207. Employment of Relatives .....	15
208. The Hiring Process.....	15
209. Personnel File Contents .....	16
210. Access to Personnel Files .....	17
211. Personal Information Changes.....	17
212. Initial Employment Period ( <i>Probationary Period</i> ).....	17
213. Whistle Blowing .....	18

214. Outside Employment .....	18
215. Re-employment .....	18
<b>III. COMPENSATION &amp; PERFORMANCE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
301. Employment Categories and Job Classification .....	19
302. Salary Administration.....	20
303. Timekeeping.....	20
304. Overtime .....	21
305. Compensatory Time .....	21
306. Pay Periods/Paydays .....	22
307. Pay Deductions .....	22
308. Direct Deposits.....	22
309. Pay Advances .....	23
310. Payroll Change Authorizations.....	23
311. Administrative Pay Corrections.....	23
312. Performance Evaluations .....	23
313. Call Back and On-Call (Non-emergency personnel) .....	24
314. Working out of Classification .....	24
315. Employee Development & Training .....	25
316. Job Transfers and Promotions .....	25
317. Change In Status Adjustments .....	25
318. Longevity Awards.....	26
319. Employment Separation .....	27
<b>IV. A PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACE .....</b>	<b>28</b>
401. Open Communication .....	28

402. Chain of Command and Council Communications .....	28
403. Citizen Relations.....	29
404. Employee Relations.....	29
405. Work Schedules, Meal Periods and Breaks.....	29
406. Attendance and Punctuality.....	30
407. Alternative Work Plan Options .....	31
408. Personal Appearance .....	32
409. Professional Standards of Conduct.....	33
410. Visitations.....	34
411. Reporting to Work During Inclement Weather .....	34
412. Acceptance of Gifts .....	35
413. Media Policy .....	35
414. Solicitations.....	36
415. Confidential Information.....	36
416. Employment Verification and Official References .....	37
417. Return of Property .....	38
418. Use of Phone, Fax and Mail Systems .....	38
419. Town Equipment and Facilities .....	38
420. Uniforms and Employee Identification .....	39
421. Driver’s Responsibilities .....	39
422. Town Vehicles .....	40
423. Business Travel Expenses.....	43
424. Computer and Email Usage.....	43
425. Internet Usage .....	44

426. Cell Phone Usage.....	46
427. Social Media .....	46
428. Political Activity.....	48
429. Disciplinary Action/Corrective Action Plan .....	48
430. Dispute Resolution (Grievance Process) .....	49
431. Collective Bargaining.....	50
<b>V. A SAFE &amp; HEALTHLY WORKPLACE.....</b>	<b>52</b>
501. Safety .....	52
502. Work Place Injuries and Accidents.....	52
503. Workers' Compensation Insurance.....	52
504. Workplace Monitoring.....	53
505. Harassment-Free Workplace .....	53
506. Tobacco-Free Workplace .....	54
507. Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace.....	54
508. Weapon Prohibition.....	55
509. Preventing Workplace Violence.....	56
510. Parking .....	56
<b>VI. TIME OFF.....</b>	<b>58</b>
601. Holidays.....	58
602. Annual Vacation Leave.....	59
603. Personal Days.....	60
604. Sick Leave (see also section 605: FML) .....	60
605. Family and Medical Leave (FML).....	62
606. Parental Leave.....	62

607. Leave Sharing .....	63
608. Small Necessities Leave Act (SNLA).....	63
609. Military Leave.....	64
610. Voting Time Off .....	64
611. Bereavement Leave .....	64
612. Jury Duty .....	65
<b>VII. BENEFITS and GROUP INSURANCE PLANS.....</b>	<b>66</b>
701. Employee Benefits .....	66
702. Benefits Continuation (COBRA) .....	67
703. Tuition Waiver Program.....	67
704. Health/Medical Benefits Plan .....	68
705. Life Insurance .....	68
706. Dental Insurance .....	69
707. Flexible Spending Program – Health Care and Dependant Care .....	69
708. Health and Wellness Programs.....	70
709. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) .....	70
710. Retirement Benefits: Plymouth County Retirement System .....	70
711. Retirement Benefits: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) .....	71
712. Deferred Compensation (457 Plan) .....	72
713. Other Optional Individual Insurance Plans through Payroll Deductions .....	72

## **I. ABOUT THE TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER**

### **101. Town of Bridgewater Statement of Mission, Vision and Commitment**

The Town of Bridgewater is a community which prides itself on being a great place in which to work, live and play, that offers residents and businesses a positive climate for growth and economic opportunity.

It is a Town of community-conscious individuals; led by Town Council and Town Manager, which together with staff, spends wisely and governs in an open and accessible manner.

#### **OUR MISSION**

The mission of the Town Council, Town Manager and staff is to work together to create and implement strategies necessary to make Bridgewater a premier municipal organization.

#### **OUR VALUES**

The vision, mission and goals of the Town of Bridgewater will be guided by core values.

- **LEADERSHIP:** in our thinking and in our actions; encouraging initiatives that exceed expectations, and advocating what we believe in
- **FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** to increase the efficiency of our town government through fiscal responsibility and prudence
- **INNOVATION:** to think broadly and long-term; to balance town-wide concerns in times of economic challenge and with limited resources
- **INTEGRITY:** to demonstrate honesty and transparency in all of our dealings, upholding only the highest ethical principles
- **PROFESSIONALISM:** to be excellent in our service delivery, through a quality workforce; and to show pride in our efforts and the community in which we live and work
- **FAIRNESS AND RESPECT:** for the needs of all residents and employees and for all the viewpoints in our community
- **WORKING TOGETHER:** making progress through partnership with staff, Council, residents, the University, state facilities, businesses and other partners
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** to responsibly use and protect the resources which have been entrusted to us

### **102. Introductory Statement**

This employee manual is designed to acquaint you with the Town and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits, and some of the policies affecting your employment. It is your responsibility to read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the manual. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by the Town to benefit employees.

The fundamental objectives of this employee manual are:

- 1) To promote and increase efficiency in the service of the town as an organization;

- 2) To develop and maintain a program of recruitment, advancement and tenure, all predicated on merit and fitness, which will make the municipal service attractive as a career and encourage each employee to provide the best possible services to the people of Bridgewater;
- 3) To establish and promote high morale among municipal employees by providing good working relationships, uniform personnel policies, equal opportunity for advancement and consideration of employee needs;
- 4) To provide fair and equal opportunity to all qualified or qualifiable persons to enter Town employment on the basis of merit and fitness as determined through impartial and job related requirements, interviews and skills assessments.

No employee manual can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. This manual is not intended to be all inclusive or to reflect the full policy of items mentioned. As a result, you are encouraged to contact your department head/leader or Human Resources if you have questions. The need may arise and the Town reserves the right, to revise, supplement, or rescind any policies or portion of the manual from time to time as it deems appropriate. Employees will be notified of such changes to the manual as they occur. Deviations from provisions of this manual may only be made with the authorization of the Town Manager.

## 103. Organization and Leadership

Effective Date: January 2016

The Town of Bridgewater operates under the council-manager form of government. The elected Town Council and appointed Town Manager formulate policy for the governance and administration of the Town, respectively.

The Town Manager serves as Chief Executive Officer and is official head of the executive branch of Town government (*see Bridgewater Home Rule Charter § 1-3*). The Acting Town Manager or Assistant Town Manager may perform the duties of the Town Manager in the Town Manager's absence or disability.

The Town Manager serves as the Town's Chief Executive Officer. The position is responsible for implementing the policies of the Town Council, directing business and administrative procedures, and appointing departmental officers. The Town Manager may delegate authority to the Assistant Town Manager, or any of the Division Directors or Department Heads.

The Town Manager is assisted by numerous departments. An enumeration of positions classified as Department Head/leaders is contained in the Town Administrative Code, Section V.

For purposes of this Employee Manual, the Town of Bridgewater Departments are:

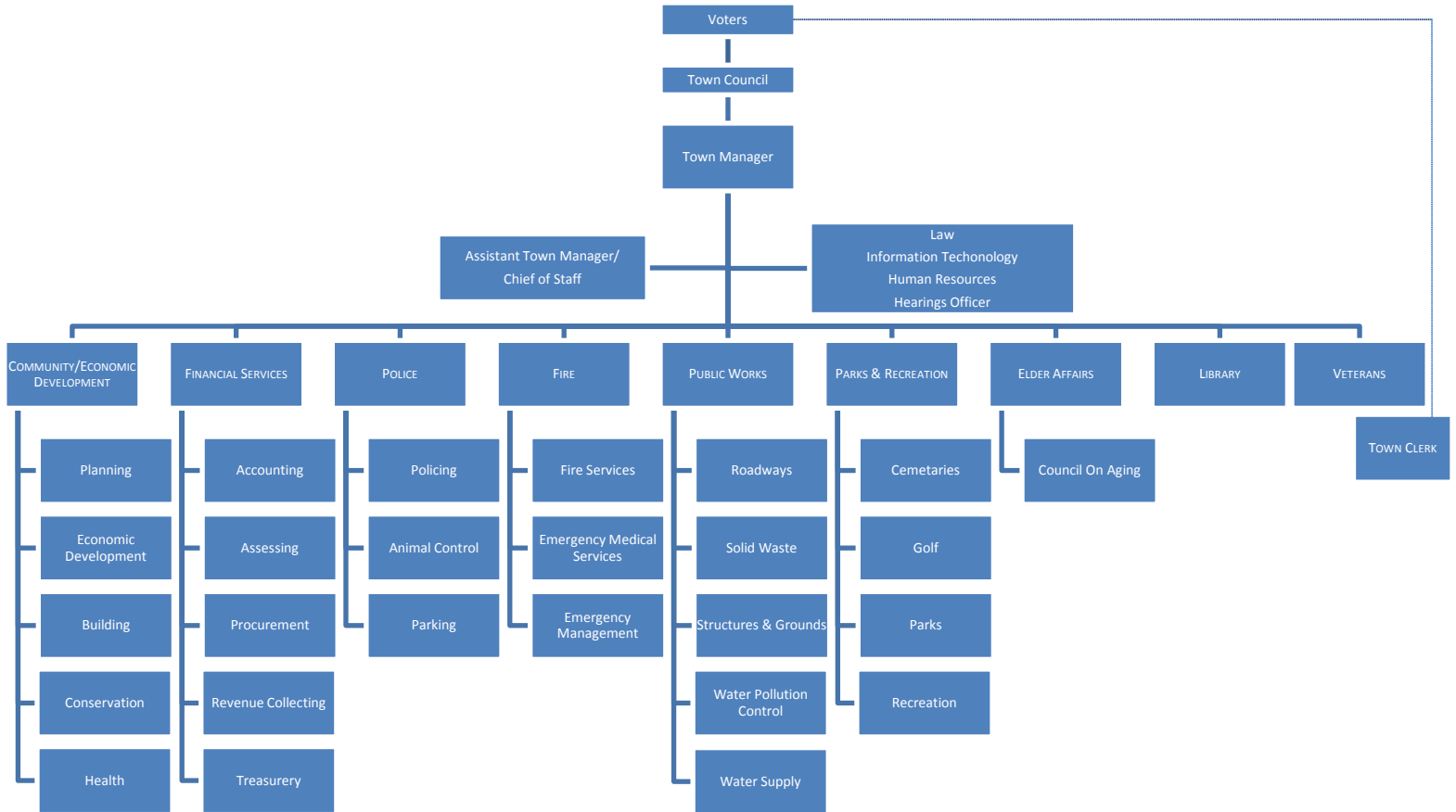
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ▪ Animal Control   | ▪ Human Resources ( <i>Town Managers Office</i> ) |
| ▪ Community & Economic Development                                       | ▪ Information Technologies                        |
| ▪ Conservation   | ▪ Building  |
| ▪ Elder Affairs  | ▪ Law   |
| ▪ Finance ( <i>Accounting, Assessing, Revenue Collection, Treasury</i> ) | ▪ Library   |
| ▪ Fire   | ▪ Police  |
| ▪ Golf ( <i>Olde Scotland Links</i> )                                    | ▪ Parks and Recreation                            |
| ▪ Health   | ▪ Roadways  |
|  | ▪ Town Clerk                                      |



- Town Council (*Clerk*)
- Town Manager
- Veterans Services
- Water Pollution Control
- Water Supply
- Zoning

## 104. Organizational Chart

Effective Date: January 2016



## **105. Departmental Policy**

Effective Date: January 2016

Every department may establish regulations that are necessary to its daily operations. The head of any department may formulate in writing additional policies/procedures necessary for the conduct of the department. These regulations shall not be in conflict with this manual, except Town Manager approves a pre-existing written Police or Fire Department policy, practice or rule not in conflict with federal or state law, and shall be authorized by the Town Manager.

A current copy of departmental regulations shall be kept on file in the departments and the Human Resources Office and in the department for review by departmental personnel.

## **106. Administration and Responsibility**

Effective Date: January 2014

The personnel policies and procedures established by this manual shall be administered by Human Resources. The Town Manager has the sole responsibility for granting waivers or amendments to this administrative policy.

The Human Resources Director, under the directive of the Town Manager, shall be responsible for planning, organizing, directing and coordinating the personnel activities of the Town.

Department heads and supervisors are expected to become knowledgeable of the rules and regulations contained herein and are responsible for compliance with personnel policies and procedure in their respective departments. Any question as to the interpretation or understanding of any personnel policy or procedure should be directed to Human Resources.

## **107. Personnel Objectives**

Effective Date: January 2014

- a) To recognize that the loyalty and cooperation of employees are of basic importance to the success and progress of the Town.
- b) To seek the advice of employees and to develop in managers and department heads an interest in listening attentively to questions and suggestions.
- c) To reward employees fairly and equitably based upon job evaluation and individual performance review, and to provide employee benefits and working conditions which will develop the Town's reputation as a good employer.
- d) To maintain regular channels of communication for the purpose of keeping employees informed about the Town's practices, issues, achievements, goals and plans.
- e) To recruit and hire competent people with the knowledge, skills, experience and abilities best suited to the Town's needs and develop them for positions of increasing responsibility.
- f) To promote from within whenever possible, considering, but not limited to, such factors as skills, experience, performance and potential, and to provide the assistance, encouragement and training necessary for advancement.
- g) To recruit, hire, train, pay and promote people and to provide privileges and conditions of employment without regard to race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability,

pregnancy, medical condition, marital status, parental status, veterans status or any other characteristic protected by law.

- h) To implement these personnel policies by publishing uniform personnel practices and procedures.

## 108. Business Ethics and Conduct

Effective Date: January 2016

The continued success of the Town is dependent upon our citizens' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. The Town will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its department heads, supervisors, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws, and to avoid any illegal or unethical conduct.

In order to comply with the 2009 Ethics Reform Act, all public employees are required to complete an ethics training program every two years. New employees must complete the training within 30 days of becoming a public employee and every two years thereafter. After successfully completing the training on the state Ethics Training website - [www.muniprogram.state.ma.us](http://www.muniprogram.state.ma.us), employees must print and submit a copy of the certificate to the Human Resource office so that the Town has a record that this mandatory course was completed. *The official copy of the same must also be filed with the Town Clerk.*

In accordance with section 9-1 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, certain exempt employees are required to complete a Statement of Financial Interest. The statement is a supplement to the State Conflict Law and it prohibits Town employees from making or participating in making any decision on any issue in which he/she has an economic interest, unless they comply with the State Ethics Commission's advice or rulings under the Conflict of Interest Law, G.L. c.268A.

Required reporting employees must complete and submit the statement within seven (7) seven days of employment, appointment, transfer or promotion. Any employee who does not comply with the terms of Ordinance shall be subject to appropriate discipline including suspension, or termination, consistent with any requirements of the state civil service law and the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, as well as to civil or criminal prosecution under any other applicable state laws.

Pursuant to the provisions of *Ordinance #D-2013-002 (effective date: November 15, 2013)* the Required Reporters are listed as following:

A. The following heads of departments or position holders:

- Assessors
- Fire Department
- Roadways (Highway)
- Building and Zoning Official (Inspector of Buildings)
- Plumbing and Gas Inspector
- Police Department
- Sealer of Weights and Measures
- Treasurer/Collector
- Town Accountant/Director of Finance
- Wiring Inspector/Assistant Inspector

B. The following Town officials and Town employees:

- Conservation Agent
- Health Agent and Assistant Health Agent
- Town Council
- Town Counsel and Associate Town Counsel
- Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager
- Veterans Agent

*See Town Council Ordinance #D-2013-002 for complete legislation. The requisite reporting form is available in the Town Clerk's Office.*

In general, the use of good judgment based on high ethical principles, will guide employees with respect to acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, employees shall discuss the matter openly with their immediate supervisor, department head, division director and, if necessary, with Human Resources for advice.

## **II. EMPLOYMENT**

### **201. Employment-At-Will**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town of Bridgewater is an employment-at-will employer. The policies and procedures contained herein are not meant to imply permanency in employment or property rights, nor a contract or binding agreement between the Town and an employee. The employment of an employee can be terminated at the discretion of the Town, with or without cause and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either the Town or the employee. The Town Manager, at his/her sole discretion, has the right to change the rules and policies as described herein at any time and the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time. This manual is not an employment contract. Moreover, no employee or representative of the Town of Bridgewater, other than the Town Manager, has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specific period of time, or to make any contrary agreement. Any and all such agreements must be in writing and signed by the Town Manager (*or his/her designee*) and the employee.

In the event of conflict between the rules and/or benefits contained in this manual and any collective bargaining agreement (CBA) the terms and conditions of the CBA shall prevail for members of the bargaining unit.

Unless otherwise provided by the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter the line of authority and responsibility for the Town of Bridgewater begins with the Town Manager and descends through the Assistant Town Manager, division directors, department heads, assistant department heads, various levels of supervisors, and ends with non-supervisory employees.

### **202. Equal Employment Opportunity**

Revision Date: January 2014

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions in the Town will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. The Town does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy, medical condition, marital status, parental status, veterans status or any other characteristic protected by law.

The Town prohibits and will not tolerate any such discrimination or harassment. This policy applies to all phases of the employment relationship – inclusive of recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfer, reduction in force, benefits, compensation and training.

Any employee with questions or concerns of discrimination in the workplace is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor, department head, division director or Human Resources. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Employees engaging in unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **203. Americans With Disabilities Act**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Access Board and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation may be provided to qualified individuals with a disability, where such disability affects the performance of essential job functions. The Town will follow state or local laws that provide individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

All requests for accommodation will be considered; as this information helps the Town recognize employees' special needs and provide assistance as needed.

Employees with questions or concerns should contact Human Resources.

## **204. Employment Applications**

Effective Date: January 2014

All applicants for employment will complete an official employment application form that shall be retained in the Human Resource Office for a reasonable period of time. The form will include a statement signed by the applicant certifying to the truthfulness and accuracy of all information provided on the form. Resumes may be accepted as supplements to the application, but not as substitutes.

## **205. Background Checks**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town requires that all final candidates, prior to being hired or considered for a position, consent to a background check. Background verification - *including but limited to employment verification, reference check, educational credential verification, credit check, driver's license records validation, and Criminal Offenders Record Information (CORI) check* - is performed prior to and after a job offer is made and employment is contingent on its successful completion. Employees who do not successfully complete the background verification may be terminated, or the conditional offer of employment may be withdrawn.

## **206. Criminal Offenders Records Information (CORI)**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town of Bridgewater is a certified agency in accordance with M.G.L. c. 6 § 172(c) where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks authorized by law or regulation for employment, contract or vendor work, volunteer work and licensing purposes with the Town.

The Town will conduct CORI checks as authorized by the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB), or its successor, the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) in conjunction with general background checks for any prospective employee, including full-time, part-time or contract employees, interns, volunteers, independent contractors, or for licensing purposes, where applicable.

Applicants will be notified that a CORI check is planned and will be required to sign an authorization form prior to the CORI check being conducted. Additionally, the Town is required to verify the Applicant's identity by reviewing a form of government-issued identification. All Applicants will be supplied with a copy of the Town's CORI policy.

Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an Applicant from consideration. However, information contained in a CORI check may be used in making the final determination in offering employment or authorizing service as an intern, volunteer, or independent

contractor. Offers of employment may be made contingent upon receipt and review of CORI information. Determinations of suitability based on CORI checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable laws and regulations.

CORI checks may be performed prior to and after a job offer is made and employment is contingent on its review of information. Candidates whose records are determined to be unsuitable will have their conditional offer of employment withdrawn. (*see Appendix – CORI Policy*)

## **207. Employment of Relatives**

Effective Date: January 2014

For purposes of this policy, a relative is defined as: spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, first cousin, or corresponding in-law, “step”, or “half” relation.

Applications for employment received from individuals who have immediate family members currently employed by the Town will be given the same consideration as other applicants for the same position and will not be given preferential consideration.

An employee shall not supervise, either directly or indirectly, the work of a relative which involves hiring, dismissing, disciplinary action, promotional evaluation, performance appraisal or work assignment.

If this situation arises through a change in family composition or a job transfer/promotion, the affected employees shall immediately report the situation to Human Resources. The employees may be separated by reassignment or terminated from employment as deemed necessary by the Town Manager.

Relatives of present employees will not be hired into the same department. Under no circumstances shall any relative of any division director, department head or of any of the employees in the Town Manager's Office be employed in a full-time or regular part-time position within the Town. This restriction does not apply to seasonal or temporary positions.

## **208. The Hiring Process**

Revision Date: January 2014

Pursuant to section 5-2 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, individual department heads may select their employees.

The Town is committed to fair and consistent processes and procedures for the hire of new employees. To ensure this outcome, Human Resources will direct all activities relative to the advertisement and posting of vacancies, recruitment, screening and interview of applicants.

### **ADVERTISEMENT AND JOB POSTING**

Job vacancy notices shall be developed, with input of the department head and/or division director, based upon the position description on file in the Human Resources office. Job vacancy notices shall not be required for temporary appointments or for the temporary replacements of incumbents on approved leave.

The position description on file with the Human Resource office is the official description of duties of the position. All postings and advertisements shall include:

- a) position title;
- b) salary or salary range;

- c) a brief description of the duties;
- d) minimum qualifications;
- e) name and address to which to send applications;
- f) last day for filing applications; and
- g) an AA/EEO statement.

Internal applicants will be considered prior to external candidates if they meet minimum entrance requirements. The Town Manager/designee shall approve the funding availability of all job advertisements prior to publication.

Job notices and advertisements may be placed in local newspapers, Boston newspapers, cable bulletin boards, trade journals and/or employment websites as deemed appropriate by Human Resources; after consultation with the division director, department head and/or Town Manager.

#### SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING

The Human Resources Director will screen resumes and applications based on criteria established prior to receipt of resumes. Selected resumes and applications meeting established criterion will be forwarded to division director and department head for review and selection for interview. The Human Resources Director/designee will direct the interview process of all candidates and advise department heads relative to their final selections.

The following are the procedural guidelines:

- a) Devise standard selection questions which are not gender or race biased, and use the same questions for all candidates;
- b) Screen resumes for minimum entrance requirements;
- c) Select candidates for interview;
- d) Notify successful candidates of selection (*by telephone or email*) and then interview those candidates;
- e) Select candidates for final (*or second*) interview, contact references and conduct final interviews;
- f) Select final candidate. Review offer to candidate with Division Director or Department leader and secure approvals if offering higher than minimum entrance rates;
- g) Offer the candidate employment in writing; and
- h) Notify unsuccessful candidates.

## **209. Personnel File Contents**

Effective Date: January 2014

Employee personnel files are maintained by Human Resources office. These files include all data relating to employee status, history, performance, training, commendations, discipline, qualifications, and the like. Employee records and information relative to benefits enrollment and payroll elections are maintained in the Finance Department's Treasury and Accounting offices, respectively.

Personnel files may also include other information deemed relevant by the Human Resources Director. Employee medical information is maintained in a separate medical file in Human Resources. Department leaders are responsible for forwarding appropriate documents to Human Resources for inclusion in the personnel files of department employees.



## 210. Access to Personnel Files

Revision Date: January 2014

Personnel files are the property of the Town. With reasonable advance notice, employees may view their personnel file in the Human Resources office in the presence of a staff member at any time during normal working hours. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain prior approval of their department head to be absent from their place of duty while reviewing their file. Otherwise, only department head/leaders and/or management personnel with specific need to do so may review personnel files. Information contained in personnel files shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed except as authorized by the Massachusetts Public Records Law or in writing by the employee.

Access to medical files maintained by the Town is limited to authorized Human Resources personnel. The information contained in medical files is subject to the Town's confidentiality policy and may also be subject to other state and federal privacy laws (i.e., HIPAA). (*see 415. Confidential Information*)

## 211. Personal Information Changes

Effective Date: January 2014

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Town of any changes in personal data. Personal mailing addresses, personal email address (*to receive statement of wages*), telephone numbers, names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such status reports shall be kept accurate and current at all times. Any change in personal data shall be provided to Human Resources and the Finance Treasury office as soon as possible.

## 212. Initial Employment Period (*Probationary Period*)

Effective Date: January 2014

The initial employment or probationary period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. The Town uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. Either the employee or the Town may end the employment relationship at any time during or after the introductory period, with or without cause or advance notice.

All new and rehired employees work on a probationary basis for the first ninety (90) working days after their date of hire. Department heads may, with the consent of the Human Resources and the Town Manager extend the probationary period for a specific measure of time.

An employee's appointment will become permanent upon written notice that the probationary period has been successfully completed following period of service required or as extended. Except as otherwise provided by law or a collective bargaining agreement, completion of the probationary period does not necessarily confer rights or privileges in the position.

During the initial employment period, new employees are eligible for benefits required by law, such as workers' compensation and pension accrual. They may also be eligible for Town provided benefits, subject to the terms and conditions of each benefits program.

Upon promotion or transfer, written performance evaluations will be scheduled three (3) months from the promotion/transfer date, and every twelve (12) months thereafter. This allows the department head and employee to discuss job performance in the new position.

In the event the employee's performance or conduct is not satisfactory, the town may dismiss the employee from employment at any time during the probationary period. If the performance or conduct of an employee serving a probationary period that has been promoted or transferred is not satisfactory, the employee may be returned to the employee's former permanent position provided the position has not been filled and the department head is in agreement.

## **213. Whistle Blowing**

Effective Date: January 2014

It is an employee's responsibility to report to the administration any violations of departmental rules or safety policy, theft or destruction of Town property, harassment, or any other conduct in conflict with the Town's work regulations, including related actions by non-employees. The reporting of such conduct shall include documented information, reliable sources and concrete facts. No employee shall be disciplined or retaliated against for providing such information in accordance with this policy.

## **214. Outside Employment**

Effective Date: January 2014

Employees may hold outside jobs if they continue to meet performance standards, maintain efficiency, and there is no time conflict or conflict of interest. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards and will be subject to the Town's scheduling demands, regardless of outside work requirements.

Employees are required to notify their division director or department leader of outside employment, including self employment, which is functionally equivalent to the employee's duties performed on behalf of the Town.

If the division director or department head determines the outside employment creates a decrease in performance, loss of efficiency, a conflict of schedules or interest, the employee shall either not accept or shall terminate the outside employment. No employee shall engage in outside business during the employee's working hours.

## **215. Re-employment**

Revision Date: January 2014

While the Town is under no obligation to re-employ or give preference to former employees, all qualified persons are encouraged to apply. Previous personnel records will be made available for the selection process. If a person is re-employed that person will accumulate annual leave and related benefits at the rate of a new employee, unless re-employed within sixty (60) days of the termination date or within one hundred-eighty (180) days of layoff due to a reduction in force or as determined by the Town Manager.

### III. COMPENSATION & PERFORMANCE

#### 301. Employment Categories and Job Classification

Revision Date: January 2014

Each position in the Town has been given a job title and is classified as either exempt or non-exempt for payroll and benefit purposes. Employees will be advised upon commencement of employment of their job classification and title. The Town reserves the right to change the job classification or title of any employee or position as appropriate to reflect changes in job duties or the requirements of applicable federal or state laws.

It is the intent of the Town to clearly define definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. Each position is designated as either NON-EXEMPT or EXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws.

- NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES. Non-exempt employees include all employees who are covered by the overtime and/or compensatory time provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or applicable state laws.
- EXEMPT EMPLOYEES. Exempt employees include all employees who are classified by the Town as exempt from the overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or applicable state laws.

A position's NON-EXEMPT or EXEMPT classification may be changed only upon written approval of the Town Manager pursuant to the FLSA.

In addition to the above classification, each employee will be designated as one of the following:

- REGULAR FULL-TIME employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work the Town's full-time schedule. *For exempt employees, full-time hours equal 40 hours weekly. For non-exempt employees, full-time hours equal 35 or 40 hours weekly.* Generally, they are eligible for the Town's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefit program.
- REGULAR PART-TIME employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work on the Town's weekly schedule of 20 hours but less than 35 hours or 40 hours. Generally, they are eligible for the Town's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefit program.
- PART-TIME employees are those who are regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week. While they do receive all legally mandated benefits (*such as workers' compensation*), they may be ineligible for the Town's other benefit programs.
- SEASONAL employees may work regular full-time or part-time hours during certain times of the year but employment terminates at the close of the season. While they do receive all legally mandated benefits, they are ineligible for the Town's other benefit programs.
- TEMPORARY/INTERMITTENT employees are those who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change. While temporary employees receive all legally mandated benefits (*such as workers' compensation and pension*), they are ineligible for the Town's other benefit programs.

## 302. Salary Administration

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town's objective is to achieve consistent pay practices, comply with federal and state laws, and offer competitive salaries within our labor market.

The Town recognizes that recruiting and retaining talented employees is critical to our success. As such, the Town is committed to paying its employees fair wages that reflect the requirements and responsibilities of their positions; based upon the experience and education applicable to the job.

The Classification and Compensation system ensures the following goals are achieved:

- Each position is assigned a job grade.
- Within each job grade there are established salary ranges. Each range is broad in order to allow adjustment based on skill development and job performance. Jobs are analyzed, compared to similar jobs within the Town and similar organizations, and placed accordingly into the applicable job grade.
- Wage rates and salaries are to be reviewed for appropriateness and are comparable to both positions in the organization and that of similarly situated employees in comparable municipalities.

Employees shall present pay related questions or concerns to the attention of their department head/leader. Typically, salary adjustments and revisions will only be addressed during the annual budget process. Division directors and department leaders at any time; however, may discuss concerns relative to the salary administration with the Town Manager. Changes and revisions to salary are subject to the availability of funding and the provisions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

## 303. Timekeeping

Revised Date: January 2014

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. Federal and state laws require the Town to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. "Time worked" means the time actually spent on the job performing duties as authorized and assigned by management.

Employees shall accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each meal period. They shall also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. For non-exempt employees overtime work must always be approved by their department head before it is performed. Employees are required to follow all policies and procedures of the timekeeping systems provided.

Incorrect reporting of time, altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record without permission shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

It is both the employees' and department leaders' responsibility to approve time records certifying the accuracy of all time recorded. The department leaders will review the time record before submitting it for payroll processing. In addition, if corrections or modifications are made to the time record the employee shall be notified of the change by the department leader.

Approved time records are to be submitted to the Finance Department's accounting office by 4:00 p.m.

on the Wednesday following the end of the pay period unless as otherwise directed by the Finance Director. Exceptions to the deadline may result when holidays occur during a pay week. These exceptions will be communicated as they occur.

Department leaders shall contact the Finance Department's accounting office or Human Resources with timekeeping questions.

### 304. Overtime

Effective Date: January 2014

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees may be required to work overtime hours. Advance notification of these mandatory assignments shall be provided whenever possible.

Non-exempt employees are not permitted to work any overtime or perform any job duties or functions outside of their normal working hours unless the work is scheduled and approved in advance.

Non-exempt employees who are required or permitted to work overtime will receive overtime pay in accordance with the requirements of all applicable state and federal laws. Although non-exempt employees will be paid for all overtime hours worked, unauthorized overtime may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### 305. Compensatory Time

Effective Date: January 2014

Employees may receive compensatory time for hours worked in excess of their normal work week pay in accordance with the requirements of all applicable state and federal laws. Compensatory time may be earned and/or used in the same week as leave time. The accumulation, use, and administration shall be under the following guidelines:

- A. Management positions and/or Department Heads/leaders are scheduled for forty (40) hours per week but require whatever hours per week may be necessary to fulfill job responsibilities.

Management employees may not accrue or request compensatory time. *Under no circumstances shall compensatory time be granted to management personnel.*

- B. Professional, confidential, administrative, and supervisory employees designated as FLSA exempt employees may request compensatory time for hours worked within the following guidelines:
  - Work plan must be scheduled and approved in advance.
  - No more than thirty (30) hours may be accrued for compensatory time.
  - No more than twenty-eight (28) hours (*or thirty-two (32) hours if scheduled work week is forty (40) hours*) of compensatory time may be taken consecutively.
  - Employees must use compensatory time within six (6) months of its accrual.

Employees will normally be granted compensatory time within the above guidelines upon request. The Town Manager may grant compensatory time in excess of the above guidelines in specific cases, such as a particularly prolonged period of excess hours required or a particularly large number of excess

hours required in a short period of time.

Record keeping shall be accomplished by recording the compensatory time on the attendance sheets submitted to the Finance Department's accounting office.

As the Town compensates its employees in accordance with the requirements of all applicable state and federal laws for hours worked, unauthorized accumulation of compensatory time may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **306. Pay Periods/Paydays**

Revision Date: January 2014

All employees are paid once weekly on Tuesday. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period.

Except for employees approved to work an alternate work schedule or shift variation by the Town Manager, the standard workweek shall begin at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday morning and end at 12:00 midnight Wednesday evening.

In the event a regularly scheduled payday falls on a holiday, employees will be paid on the last business day before the regularly scheduled payday.

Employees will have pay directly deposited into their bank accounts.

Employees will receive via email an itemized statement of wages when the Town makes direct deposits. It is the employee's responsibility to promptly notify the Town with any change to the email address at which the itemized statement of wages is to be sent. (*see 211. Personal Information Changes*)

Direct deposit forms are available in the Finance Department's accounting office. (*see 308. Direct Deposits*)

### **307. Pay Deductions**

Revision Date: January 2014

The law requires the Town make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these are applicable federal and state withholdings.

The Town offers benefit programs beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may authorize deductions from their pay checks to cover the costs of participation in these programs.

Court ordered pay deductions which may affect an employee are garnishments, child support orders, etc. The Finance Department's treasury office will supply the employee with a copy of court ordered pay deductions.

Questions concerning why deductions were made or how they were calculated shall be directed to Finance Department's treasury office.

### **308. Direct Deposits**

Effective Date: July 2014

The direct deposit of pay to a financial institution is mandatory for all employees. This program allows employees the flexibility of simultaneously distributing funds to more than one account. It also provides employees the security of knowing that pay will be deposited automatically, even during an absence



from work. Employees receive via email a Statement of Wages (*Direct Deposit Advice*) prior to payday, itemizing deductions and deposit amounts. It is the responsibility of the employee to promptly notify the Town of a change to the personal email address to which the Statement of Wages is to be delivered. (*see 211. Personal Information Changes*)

Information about direct deposit and forms are available in the Finance Department's treasury office.

### **309. Pay Advances**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town does not provide pay advances to employees.

### **310. Payroll Change Authorizations**

Revision Date: September 2014

No changes shall be made to an employee's compensation without the written approval of the Town Manager (or his/her designee) and verification of the availability of funds by the Finance Director (or his/her designee).

To ensure this outcome, requests for changes must be submitted on the *Town's Payroll Change Authorization Form (as revised 9-2-2014)*. The *Town's Payroll Change Authorization Form (PCAF)* is a multi-purpose form used to make and document requests for changes in compensation. The PCAF must be fully completed and signed by the Department Head before submitting to Human Resources for review. *The preferred method of delivery of the PCAF is via email.*

Submission of a *Payroll Change Authorization Form* in no way confers approval of a request. Requests are not approved unless signed by the Division Director or Department leader (*expect for new Hires*), Human Resource Director and/or the Town Manager.

### **311. Administrative Pay Corrections**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town takes all reasonable steps to ensure employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event there is an error in the amount of pay, the employee shall promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of their department head/leader so corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

### **312. Performance Evaluations**

Revision Date: January 2014

Division directors, department heads/leaders and employees are encouraged to discuss job performance and expectations on an informal, day to day basis. Formal performance evaluations are conducted to provide both managers and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting expectations. It is expected that department head/leaders formally establish their expectations for each employee and share those expectations with each employee.

Each department head/leader is responsible for preparing a formal performance evaluation of their employees, both full time and part time, at least once per year. The evaluations are to be prepared on the appropriate evaluation form provided by Human Resources. Employees are expected to meet standards of satisfactory performance. As a reward for performance, employees who meet, or exceed established expectations of performance may be eligible for a merit or step increase depending on the level of performance and the provisions of the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Employees who fail to meet established expectations of performance or fail to correct or improve performance deficiencies may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Formal performance evaluations for new, newly promoted, or transferred employees are scheduled following the successful completion of their first ninety (90) working days probationary period. Consecutive performance evaluations will be scheduled every twelve (12) months from this review date. Employees not meeting expectations during a performance evaluation will receive a follow-up review in three (3) months. This second review does not change the employee's annual review date.

As the needs, conditions, and resources of the Town change, the performance evaluation system will adapt so it can contribute to the effectiveness of the organization.

### **313. Call Back and On-Call (Non-emergency personnel)**

Effective Date: January 2014

During periods of emergency, as deemed by the Town Manager, all employees may be subject to call back as needed by the Town to provide necessary, uninterrupted services to the public.

Each department head/leader shall maintain an on-call list of employees with current contact information. The on-call list shall be available to all employees to review on a reasonable basis. Employees must be called from the top of the list down and the list should be updated as necessary to move those who last worked call out duty to the bottom of the list. When an employee is called, the employee must respond to the call by either answering the call directly or returning the call as soon as they get the message. Response should not be unnecessarily delayed for any reason. If an employee is unavailable to respond to a call-out, they must immediately notify their department head/leader.

The Town provides additional compensation for non-exempt employees who respond to unexpected, unscheduled situations in order to perform necessary work of an emergency nature at a time other than during the employee's regularly scheduled hours of work. When an employee is called back to work after leaving the premises and outside of the employee's regularly scheduled hours of work, the employee shall be paid for actual time worked upon arrival at the worksite, or a minimum of two hours, whichever is greater (the "guaranteed call-back period"). If the employee completes his/her original assignment and is called back again at a time that is within the "guaranteed call-back period" he/she will be considered still on the clock from the initial call and shall not receive additional compensation. The employee shall receive compensation for all hours actually worked in excess of the initial two hours.

Callback compensation will be calculated at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate. The provisions of the policy apply to non-exempt personnel only.

### **314. Working out of Classification**

Effective Date: January 2014

Skilled labor employees may be asked to perform duties outside of their normal responsibilities that are typically performed by someone assigned to a higher pay range. Under certain circumstances, when the skilled labor employee must perform these additional responsibilities in the place of another employee



for extended periods of time, or if the responsibilities require the utilization of special skills that are not required as part of their regular job, the division director or department head/leader may recommend additional compensation.

Employees shall only be eligible for additional compensation if they perform all of the significant duties and responsibilities of the higher range position for forty (40), or more, consecutive work hours. During the time an individual serves in such capacity, they shall be paid at a rate 6% higher than their normal rate. Employees shall not be eligible for additional compensation if they serve in such capacity for less than forty (40), consecutive work hours.

### **315. Employee Development & Training**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town is committed to supporting employees in their professional development. To provide opportunities for career advancement and growth, the Town offers a variety of training programs. Available courses, times, locations and dates for available training programs are communicated on a regular basis. Employees should discuss professional development goals with their department head to determine the courses in which to enroll.

Employees are required to attend at least three (3) Town provided training sessions each calendar year.

### **316. Job Transfers and Promotions**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town encourages all employees to apply for higher-level positions or lateral transfers for which they qualify. Open positions are posted regularly. Employees who wish to apply for a transfer or promotion should discuss it first with their department head. Generally, employees should be in their job for at least six (6) months before applying for a change in position. In addition, employees must have a good performance and attendance record. Qualified employees interested in applying for any of the posted positions should follow established procedures as outlined in *Section II - Employment* of this manual.

The Town may, in its discretion, determine that certain positions need not be posted, and reserves the right to hire qualified candidates without posting positions. The Town also reserves the right to transfer, reassign, demote or promote employees to support reasonable and necessary organizational needs.

Employees with questions should contact Human Resources for more information.

### **317. Change In Status Adjustments**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town supports and encourages employees to build their careers within the organization. From time to time, the Town may extend opportunities for employees to alter their current positions to suit organizational needs or to assume positions in different departments. If the Town chooses to extend these opportunities, in general, the employee will retain their seniority and other applicable benefits.

#### **CHANGE IN STATUS GUIDELINES**

While these guidelines cannot address every situation that may arise, generally, these guidelines affect the accrual of current calendar year sick, vacation and personal time. In no case shall vacation

carry-over time be adjusted to meet an employee's change in status.

#### ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for an accrual adjustment includes:

- Employees whose status changes from exempt to non-exempt will have their leave accrual rate adjusted to match their length of service to the accrual rate on the non-exempt personal leave schedule.
- Employees whose status changes from non-exempt to exempt will have their accrual rate adjusted, if necessary. Affected employees will receive an accrual rate that matches their length of service on the exempt personal leave schedule.
- An employee whose full time equivalency (FTE) changes or who changes from part-time to full-time (or vice-versa) will maintain his or her accrual balances. As of the beginning of the next pay period after the effective date of the change, accruals will be earned at the appropriate new rate.
- An employee going from a non-accruing position to an accruing position may have his or her length of service credited when the applicable accrual rate is determined. The employee will not be required to observe a waiting period for vacation accrual use if the employee has been with the Town for at least six (6) months.
- An employee whose workweek changes from 35.0 hours to 40.0 hours or vice-versa will maintain his or her accrual balances. As of the beginning of the next pay period after the effective date of the change, accruals will be adjusted as appropriate to the new accrual rate.
- In the case, where an employee's time is "top-loaded" or added on January 1st, 5.0 hours will be added to each earned but unused vacation week(s) as of the date of the change. i.e. – *Employee A is eligible for 3 weeks of vacation at 35 hours per week on January 1. The employee used 1 week (35 hours of vacation) on January 15. Employee's change in status begins February 1 and new work week is 40.0. Employee's vacation time is adjusted for new work schedule. Accordingly, 5.0 is added to the vacation balance for each of the 2 remaining weeks of vacation.*
- An employee going from an accruing position to a non-accruing position will cease to accrue, but will maintain his or her accrual balances. If the employee is changing to a seasonal position, or a position where he or she cannot charge his or her accrued vacation leave, then the employee will be paid for that time upon reassignment.

The Town recognizes that exceptions to these guidelines may occur. Granting of such exceptions will be noted in writing, be approved by the Town Manager (or his/her designee) on a case-by-case basis. An overall review of these guidelines - and the exceptions thereto - will be annually reviewed.

All *Change in Status Adjustments* must be reviewed by Human Resources and approved by the Town Manager (or his/her designee) in writing and recorded on the Town's Payroll Change Authorization Form.

Employees with questions should contact Human Resources for more information.

## 318. Longevity Awards

Revision Date: January 2014

In recognition of length of service, the Town pays an annual bonus to employees upon completion of ten (10) years service or more. Regular, full-time employees are eligible to receive longevity awards.

Part-time employees under twenty (20) hours/week, seasonal employees, temporary employees, and per-diem employees do not qualify for longevity awards.

The longevity awards shall become effective on the employee's ten (10) year anniversary. No longevity award will be paid prior to the individual's anniversary date and the employee must be currently employed at the time that the award is due.

Generally, these longevity payments are non-cumulative and are made in accordance with the following schedule:

- 10 years of service through 14 years: 1% base wage increase
- 15 years of service through 19 years: 2% base wage increase
- 20 years of service through 24 years: 3% base wage increase
- 25+ years of service : 4% base wage increase

In no case shall a full-time hourly or salaried employee receive more than 4% in annual longevity compensation.

### **319. Employment Separation**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town is an at-will employer. Employment is not for a specified term and is at mutual consent of the employee and the Town of Bridgewater. Termination of employment is part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine.

Employees are asked to give adequate written notice, of at least ten (10) working days, if there is a decision to leave the employ of the Town, so an orderly transition of responsibilities may be arranged. The written notice should indicate the reason for leaving, the employee's last day of work, and must be signed by the employee.

The Town may schedule an exit interview at the time of employment termination. The exit interview will afford an opportunity to discuss such issues as employee benefits and return of Town-owned or leased property. Employee suggestions, complaints, and questions can also be discussed.

Since employment with the Town is based on mutual consent, both the employee and the Town have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause, at any time. Employees will receive their final pay in accordance with applicable laws.

## IV. A PROFESSIONAL WORKPLACE

### 401. Open Communication

Effective Date: January 2014

Division Directors, department heads/leaders and employees are encouraged to communicate openly and honestly on a regular basis. Open communication should allow everyone to feel comfortable doing the following things:

- Communicating needs and expectations
- Asking questions and discussing problems
- Sharing any suggestions to improve work processes and team performance

Department head/leaders are an important link to many of the resources available for an employee's personal and professional development. When assistance or support is needed, employees should begin with their department head/leader.

Human Resources may also provide information or answer questions regarding Town policies or other work-related issues.

### 402. Chain of Command and Council Communications

Effective Date: January 2014

The Bridgewater Home Rule Charter section 2-6(4). *Exercise Of Powers; Quorum; Rules Of Procedure* states: “The town council shall deal with the officers and employees serving under the town manager solely through the town manager and the council president shall not give any orders or directions to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately”.

Further, Bridgewater Home Rule Charter section 1-3. *Division of Powers* states: “All legislative powers of the town shall be exercised by a town council. The administration of all town fiscal, business and municipal affairs shall be vested in the executive branch headed by the town manager”.

The chain of command is an effective business tool to maintain order and assign accountability in most business environments. Following the proper chain of command etiquette not only improves business operations, it helps the organization run more smoothly and efficiently. The Town Council serves as the Legislative Body and direct policy decisions for Town. The Town Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer charged with the direction of all town fiscal, business and municipal affairs.

To adhere to spirit and intent of the applicable Charter provisions and to ensure that division directors, department heads/leaders and employees have clearly delineated lines of authority for the Town Council and Town Manager as provided in the Home Rule Charter, the following rules shall be adhered to:

1. Unless otherwise provided by the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter the line of authority and responsibility for the Town of Bridgewater begins with the Town Manager and descends through the Assistant Town Manager, division directors, department heads/leaders, assistant department heads/leaders, various levels of supervisors, and ends with non-supervisory employees.
2. No Department head/leader or employee shall communicate with members of the Town Council in their official capacity to represent or discuss organizational or departmental

- matters; or advocate for organizational or departmental needs, either publicly or privately. Department Head/leaders or employees with issues or requests that require Town Council approval shall bring their concerns to the Town Manager. The Town Manager may, in his/her discretion, bring forward these matters, issues and/or requests to the Town Council.
3. No Department Head/leader shall direct an employee to communicate with members of the Town Council, verbally or in writings, to represent or discuss organizational or departmental matters or advocate for organizational or departmental needs.
  4. Employees shall not communicate with members of the Town Council, either verbally or in writings, relative to departmental or organizational matters **except** in matters of emergency or as specifically directed by or as expressly authorized by the Town Manager.

Violations of the provisions of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### **403. Citizen Relations**

Effective Date: January 2014

Every employee represents the Town to the public. How employees present themselves and the way they perform their jobs presents an image of the entire organization. Citizens judge all Town employees by how they are treated with each employee contact. All employees are expected to be courteous, friendly, helpful, and prompt in the attention given to citizens.

Employees shall refrain from making recommendations, criticism, etc. of individuals, businesses or organizations during work time or when representing themselves as agents of the Town.

### **404. Employee Relations**

Effective Date: January 2014

It is the responsibility of all employees to be respectful, to be fair in treatment of others and to conduct themselves in a non-discriminatory manner in their associations with other employees.

For minor employee conflicts, the parties should first attempt to address the issue without a department head's intervention. If the issue persists, both parties should relay the information to their department head for further consideration and resolution.

### **405. Work Schedules, Meal Periods and Breaks**

Effective Date: January 2014

The standard work week for most Town employees will consist of five 8-hour days for exempt employees and public works employees and four 7.5-hour days (*Monday – Thursday*) and one 5.0- hour day (*Friday*) for most non-exempt employees. Alternate work schedules may be approved by the Town Manager based on a written request from the department head.

Unless specifically assigned to shift work or approved for an alternative work plan or modified schedule, all employees must start work no later than 8:00 a.m. Alternative work plans or modified work schedules and start times may be subject to change at any time by order of the Town Manager.

Breaks and meal periods are intended to provide an opportunity for rest and relaxation. Accordingly, they should be enjoyed away from employee work spaces where available.

A meal period is provided to employees scheduled to work 7.5 or more hours in a day. Meal periods are not considered hours worked and therefore are not compensated. A meal period consists of at least thirty consecutive minutes during which the employee is completely relieved from work. Meal periods will be scheduled by the employee's department head (*or his/her designee*). Meal periods must be coordinated within the department so that there is adequate coverage at all times during operational hours.

Two paid fifteen (15) minute breaks may be provided, as a privilege to employees, during a regular 7.5 hour work schedule. To the extent possible, break periods will be provided in the middle of work periods. The purpose of break periods is to provide employees with a short respite from normal work activities. Break periods are considered time worked. Department heads may; however, schedule break periods at any time to reflect departmental operating needs.

Since this time is counted and paid as "time worked" employees must not be absent from their work area or stations beyond the allotted break period time and are not allowed to use their personal vehicle while on break.

Break periods should not be combined with the meal period to extend the total length of the meal period, without prior approval of the department head or designee.

Under no circumstance shall the break period be accumulated to be taken together later in the day in order to shorten or truncate the normal work day. Employees that leave work early must be charged from their accrued vacation or comp time allotment and receive prior approval of the department head or designee.

Violations of the provisions of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **406. Attendance and Punctuality**

Revision Date: January 2014

Punctual and consistent attendance is a condition of employment. Employees are expected to be at their workstations, ready to begin work at the scheduled work time.

In instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they shall notify their department head/leader as soon as possible in advance of (*but not less than thirty (30) minutes*) the anticipated tardiness or absence. Direct notification by phone or email must be given by the employee to the appropriate department head or designee.

Employees are required to maintain regular contact for any period of unscheduled absence, unless the employee and department head agree to other arrangements.

Excessive, repeated or frequent absences are disruptive to the work flow of the Town. Employees should not assume that an absence is permissible merely because there is sufficient vacation or sick leave available to cover time off. Likewise, arriving late or leaving early in connection with schedule work times, breaks or meal periods must be pre-approved by the employee's department head.

Attendance records are maintained and tracked; and may be analyzed for trends. Excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. An employee absence of three consecutive working days, without contacting the employee's department head or designee, may be considered a voluntary resignation.

Employees with an approved alternative work plans, modified schedules or who exercise the option to telecommute (*see 405. Work Schedules, Meal Periods and Breaks and 407. Alternative Work Plan Options*) are encouraged to communicate their approved schedule with other departmental personnel.



Such communications alleviate undue concern and unnecessary confusion for other staff and help to create a harmonious work environment.

## 407. Alternative Work Plan Options

Effective Date: January 2014

Alternate Work Plan Options allow certain qualified employees and department heads some flexibility in defining when, where and how work is done. This flexibility is a critical driver of employee well-being and performance and is responsive to the changing professional demographics of the workforce. For many people, even a small amount of flexibility can make a tremendous difference in successfully balancing responsibilities at work and at home.

When properly managed, alternate work schedules have been shown to increase productivity, increase employee engagement and retention, provide extended coverage and cross training opportunities, and decrease unplanned absences.

The Alternate Work Plan Options available in the Town include the compressed workweek, flextime, and work away from premises/telecommuting.

- i. COMPRESSED WORKWEEK: Compressed workweeks are alternative work arrangements where a standard workweek is reduced to fewer than five days, and employees make up the full number of hours per-week by working longer hours.

The most common type of compressed workweek schedules are:

- 4/10 schedule (four 10-hour days per week).
- 9/80 schedule (80 hours in a two week period worked over nine days instead of ten)

- ii. FLEXTIME: Flextime is an arrangement that allows an employee to alter the start and end times of her/his work day around the normal schedule of 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Flextime does not reduce the total number of hours worked in a given workweek.
- iii. WORK AWAY FROM PREMISES/TELECOMMUTING: Telecommuting is a voluntary work arrangement available for certain qualified Town employees that allow those employees to work from another location for a specific period of time, linked to the Town by computer and/or phone.

Flexible work arrangements are not available for all positions or employees. Flexible work arrangements are not an employee entitlement or requirement, but a voluntary work assignment mutually agreed to by the employee and department head. The arrangement must be in the best interest of the Town. The focus in flexible work arrangements must be on results.

In general, an employee may initiate the request for an alternate work plan by submitting a proposal to her/his department head. Before entering into any flexible work arrangement or agreement, the division director, department head and Human Resources will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement. *Submission of a request does not constitute approval of the proposal.*

All Alternate Work Plan plans must be approved by the Town Manager. All requests must go through the appropriate approval process.

Employees with an approved alternative work plan, modified schedule or who exercise the option to telecommute are encouraged to communicate their approved schedule with other departmental personnel. Such communications alleviate undue concern and unnecessary confusion for other staff and help to create a harmonious work environment.

Employees with questions should contact Human Resources for more information.

## 408. Personal Appearance

Effective Date: January 2014

Personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the image the Town presents to customers and visitors. All employees, regardless of work location, are required to maintain a positive, clean and professional image at all times. This is particularly true for employees with jobs involving contact with customers or visitors in person.

Employees should wear professional, clean, tasteful and business or task-appropriate attire.

Employees shall dress and groom themselves according to the requirements of their position and accepted social standards.

Division directors and department heads may identify additional inappropriate dress items relevant to the work environment. If a department head feels an employee's personal appearance is inappropriate, the employee will be asked to leave the workplace until properly dressed or groomed. Under such circumstance, the employee will not be compensated for the time away from work. When necessary, reasonable accommodation may be made to a person with a disability.

Without unduly restricting individual tastes, employees are expected to refrain from wearing the following during work hours:

- Any clothing displaying advertising, unless endorsed or sponsored by the Town of Bridgewater
- Sweatpants, jogging suits and cut-off shorts
- Any clothing that reveals bare backs and midriffs
- Any inappropriate revealing, sheer or provocative clothing
- Tube tops, tank tops, halter tops or like shirts worn as outerwear
- Stretch pants, leggings, "jeggings" or the like
- Any hats, caps or head covering that bear offensive or distasteful logos and/or language as determined by the Town
- Ripped, excessively worn, or ragged denim pants of any color whether by design or deterioration
- Ill-fitted clothing (*i.e.* - pants, jeans, blouses, shirts, sweaters) which expose the stomach or buttocks are not acceptable. Employees should be able to reasonably bend, reach and stretch without exposure of these body parts.
- Shoes must provide safe, secure footing, and offer protection against hazards.
- Offensive body odor and poor personal hygiene are not professionally acceptable.
- Perfume, cologne and aftershave lotion shall be used moderately or avoided altogether, as some individuals may be sensitive to strong fragrances.

Employees shall comply with the requirements of this policy with appropriate business apparel, personal appearance and hygiene. Individual concerns and guidance should be directed to Human Resources.



## 409. Professional Standards of Conduct

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town endeavors to maintain a high level of public confidence. This can be sustained only if employees observe the highest standards of conduct and ethical behavior in the performance of their duties. Employees should be cognizant of the Town's ethical and legal responsibilities. Employee actions should be based on good judgment, reason and in good faith having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of the Town and the welfare of its residents.

The Town has established these *Professional Standards of Conduct* through its personnel policies and seeks to maintain standards of employee conduct and supervisory practices that will, in the interest of the Town of Bridgewater and its employees, support and promote effective operations. Employees are expected to follow the *Professional Standards of Conduct*, as well as observe all policies and procedures and applicable laws and regulations. Department head/leaders will ensure employees are informed of Town and departmental policies and procedures; as well as applicable laws, rules and regulations.

In most instances, good judgment will dictate appropriate behavior. However, the Town reserves the right to determine unacceptable behavior. While it is impossible to list every aspect of behavior which is or is not appropriate, the following list includes some examples of types of conduct that are considered impermissible. Violation of **any** of these may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- Violation of any rules contained within this manual.
- Inappropriate use of position with the Town for personal gain.
- Falsification of, destroying, or making a material omission on forms, records or reports including timesheets, employment applications, personnel records, customer records or other Town documents.
- Unauthorized possession of Town or employee property, gambling, carrying unauthorized weapons or explosives, or violating criminal laws on Town of Bridgewater premises or in Town vehicles or by using Town property.
- Fighting, throwing things, horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly conduct which may endanger the well-being of any employee or Town operations.
- Engaging in acts of fraud, theft or sabotage.
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, using abusive or vulgar language, or interfering with the performance of other employees.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Insubordination or refusal to comply with instructions, directions, or orders. Failure to perform reasonable duties which are assigned.
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of Town material, time, equipment or property.
- Damaging or destroying Town property through negligent, careless, or willful acts.
- Conduct that the Town feels reflects adversely on the employee, program/department or Town.
- Engaging in tantrums, tirades and related derisive or divisive activities which undermine morale.
- Engaging in such other practices as the Town determines may be inconsistent with the ordinary and reasonable rules of conduct necessary to the welfare of the Town, its employees or citizens.

- Failure to follow safety or security policies, procedures and regulations.
- Violating the Town's non-discrimination or anti-harassment policy.
- Establishing a pattern of excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Violation of personnel policies.
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.
- Conviction of a felony or of a misdemeanor involving baseness, vileness or depravity (moral turpitude).
- Violation of the law during on duty hours or off duty hours if the violation would tend to render the reasonable employer insecure, or the citizens of the Town insecure, in the continued employment of the employee.
- Failure to notify department head immediately after being charged with a misdemeanor or felony.
- Failure to notify the Town immediately after receiving a moving traffic citation or any citation while in a town vehicle.
- Reporting to work intoxicated or under the influence of prescribed or non-prescribed drugs.
- Illegally manufacturing, possessing, using, selling, distributing or transporting drugs.
- Failure to follow Federal, State or local laws and regulations.
- Other behavior or performance issues that in the opinion of the Town require disciplinary action.

Employees must notify the Human Resources of any arrests, the filing of any criminal charges, and the disposition of any criminal charges pending against them. Notification shall occur within five (5) business days of notification to the employee. Information relating to arrests and/or criminal charges shall be treated and maintained as part of the employee's confidential file.

## **410. Visitations**

Effective Date: January 2014

Family members or friends are welcome for occasional visits in the workplace. However, the frequent and extended presence of others during work hours is discouraged for the following reasons: the potential for interruption of work, health and safety issues and liability to the organization.

## **411. Reporting to Work During Inclement Weather**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town of Bridgewater provides a wide array of services, including many emergency related functions. Therefore, it is the Town's policy to maintain normal operating hours during inclement weather. Generally, all employees are expected to report to work. However, in case of a severe weather emergency, it may be necessary to adjust normal staffing levels. An employee who is unable to report to work due to inclement weather shall immediately contact their department head and shall use accrued compensatory time, annual vacation leave or personal leave.

For more information, please refer to the full Inclement Weather Policy (Appendix).

## 412. Acceptance of Gifts

Revision Date: January 2014

Employees should not directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gift – whether it be money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, promise, or any other form – under the following circumstances: (1) it could be reasonably inferred or expected that the gift was intended to influence them in the performance of their official duties; or (2) the gift was intended to serve as a reward for any official action on their part. This policy is not intended to isolate employees from normal social practices where gifts among friends, associates, and relatives are appropriate for certain occasions.

For more information, please refer to the Ethics Conduct law on the State Ethics Commission website at [www.mass.gov/ethics/summaries-of-the-law-in-english-spanish-portuguese.html](http://www.mass.gov/ethics/summaries-of-the-law-in-english-spanish-portuguese.html). (see 108. Business Ethics and Conduct)

The Town Clerk's Office may also provide some assistance in understanding the ethics law.

## 413. Media Policy

Revision Date: January 2016

The official spokesperson of the Town of Bridgewater is the Town Manager.

Unless express authorization has been given by the Town Manager to make media statements (*electronic, in person, or print*) on behalf of the Town, all requests for information shall be referred to the Town Manager's Office.

Exceptions to this policy are as follows:

- Matters of General Concern – The Town Attorney.
- Public Safety incidents – The Police and Fire Chiefs are fully authorized to respond to all inquiries.
- Public Works weather events – The Public Works Director or the Roadways Superintendent is authorized to respond to inquiries on snow and other inclement weather events.
- Public Health incidents – The Health Agent is fully authorized to speak on matters of public health.

Department head/leaders and employees who wish to make a public statement, engage in an interview, or in any way communicate with the media in any manner having to do with or referring to the Town of Bridgewater - whether at the employee's or the media's instigation – **must** have the expressed authorization of the Town Manager.

Town employees with questions on this policy or issues related to implementation shall raise their concerns with the Town Manager. Deviations from this policy may result in misinformation to the public, undue confusion or legal liabilities for the Town.

When media agents/reporters are present either in town offices or at town meetings or events, employees shall refrain from making comments, recommendations, criticism, etc. of individuals, businesses or the organization during work time or when representing themselves as agents of the Town.

Employees who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **414. Solicitations**

Effective Date: January 2014

Every effort is made to prevent interference with employees at their work. Sales representatives, collection agencies and other unauthorized people are not allowed in work areas during working hours without prior approval. Solicitations, fund raising drives and promotions must be authorized in advance by the Town Manager or his/her designee.

With the exception of such authorized solicitations, employees are not permitted to distribute or circulate any printed matter which tends to promote or publicize the activities of any individual or organization during working time or in established work areas. Any questions regarding solicitations or distributions shall be directed to Human Resources.

Under no circumstances shall any employee distribute or circulate any printed matter which promotes, defends, or references any political issue, candidate, or political group or fundraising entity during work hours or in established work areas.

## **415. Confidential Information**

Revision Date: January 2014

During the course of employment, employees may learn, see or acquire confidential information about the Town, other employees or our citizens. Such information is to be handled in strict confidence and is to be shared only with those persons within the Town who need to know such information. Employees are expected to deal with confidential information in a manner which complies with state and federal laws and regulations. All employees are expected to hold confidential information in the strictest confidence, whether such information is in written, electronic or spoken form. Such information shall only be reviewed, retained and/or discussed in private, and only for work-related purposes. Unauthorized access to confidential information is prohibited.

Confidential information may include, but is not limited to, medical and health information, passwords, citizen related discussions, employee records, other personal information regarding Town employees or former employees, economic development information, records of criminal investigations, and business or financial records.

Unless required by law, no employee may, during the term of employment or thereafter, use or disclose to others outside of the Town any confidential information. The Town recognizes the need to comply with reporting requirements as mandated by federal, state and Town laws and regulation.

### **BREACH OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Employees must recognize the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information could cause irreparable harm and be detrimental to the Town.

Inappropriate releases of confidential information shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who violate confidentiality laws may also be subject to sanctions as imposed by federal or state law.

All questions regarding the use and handling of confidential information, and all public or employee requests for such information shall be immediately forwarded to the Town Manager's Office.

## 416. Employment Verification and Official References

Effective Date: July 2014

The Town frequently receives requests from outside organizations for employment verification and references. In order to maintain a consistent policy throughout the Town concerning the release of employee information, all calls to verify employment or provide an official statement of reference should be referred to the Finance Department's treasury office (*or Human Resources for general verification only*). The Town will not release home addresses, home telephone numbers or Social Security numbers.

### RELEASE OF PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Only the following information concerning active or terminated employees is released by the Finance Department's treasury office upon receipt of a telephone or written request:

- Dates of employment
- Job classification or title
- Department in which the individual is or was employed
- Telephone extension on active employees, if requested

Written requests for additional information related to credit evaluation, employment references, mortgage applications, etc. will be provided only if a release form is signed and returned to Treasurer's Office by the employee.

Requests for employment information by the Division of Employment Security in Massachusetts and other states in connection with an unemployment compensation application will be provided, as required by law, without the use of a release form, since this inquiry is initiated by the terminated employee who has filed a claim.

Employees may be notified, whenever possible, when the Town is required to provide personnel information by a subpoena, warrant, or other court order.

### MORTGAGE VERIFICATION

If you are applying for a mortgage, your bank will send to the Town a request for employment verification. Since this request asks specifically for salary information, it is Town policy to have a signed letter of request in the Finance Department's treasury office before this information will be supplied. Upon receipt of the letter, the requested information will be returned to the lending institution.

If you know that your bank will be sending in a verification request form, please contact the Finance Department's treasury office to provide a written release. A copy of the release form will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

### GENERAL VERIFICATION

Human Resources will, at an employee's request, prepare a general letter which verifies employment in the Town. This letter is addressed "To Whom It May Concern" and contains the following information:

- Current (official) job title
- Original hire date
- Department in which you are currently working
- Current salary

A copy of the requested letter will be kept in the employee's personnel file. Under no circumstances shall an employee, other than the Finance Director (or designee), Treasurer (or designee), Human Resources Director (or designee) or Town Manager (or designee), provide information on other employees.

This policy does not, however, preclude employees from providing a personal reference if so requested by a colleague.

#### INSURANCE CLAIMS

The insurance claims that we receive contain requests for salary information, therefore the Town does not need a signed letter of request in Finance Department's treasury office before this information will be given. Upon receipt of a request for information, the requested information will be returned to the insurance carrier or law firm. A copy of the all forwarded information will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

### **417. Return of Property**

Effective Date: January 2014

Employees are responsible for all Town property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Employees must return all Town property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. The Town may withhold from the employee's check or final paycheck the cost of any items that are not returned when required. The Town may also take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property.

### **418. Use of Phone, Fax and Mail Systems**

Revision Date: January 2014

To ensure effective telephone communications, employees shall answer the phone with their Department and first names and speak in a courteous and professional manner at all times. Inaccurate messages, or calls not returned, reflect badly on the Town. Messages should contain the caller's name, company, phone number, and other important information. Confirm information received from the caller, and hang up only after the caller has done so. Employees shall advise callers prior to placing them on hold. When transferring a call employees shall advise the caller of the individual's name and title to whom they will be transferred.

Personal use of the telephone, facsimile systems, and mail system is allowed only with prior authorization from the department head/leader. Employees will be required to reimburse the Town for any charges resulting from personal use of the telephone and facsimile systems. When approved by the department head/leader, incoming and outgoing personal calls from Town phones and use of personal cell phones shall be limited in terms of number and duration so as to not interfere with Town business and overall employee performance.

The use of Town paid postage for personal correspondence is not permitted.

### **419. Town Equipment and Facilities**

Effective Date: January 2014

Equipment and furniture used by Town employees (*including offices, cubicles, desks, file cabinets, computers, and any other equipment in the work area*) are the sole property of the Town. The Town

reserves the right to open this property at any time, with or without notice or consent of the employee. This includes any owned, leased, operated or managed buildings, facilities, vehicles, storage facilities, parking lots and any other designated Town property.

When using Town equipment and vehicles, employees are expected to exercise care, follow required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Town property is for business use only.

It is the employee's responsibility to notify their department head/leader when any equipment, machine, tool, or vehicle appears to be missing, damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting could prevent equipment failure and possible injury to employees or others. Department head/leaders can answer more specific questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance, and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job. The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **420. Uniforms and Employee Identification**

Effective Date: January 2014

Uniforms may be provided for employees whose position has been identified as one that requires them to wear a uniform. Typically, employees in a job that causes clothing to become soiled on a regular basis will be required to wear a uniform. Upon written recommendation by the department head, the Town Manager will designate positions requiring uniforms.

It is mandatory that those employees that are provided uniforms wear their current uniform without substitution during all working hours. All uniforms must be returned to the Town when a new uniform is issued or upon termination of employment.

For employees that are not required to wear a uniform, a Town identification card will be provided. These employees are required to display their cards to identify themselves and their association with the Town at all times when conducting business on behalf of the Town. The identification card can be worn using a breakaway lanyard, clip-on badge reel or badge holder.

Identification cards include a color photograph of the individual, his or her full legal name, and department designation to indicate where that individual is employed. An individual who uses a nickname may have the nickname included in parenthesis on his/her badge if that is the primary name he/she uses. The Town provides these badges free of charge upon appointment. If a badge must be replaced, the badge holder may reimburse the Town for the cost of a new badge. *{Effective September 2016}*

Identification badges are the property of the Town and will be retained by the Town when an individual terminates his or her employment. Individuals will only be issued one identification badge at the time of employment.

Employees who are not required to wear a uniform may, *but are not required to*, purchase a shirt with the Bridgewater logo to wear at work.

## **421. Driver's Responsibilities**

Effective Date: January 2014

All employees who drive or may drive Town vehicles must have and maintain a driving record that is acceptable to the Town. Failure to maintain a current, properly classified Massachusetts driver's license



and/or an acceptable driving record may result in suspension or termination of employment if the driver's license is needed for the performance of essential job duties. In no case shall an employee operate a vehicle or vehicle/trailer combination unless properly licensed to do so.

Personal use of Town vehicles is strictly prohibited unless prior authorization is obtained from the Town Manager. Except for public safety personnel, personal use of a Town vehicle, where permitted, is considered a taxable employee benefit. Non-employees of the Town shall not operate a Town vehicle or be a passenger in any vehicle not intended to transport the public. Town vehicles are not to be left unattended with the key in the ignition and shall be locked when not in use. Seatbelts must be worn at all times by all drivers and passengers. (*see 422. Town Vehicles*)

Authorized drivers shall follow all traffic regulations and safe driving practices. Safe driving practices include steps to ensure the driver's total concentration and safe operation of vehicle, such as, but not limited to: determining clear directions before departing; not taking notes; eating; flipping through papers; manipulating radios, texting or using other equipment while the vehicle is moving; and not operating a vehicle when the ability to react is impaired. While operating a motor vehicle, employees shall either refrain from cell phone use altogether, use hands-free equipment that allows both hands to stay on the wheel, or pull over to the side of the road before making or accepting a call.

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on Town business must promptly report the accident to their immediate supervisor or department head who shall notify the Town Manager's Office and, if appropriate, the local public safety authorities.

Town employees shall be personally responsible for the payment of fines and any related costs for any traffic citations that are received while driving a Town vehicle. Under no circumstances shall citations be paid with Town funds.

## **422. Town Vehicles**

Effective Date: July 2014

The Town, as it deems necessary or appropriate, may acquire and allow utilization of vehicles for use by officials or employees of the Town, in the conduct of their employment responsibilities, either during the work shift or on a twenty-four (24) hour on-call basis. All new vehicles acquired by the Town shall be fuel efficient and adhere to the guidance of Criteria 4 published by the MA Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities Division. All new vehicles must be approved prior to order by the Town's Procurement Officer.

Town vehicles are for use by its officials or town employees only. Town vehicles are assigned; but may be used by other departments, as organizational needs dictate.

Town vehicles are not personal vehicles and are not for personal use. Town vehicles should be viewed as belonging to the citizens of Bridgewater and are assigned solely for purposes consistent with providing services to those citizens.

When town vehicles are not on town business, they are to be garaged at the appropriate town department office. Adherence to this policy ensures that Town vehicles are available for official town use. The appropriate garage location shall be determined by the Town. Exceptions to this policy are granted only for the following public safety department leaders:

- Chief of Police
- Deputy Police Chief (*or 2<sup>nd</sup> highest ranking officer in command structure*)
- Fire Chief



- Deputy Fire Chief (*or 2<sup>nd</sup> highest ranking officer in command structure*)
- Animal Control Officer

#### ASSIGNMENT OF TOWN VEHICLES FOR 24-HOUR USE (*Vehicle Approved for Commuting Purposes*)

- Requests for the assignment of vehicles for twenty-four (24) hour use will be made in writing by Division Directors or Department Heads to the Town Manager, and will only be considered for employees who require a vehicle for the ordinary and necessary discharge of their job functions. Criteria, which will be used in the determination of eligibility for 24-hour vehicle use, include:
  - officially designated on-call status;
  - requirement for frequent emergency availability;
  - emergency or other equipment contained in the vehicle;

Such assignment may be rescinded with reasonable notice by the Town Manager for work-related reasons.
- When commuting, vehicle use is limited to travel to and from the residence and place of work. The vehicle should be driven over the most direct route taking into account road and traffic conditions. The vehicle should not be utilized for travel outside a direct commuting route for personal reasons.
- The authorization for 24-hour use for commuting shall be re-evaluated annually.
- Employees assigned vehicles for 24-hour use involving a commute of more than twenty (20) miles one way shall reimburse the Town for the additional operational or maintenance cost as determined by the Town.

#### VEHICLE USE AND OPERATION

- Municipal vehicles shall have the Town seal or department insignia patches affixed on the drivers and passenger side doors (*except for unmarked Police vehicles*), and may only be used for legitimate municipal business.
- Municipal vehicles will not be used to transport passengers who are not directly related to municipal business. Passengers should be limited to Town employees and individuals who are directly associated with municipal work activity (*ie - committee members, consultants, contractors, municipal employees from other communities, or by others that have been granted special permission by the department head, etc.*).
- Vehicles should contain only those items for which the vehicle is designed. The Town shall not be liable for the loss or damage of any personal property transported in the vehicle.
- Employees are expected to keep municipal vehicles clean, and to report any malfunction or damage to their supervisor immediately.
- Employees are not allowed to transport animals in municipal vehicles unless they are service animals or transport is a job related function.
- Employees driving a Town vehicle shall not smoke or use tobacco products in such Town vehicle nor shall smoking or tobacco use be permitted by any passengers in such vehicle.
- It shall be the employee's responsibility to maintain the security of the vehicle and its contents

at all times it is in his or her possession. Drivers must also make sure that the vehicle has a valid Massachusetts State inspection sticker, oil is checked on a regular basis, tires have sufficient tread, and that the vehicle is kept clean, etc. No vehicle should be driven unless it is safe for the road.

- h) Employees and other vehicle passengers must wear seatbelts in Town vehicles so equipped during operation of the vehicle (*except for Police who must respond to an incident where the use of a seat belt may present an unsafe situation for the vehicle operator and/or occupant*).
- i) Employees are to refrain from using cell phones while driving municipal vehicles.
- j) Employees shall not operate municipal vehicles under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs or medication that may interfere with effective and safe operation of the vehicle. Employees are not permitted, under any circumstance, to operate a Town vehicle, or a personal vehicle for Town business, when any physical or mental impairment causes the employee to be unable to drive safely. This prohibition includes circumstances in which the employee is temporarily unable to operate a vehicle safely or legally because of illness, medication, or intoxication by drugs and/or alcohol. Employees operating a Town vehicle or personal vehicle for Town business must drive defensively and courteously at all times.
- k) Employees who operate municipal vehicles must have a valid motor vehicle license issued by the state of their current residence and may be required to provide proof of valid motor vehicle license once per year.
- l) Employees driving municipal vehicles shall obey all applicable traffic and parking regulations, ordinances, and laws.
- m) Employees who incur parking or other fines in municipal vehicles shall be personally responsible for payment of such fines.
- n) Employees who are issued citations for any offense while using a municipal vehicle must notify their supervisor immediately when practicable, but in no case later than twenty-four (24) hours. Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for disciplinary action.
- o) An employee who is assigned a municipal vehicle and who is arrested for or charged with a motor vehicle offense for which the punishment includes suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license, whether in his or her personal vehicle or in a municipal vehicle, must notify his or her supervisor no later than the beginning of their next work shift. Conviction for such an offense may be grounds for loss of municipal vehicle privileges and/or further disciplinary action.
- p) An employee who is involved in any motor vehicle accident involving a municipal vehicle shall contact their supervisor **immediately** who will contact the appropriate public safety agency.
- q) Employees must report to their direct supervisor or Department Head and the Town Manager's office any accident, theft, or damage involving a Town vehicle or a personal vehicle used on Town business, regardless of the extent of damage or lack of injuries. This report must be made as soon as practicable, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the accident.
- r) No employee may use a municipal vehicle for out of state use without advance approval of the Town Manager.

Time spent by non-exempt employee (*those covered by the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act*) in driving a Town or personal vehicle on Town business during normal working hours, is considered hours worked for pay purposes. Commuting time before the start and after the end of the workday is not treated as work time for pay purposes.

For part-time summer help hired under the auspices of the Parks & Recreation Department, or any like department, drivers must have a valid senior operator's license.

Failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal of Town vehicle privileges, suspension, and/or termination of Town services.

#### TAXABLE FRINGE BENEFIT

Employees authorized to use a twenty-four (24) hour Town vehicle may be subject to imputed income tax regulations as set forth by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which considers a certain portion of the vehicle use (*namely the commute*) to be income for the purposes of income taxation. The Town will use the IRS Publication 15-B, Employers Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits, Section 3, Commuting Rule in determining any tax liability and automatically update changes to the rate made by the IRS. The rule establishes a \$1.50 per one-way commute value as the non-cash taxable fringe value. This value will be includable in the employee's gross income reported on their W-2 at fiscal year-end (FYE) and is subject to all federal withholding taxes. Employees who are assigned marked police and fire vehicles, unmarked police vehicles or specialized vehicles carrying tools and meeting certain other eligibility criteria established by the IRS will not be subject to the commuting valuation. (see Publication 15-B 2015 Employer's Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits: [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p15b.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p15b.pdf))

### 423. Business Travel Expenses

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the department head.

Employees shall contact the Town Manager's office or the Finance Department's accounting office for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, and any other business travel issues. **Expenses deemed frivolous, excessive or ineligible for reimbursement will not be paid by the Finance Director/Town Accountant.**

Abuse of this business travel policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### 424. Computer and Email Usage

Revision Date: January 2014

Computers, computer files, the email system, email addresses, and software furnished to employees are Town property intended for business use. Employees shall not use a password, access a file, modify computer code, add or delete files, expose the system to outside threats, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and email usage may be monitored. Personal, incidental use of email must be limited to non-work hours. All files, communications, and material on the Town computer system may be subject to disclosure under provisions of the Massachusetts Public Records Law and/or Freedom of Information Law 5 USC 552. Computer files are business records of the Town; accordingly, they may be used in administrative, judicial or other proceedings to the extent allowed by law.

The Town strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, the Town prohibits the use of computers and the email system in ways that are

disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to: ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.

The email system shall not be used to solicit others for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-business matters, or to communicate personal preferences, criticisms or recommendations.

The Town purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, the Town does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer.

Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. The Town prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation and installation of personal software programs. Employees shall immediately notify their department head and/or the Information Technology Director upon learning of violations of this policy.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **425. Internet Usage**

Revision Date: January 2014

Internet access to global electronic information resources on the World Wide Web is provided by the Town to assist employees in obtaining work related data and technology. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure responsible and productive Internet usage. While Internet usage is intended for job related activities, incidental and occasional brief personal use is permitted during non-work time.

All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via our computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of the Town and, as such, is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees shall always ensure that the business information contained in Internet email messages and other transmissions is accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

The Town reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic, and retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through our online connections and stored in our computer systems.

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed or collected and stored via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any employee or other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

The unauthorized use, installation, copying, or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material on the Internet is expressly prohibited. As a general rule, if an employee did not create material, does not own the rights to it, or has not gotten authorization for its use, it shall not be put on the Internet. Employees are also responsible for ensuring that the person or source providing any material over the

Internet has the appropriate distribution rights.

Information Technology shall be notified prior to downloading programs from the internet. All downloaded files are to be checked for viruses; all compressed files are to be checked before and after decompression.

Abuse of the Internet access provided by the Town in violation of law or Town policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy.

The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing or threatening messages or images.
- Using the organization's time and resources for personal gain.
- Stealing, using or disclosing someone else's code or password without authorization.
- Copying, pirating or downloading software and electronic files without permission.
- Sending or posting confidential material or proprietary information outside of the organization.
- Violating copyright law.
- Failing to observe licensing agreements.
- Engaging in unauthorized transactions that may incur a cost to the organization or initiate unwanted Internet services and transmissions.
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the Town's image or reputation.
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of pornography or obscene materials.
- Sending or posting messages that defame or slander other individuals.
- Attempting to break into the computer system of another organization or person or other systems on the Town's network to which the user is not explicitly authorized.
- Refusing to cooperate with a security investigation.
- Sending or posting chain letters, solicitations, or advertisements not related to business purposes or activities.
- Using the Internet for political causes or activities, religious activities, or any sort of gambling.
- Jeopardizing the security of the organization's electronic communications systems.
- Sending or posting messages that disparage another organization's products or services.
- Passing off personal views as representing those of the organization.
- Sending anonymous e-mail messages.
- Engaging in any other illegal activities.
- Interfering with the successful operation of an individual's, the Town's, or another organization's computers or networks by causing excessive or unnecessary traffic or releasing hostile computer viruses, worms, or Trojan horse programs.

## 426. Cell Phone Usage

Revision Date: January 2014

### PERSONAL CELLULAR PHONES

While at work employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cellular phones as is expected for the use of company phones. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. Personal calls during work time should be within reasonable limits. Flexibility will be provided in circumstances demanding immediate attention. The Town, however, will not be liable for the loss of personal cellular phones brought into the workplace.

### PERSONAL USE OF TOWN PROVIDED CELLULAR PHONES

Where job or business needs demand immediate access to an employee, the Town may issue a cellular phone to an employee for work related communications. To protect the employee from incurring a tax liability for the personal use of this equipment, such phones are to be used for business reasons only. Phone logs will be audited regularly to ensure regular unauthorized use has not occurred.

Employees in possession of company equipment such as cellular phones are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage or theft. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time upon request, the employee may be asked to produce the phone for return or inspection. Employees unable to present the phone in good working condition within twenty-four (24) hours may be expected to bear the cost of a replacement. Employees who separate from employment with outstanding debts for equipment loss or unauthorized charges will be considered to have left employment on unsatisfactory terms and may be subject to legal action for recovery of the loss. The Town may deduct the cost of lost equipment or unauthorized charges from the employee's final paycheck.

As a Town representative, cell phone users are reminded that the regular business etiquette employed when speaking from office phones or in meetings applies to conversations conducted over a cell phone.

While operating a motor vehicle, employees shall either refrain from cell phone use altogether, use hands-free equipment that allows both hands to stay on the wheel, or pull over to the side of the road before making or accepting a call.

## 427. Social Media

Revision Date: January 2014

Given the multitude of concerns (*legal, political, and ethical*) raised by social networking (*Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, Tumblr, Yammer, SnapChat etc.*) the Town establishes prudent and acceptable practices regarding Town officials and employees use of social media platforms.

While the Town encourages its employees to enjoy and make good use of their off-duty time, certain activities on the part of its personnel may become a problem if they have the effect of impairing the work of any official or employee; harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile working environment; disrupting the smooth and orderly flow of work; or harming the goodwill and reputation of the Town among its citizens or in the community. For these reasons, the Town reminds its employees that the following guidelines apply in their use of social media, both on and off duty.

Under this policy, the Town disavows, and is not responsible for any sites, posts, opinions, or content not coordinated through and approved by the Town Manager or its Town Council. If Town personnel posts data purporting to be on behalf of the Town while using a social media site without the approval of the Town Manager, the Town is not responsible for that content, such content is not to be construed as

reflecting the views or opinions of the Town Council, Town Manager or Town management, and the Town is not responsible for archiving such content in accordance with the records retention schedule, or providing copies in accordance with the Massachusetts Public Records Law. Furthermore, the absence of explicit reference to a particular site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. If you are uncertain, consult your supervisor or department head before proceeding.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. While on duty, the use of Town equipment or internet service by personnel must be limited to work related tasks. Social media activities should never interfere with work commitments.
2. No employee may post online content as a representative of the Town, or on the Town's behalf without the Town Manager's approval.
3. If discussing Town related issues, but not posting online content as an approved representative of the Town or on the Town's behalf, all employee's must make it clear that they are speaking for themselves, and not on behalf of the Town by displaying a disclaimer that states: *"This is my own opinion and not necessarily the opinion or position held by the Town Council, Town Manager, its management staff or employees."*

#### GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL TOWN SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND CONTENT

- 1) All Town-sanctioned social media sites shall be maintained by the Town Manager or his/her designee(s). Any content to be posted on Town-sanctioned social media sites must meet the approval of the Town Manager before it is posted.
- 2) All employees that engage in social media activities on the Town's behalf and all Town sanctioned social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, including the Massachusetts Public Records Law and the records retention schedule. All content must be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
- 3) All online content posted as representative of the Town, or on the Town's behalf shall clearly indicate that it is subject to records retention and public disclosure. All Town-sanctioned social media sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to records retention and public disclosure.
- 4) Any content posted as representative of the Town, or content posted to a Town-sanctioned social media site containing any of the following shall not be allowed:
  - a) Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
  - b) Profane language or content;
  - c) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
  - d) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - e) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - f) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - g) Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- 5) Content submitted for posting on a Town-sanctioned social media site that is deemed unsuitable

for posting by the Town Manager because it violates criteria in the preceding item (*Item 4, above*), shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed unsuitable for posting.

- 6) Any hyperlinks posted on a Town sanctioned social media site shall be accompanied by a disclaimer which states: *“The Town guarantees neither the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of the link, website, or content linked thereto.”*

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **428. Political Activity**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Bridgewater Home Rule Charter § 9-2(4) states:

*“During work hours, no town employee shall knowingly or willfully participate in any aspect of a political campaign on behalf of, or opposition to, a candidate for town office.*

Town employees, on their own time, may attend political meetings and may support principles and policies of political organizations in accordance with the United States Constitution and applicable state and federal laws.

Town employees who are also residents of the Town, may run for elective office; but must choose between the elective office or town employment in the event of a ballot victory. (*see Bridgewater Home Rule Charter § 3-1*)

## **429. Disciplinary Action/Corrective Action Plan**

Effective Date: January 2014

At the sole discretion of the Town, inappropriate workplace behavior and violations of policies, procedures, applicable laws, rules or regulations may be addressed through disciplinary action.

The use of disciplinary action is intended to correct inappropriate or unacceptable employee behavior or conduct, to prevent reoccurrences of such behavior or conduct, and to provide specific guidance to the employee to assist him/her in achieving future behavior and conduct that is considered acceptable. Examples of such behavior or conduct are included in, but not limited to section 409: *Professional Standards of Conduct*. Various types of employee discipline may be imposed that include, but are not limited to the following: informal coaching, training or counseling; verbal warning; written warning; demotion; or, suspension with or without pay, temporary or permanent pay reductions. None of these disciplinary actions are required to be used before termination from employment occurs, nor are the listed actions required to be used in any specific order. The disciplinary action that is appropriate will vary based upon the nature of the offense, the circumstances surrounding its commission, and the employee’s past record with the Town.

It shall be the responsibility of all managers and department heads to reasonably and impartially supervise, and when necessary, apply corrective action or recommend corrective action for the personnel assigned to them. Various levels or combinations of corrective action may be used depending upon the severity of the employee behavior or conduct. All supervisors and department heads shall exercise good judgment and discretion in taking or recommending disciplinary action. They shall



endeavor to insure that the extent of the penalty is not unreasonable or excessive in relationship to the seriousness of the violation or circumstances for which the employee is being penalized. Such action is to be based on what is best for the department, the Town and its employees.

The division director or department head shall consult with Human Resources and/or the Town Manager prior to issuing corrective action. In any case of corrective action (*except a verbal reprimand*), the division director or department head shall be responsible to submit a written report through the chain of command. Such report shall be made with the employee's knowledge. The employee shall be required to read and sign the report to acknowledge awareness of it, not to demonstrate agreement or disagreement with it. In the event the employee refuses to do so, a notation to that effect shall become a part of the report. As the report progresses through the chain of command, each supervisor and the department head shall be responsible for adding a written acknowledgment of having received the report and shall supplement it with opinions and recommendations prior to forwarding it to the next level of command. Any employee, except a newly hired employee, shall have the right to appeal any disciplinary action except verbal warnings to the Town Manager. (*Concerns over a verbal warning shall be addressed through section (430) Dispute Resolution (Grievance Process)*). Any such appeal shall be submitted in writing by the employee within five (5) business days following notification of the action (*weekends and holidays excluded*). The appeal shall be submitted to the Human Resources.

Prior to issuance of disciplinary action other than verbal or written warnings, a pre-disciplinary hearing with the Town Manager must be scheduled by the department head, unless waived by the employee in writing. However, an employee may be temporarily removed from a work site, pending a review of the appropriate corrective action to be taken, if in the opinion of the division director or department head the employee's actions or behavior result in an immediate and significant safety threat to the employee, co-workers or other persons. Upon removing an employee from the work site, the division director or department head shall immediately contact the Human Resources and Town Manager's office.

Employees are reminded that employment with the Town of Bridgewater is at-will and may continue only at the mutual consent of the employee and the Town.

## **430. Dispute Resolution (Grievance Process)**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Division directors, department heads, managers and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive encouragement and constructive criticism.

The Town of Bridgewater has established a formal grievance procedure to allow employees the opportunity for review of decisions or actions relating to working conditions, misinterpretation or unfair application of policy, wages, and disciplinary actions. All information provided by the employee and all responses by department heads and/or management shall be in writing. Division directors, department heads and/or managers involved in settling disputes shall meet with the affected employee throughout the process. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step. *Please note that employees are expected to make an effort to resolve any issues informally with the appropriate department head/leader prior to filing a formal grievance.*

The Dispute Resolution (*Grievance Process*) is as follows:

- a) If an employee disagrees with a verbal warning, established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern to their department head within three (3) days after the incident occurs. *No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with the Town in a reasonable, business-like manner or for using the resolution procedure.*

Division directors or department heads should respond to the issue within five (5) working days. If employee is not satisfied with the department head's response the employee shall appeal to the Town Manager by submitting through Human Resources.

- b) In the event that disciplinary action other than verbal or written warnings is determined to be necessary by a department head, the employee shall be provided with written notice of the charge and an explanation of the Town's evidence. The employee shall be given an opportunity to respond to the charges during a disciplinary hearing before the Town Manager, unless waived by the employee in writing.
- c) At the disciplinary hearing, employees may present evidence and witnesses on their behalf, question the Town's evidence and be represented by any person of their choice at their own expense. The Town's explanation of the evidence at the pre-disciplinary hearing shall be sufficient to apprise the employee of the basis for the proposed action. This shall not limit the Town at a later date from presenting a more detailed and complete case, including presentation of witnesses and documents not available at the pre-disciplinary hearing.
- d) Once all evidence has been submitted, the Human Resources Director shall make a written recommendation to the Town Manager.
- e) The Town Manager reviews and considers issue and informs employee of the final decision within ten (10) working days, in writing to all parties concerned and forwards copy of written documents for employee's file. The Town Manager has full authority to make any adjustment deemed appropriate to resolve the issue.

*Employees are reminded that the Town of Bridgewater is an employment-at-will employer. The employment of an employee can be terminated at the discretion of the Town, with or without cause and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of either the Town or the employee.*

## **431. Collective Bargaining**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Certain employees may organize, be represented by an independent trade union and enter in to a contract for a specified period, between the management of an organization and its employees. The collective bargaining agreement (CBA) sets down and defines certain conditions of employment (*generally wages, working hours and conditions, overtime payments, holidays, vacations, some benefits, etc.*) and procedures for dispute resolution.

The Town Manager or his/her designee is the collective bargaining agent for the Town. In accordance with Chapters 149 and 150 of the General Laws and Chapter 1078 of the Acts of 1973, an agreement must be reached between the Town, through its Town Manager, and an employee group prior to that group's being recognized by the Town.

The Town presently recognizes the following collective bargaining groups:

- A.F.S.C.M.E. Council 93, Local 1700 (*public works employees*)
- Bridgewater Firefighters Association, Local #2611
- Bridgewater Police Association
- Bridgewater Public Library Staff Association. MLSA, AFT-MA
- S.E.I.U, Local 888 (*clerical employees*)

- United Steelworkers (USW) - Local #16031-39 (*department leaders/supervisory staff*)
- United Steelworkers (USW) - Local #16031-40 (*professional staff*)

Except as specifically provided in the applicable CBA, employees are advised that nothing shall impair or infringe upon the Town, the Town Manager or its duly empowered representatives from prescribing the methods and means by which the operation of the Town shall be conducted. The Town Manager as the Chief Executive Officer for the Town and the Home Rule Charter vests in him/her the authority and responsibility to supervise, direct and be responsible for the efficient administration and proper operation of the Town.

## V. A SAFE & HEALTHLY WORKPLACE

### 501. Safety

Effective Date: January 2014

Creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment is the responsibility of every employee. Every employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities, to take the time to perform jobs safely and to comply with the following safety rules:

- All established safety procedures must be followed.
- All work-related injuries/illnesses/accidents must be reported to the appropriate department head/leader and the Town Manager's office immediately.
- Unsafe working conditions must be reported to the appropriate department head/leader and the Town Manager's office immediately.
- All personal protective equipment must be used in any area for which it has been issued. If proper protective equipment is not available, the employee should ask the appropriate supervisor before proceeding.
- If an employee is unsure how to perform an assigned task or operate a machine, the employee should ask the appropriate supervisor before proceeding.
- Only the proper tool(s) should be used for the job. If the proper equipment is not available, the employee should ask the appropriate supervisor before proceeding.
- Defective equipment or tools should never be used.
- Employees should use proper techniques in lifting and ask for assistance in lifting any object that is too bulky, awkward or heavy to be lifted safely by one person.

Prompt notification of unsafe conditions will help the Town prevent future injuries or illnesses. An employee will not be subjected to retaliation for reporting safety problems or concerns. All employees are encouraged to make suggestions for improvement of workplace conditions and/or related policies.

### 502. Work Place Injuries and Accidents

Revision Date: January 2014

Employees who sustain work related injuries or illnesses shall inform their supervisor immediately. Supervisors/Department heads/leaders shall notify Human Resources of the injury or illness. **No matter how minor an on the job injury may appear, it must be reported immediately.** Some examples include, but are not limited to, slips, trips, falls, near misses, malfunctioning or damaged equipment, citizen or visitor injury, theft, threats or actions of violence.

The employee, in conjunction with their supervisor and/or department head, must submit a completed accident or property damage report within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident. This will ensure compliance with OSHA and enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

### 503. Workers' Compensation Insurance

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town maintains Workers' Compensation insurance to cover injuries or illnesses that arise out of employment and occur during the course of employment pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 152. (Uniformed Police and Firefighters are covered under the provisions of 111F). This insurance provides medical, surgical, or hospital treatment in addition to payment for lost earnings that result from work-related injuries. Any employee who suffers an on-the-job injury or illness, **no matter how minor**, must report that injury or illness to the appropriate supervisor, division director and/or department head and the Town Manager's office.

Injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off duty recreational, social, or athletic activity are not compensable under the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation Act.

The salary compensation under worker's compensation is calculated at 60% of the average weekly wage of the employee. If an employee has accumulated leave and requests to do so, the difference between the worker's compensation pay and their regular pay may be charged to accumulated sick, vacation, or compensatory time leave so that the employee receives 100% of his/her weekly gross payroll. The employee may also elect only to receive the worker's compensation. No deductions are made from the worker's compensation check and therefore the employee must make arrangements for voluntary deductions such as health insurance.

The Town's Workman's Compensation program is administered by the town's insurer Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIAA).

## 504. Workplace Monitoring

Effective Date: January 2014

Workplace monitoring may be conducted by the Town to ensure quality control, employee safety, security and customer satisfaction.

Employees may have their telephone use monitored. Telephone use monitoring may be used to identify and correct performance issues.

Computers furnished to employees are the property of the Town. As such, computer usage and files may be monitored or accessed. E-mail may be subject to monitoring.

The Town Manager may request video surveillance of non-private workplace areas. Video monitoring is used to identify safety concerns, maintain quality control, detect theft and misconduct, and discourage or prevent acts of harassment and workplace violence.

## 505. Harassment-Free Workplace

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town will not tolerate any form of harassment based race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy, medical condition, marital status, parental status, veterans status or any other characteristic protected by law. It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered harassment. The following are examples of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Unsolicited and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, vulgar or obscene photographs, drawings, jokes, comments or gestures, as well as physical contact of a sexual nature which is unwelcome. Further, any supervisor, manager, department head/leader or division director

who uses implicit or explicit coercive sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, job or working environment of an employee is engaging in sexual harassment. *For more information, please refer to the full Sexual Harassment Policy.*

#### GENERAL HARASSMENT

Any slurs, jokes, general threats, intimidation, and/or other degrading verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion, national origin, or race constitutes harassment.

Any employee who feels that this policy is being violated has the right and responsibility to report the situation immediately. Complaints of harassment shall be made to one of the following: the employee's immediate supervisor, any department head, division director or Human Resources. Employees have the right to report any harassing conduct without fear of retaliation of any kind or form.

All complaints will be immediately referred to the Human Resources, which will investigate the incident. The employee may be asked to provide written comments, including details of the incident(s), names of individuals involved and names of any witnesses. If it is determined that harassment has occurred, effective action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances.

## 506. Tobacco-Free Workplace

Effective Date: January 2014

Tobacco use is prohibited at all times in all locations of all work areas, facilities and vehicles operated, owned, leased, occupied, managed or controlled by the Town. Pursuant to the provisions of the Town of Bridgewater General Ordinances (*ARTICLE XXXXVIII - Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places and Workplaces*) smoking is strictly prohibited in the described areas:

*"Any building, facility or vehicle owned, leased, operated or occupied by the municipality, including school buildings and grounds; any enclosed area open to the general public including, but not limited to, ... libraries... public restrooms, lobbies, staircases, halls, exits, entrance ways, elevators accessible to the public...open meetings of a governmental body".*

Employees who wish to use tobacco products will be permitted to do so outside of the building in areas at least twenty-five (25) feet away from any public entry of any public facility.

*This policy applies equally to all employees, customers and visitors.*

## 507. Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees. Using or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. To help ensure a safe working environment, job applicants and employees may be asked to provide body substance samples (such as urine and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (*see to section 709. Employee Assistance Program*) provides confidential counseling and referral services to employees for assistance with such issues as drug and/or alcohol abuse or addiction. It is the employee's responsibility to seek assistance from the EAP prior to reaching a point where his or her judgment, performance, or behavior has led to imminent disciplinary

action. Participation in the EAP after the disciplinary process has begun may not preclude disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

While on Town premises and while conducting business related activities off Town premises, no employee may use, possess, manufacture, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Under the Drug Free Workplace Act, an employee must notify the Town within five (5) working days of a criminal conviction for drug related activity occurring in the workplace.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program.

Testing for Town employees includes testing for pre-employment, post accident and reasonable suspicion.

Those employees who are required to maintain a commercial driver's license as a condition of employment will also be subject to random alcohol and drug testing. For more information, please refer to the full Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace shall raise their concerns with their division director, department head/leader or Human Resources without fear of reprisal.

## 508. Weapon Prohibition

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town provides a safe environment where people feel protected and secure. Therefore, unless specifically authorized in writing by the Town Manager, all employees are prohibited from carrying or possessing any handgun, rifle, shotgun or any other weapon of any kind on Town property, in Town facilities, while operating Town vehicles, or while acting in the course of Town business.

A "weapon" is defined as:

*"...any pistol, revolver, dagger, bowie knife, dirk knife, switchblade knife, spring type knife, sword cane, knife having a blade which opens automatically by hand pressure applied to a button, spring, or other device in the handle of the knife, blackjack, loaded cane, billy club, hand chain, metal knuckles, or any other offensive weapon..."*

For the purposes of this policy, "Town Property" is defined as all buildings, grounds, vehicles and equipment owned by the Town of Bridgewater.

The prohibitions of this policy apply equally to personal vehicles parked on Town property, as well as, Town vehicles.

Exceptions and Police/Fire Exemptions:

- small folding pocket knives (*with a blade of 3 inches or less*)
- lawfully permitted chemical defense spray such as pepper spray or mace
- sworn police department and authorized fire department employees (*and others specifically authorized by the Chief of Police*) are exempt from the provisions of this policy



An employee who possesses a permit to carry a concealed weapon in Massachusetts is hereby notified that provisions of this policy DO SPECIFICALLY APPLY to any such permit holder and the policy will be enforced regardless of any permits held.

This policy complies with current laws of the United States and the State of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts General Laws and the Home Rule Charter of the Town of Bridgewater.

Anyone determined to be in violation of this policy will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **509. Preventing Workplace Violence**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town believes that all people should be treated with dignity and respect. The Town will not permit threats or acts of violence against co-workers, citizens, visitors, or any other persons who are either on Town premises or have contact with employees in the course of their duties.

Employees will not participate in fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may cause harm to themselves or others. All threats or acts of violence, including those made in a joking manner, will be taken seriously and will be fully investigated.

Employees shall not engage in conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time. All threats of (*or actual*) violence, both direct and indirect, shall be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor or any other member of management, or the police. When reporting a threat of violence, be as specific and detailed as possible. All suspicious individuals or activities shall also be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor or department head. The supervisor or department head shall immediately forward the information to the Town Manager's Office.

The Town will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (*or actual*) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the Town may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of (*or actual*) violence or other conduct in violation of these policies will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

The Town expects employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors, department head/leader, division director, Human Resources and/or the Town Manager before the situation escalates into potential violence. The Town will assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns; however, knowingly false complaints or allegations will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **510. Parking**

Revision Date: January 2014

Parking is available for town employees in the municipal lot located behind the Town Hall. Employees utilizing the municipal lot must register their vehicles with the Town Clerk's office and obtain a permit or risk being ticketed. Parking decals must be affixed to the inside, front bottom corner of the windshield, driver's side.



Employees are to follow the designated employee parking guidelines while at work during normal hours of operation. Employees shall park around the perimeter of the lot, leaving the interior spots, closer to local businesses, available for the Central Square business patrons.

If you have any questions, please contact the Town Clerk's Office.

*Attempts to duplicate municipal parking decals are unlawful and will be enforced and punishable to the fullest extent of the law.*

## VI. TIME OFF

### 601. Holidays

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town observes the holidays listed below:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Patriot's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas

All other days will be considered a normal workday and Town offices will be opened for normal work hours.

Holiday pay will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate (*as of the date of the holiday*). Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for holiday pay as described in this policy.

A recognized holiday that falls on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. A recognized holiday that falls on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

To be eligible for holiday pay, employees must work, or be on approved paid leave, the last scheduled day immediately preceding and the first scheduled day immediately following the holiday. If a recognized holiday falls during an employee's paid absence (*such as vacation or sick leave*), holiday pay will be provided instead of the paid time off benefit that would otherwise have applied.

Paid holidays (*other than Christmas*) which fall on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday and if the holiday falls on a Sunday it will be observed on the following Monday.

#### HOLIDAY DURING VACATION, SICK OR OTHER PAID LEAVE

If a paid holiday falls during an employee's scheduled paid leave (*vacation, sick or other paid leave*), the holiday will not be counted as vacation, sick or other paid leave taken. An employee who commences an unpaid leave of absence on the last scheduled workday preceding or following a holiday will not receive holiday pay.

#### WORK ON A HOLIDAY

Employees required to work on a holiday will be given another day off at a time mutually convenient to the employee and the Town. The holiday may not be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

#### REGULARLY SCHEDULED DAY OFF

An employee whose regularly scheduled day off falls on a holiday will be given another day off at a time mutually convenient to the employee and the Town. The holiday may not be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

#### HOLIDAYS AND TERMINATION

If an employee's termination coincides with an observed holiday, the last day actually worked prior to the holiday will be considered the date of termination. An employee may not extend the date of termination to include a holiday.

## 602. Annual Vacation Leave

Revision Date: January 2014

Time off with pay is available to eligible employees to provide opportunities for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Regular fulltime, regular part-time and part-time employees are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in this manual:

#### ELIGIBILITY

Regular full-time employees are eligible for vacation leave. Regular part-time employees and part-time employees who work at least 10 hours per week will receive vacation pay on a pro-rated basis.

#### ACCRUAL

Leave accrual begins with the employee's date of hire. If a temporary, intermittent or part-time employee working less than twenty hours per week receives a status change to regular full-time or regular part-time working twenty or more hours per week, accrual will begin with the effective date of the status change.

Annual leave is earned on a monthly basis in accordance with the following schedule:

Years of Service	Days Accrued Per Year	Days Accrued Per Pay Period
< 2	10	0.385
2 to 4	12	0.462
5 to 9	15	0.577
10 to 14	18	0.692
15 +	20	0.769

New employees are not allowed to use accrued annual vacation leave during their first three (3) months of employment.

#### MAXIMUM CARRYOVER

A maximum of 80 vacation leave hours may be carried over to the next calendar year. At year end, if the total amount of unused leave surpasses the "maximum carry over" limit the employee will lose the amount above the limit. Each employee who is expected to exceed their "maximum carry over" limit will be notified prior to year end to provide them an opportunity to use the leave. The Town Manager, in his/her discretion, may grant exceptions to the maximum carry-over due to operational or extraordinary circumstances.

## UPON SEPARATION

Regular full-time employees who have successfully completed the probationary period and who provide at least two weeks' notice will be paid for accumulated vacation leave upon separation.

## SCHEDULING VACATION LEAVE

Employees should follow departmental guidelines when requesting vacation leave. Generally, a request for vacation leave should be made to the department head as far in advance as possible, or as soon as practical. A department head or their designee is responsible for approving vacation leave requests. Vacation leave may not be approved if the leave interferes with the service needs of the Town. All requests will be considered based on criteria such as department needs, timeliness of the request, employee's length of service, or any other factors based upon the service needs of the Town. Department heads will notify employees of the status of their leave requests within three (3) days of receipt.

Leave requests in excess of three (3) weeks must have prior approval of the department head. Leave requests in excess of twelve weeks must have prior approval of the Town Manager.

## UNSCHEDULED LEAVE

Each employee has a responsibility to assist in the efficient operation of the Town by preventing excessive unscheduled absences. For unscheduled absences, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the appropriate department head in accordance with departmental guidelines.

## PAYMENT OF VACATION LEAVE

Annual vacation leave is paid at the employee's base pay rate at the time of vacation. It does not include overtime or any special forms of compensation. Annual vacation leave does not accrue during periods of unpaid leave.

Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for unused annual leave that has been earned through the last day of employment.

## 603. Personal Days

Revision Date: January 2014

All regular full-time and regular part-time employees shall be granted three (3) personal days per calendar year. Personal days do not accumulate and must be used in the year in which they are earned. No other employee classification group is eligible for personal days. If an employee's status changes from regular full-time or regular part-time to part-time they are no longer eligible for personal days.

## 604. Sick Leave (see also section 605: FML)

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town provides paid sick leave to all eligible employees for periods of temporary absence due to illnesses or injuries. Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible to earn and use sick leave as described in this policy.

An eligible employee may use sick leave for an absence due to the employee's own illness or injury or to care for an immediate family member. The Town defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse, parent, child or legal ward, sibling; the employee's spouse's parent, child, or sibling; the employee's child's spouse; grandparents or grandchildren or corresponding in-law, "step", or "half"

relation.

For regular full-time Town employees, Sick leave begins to accrue upon hire at the rate of twelve (12) days per year up to a maximum accumulation of ninety-six (96) days. Part-time employees occupying benefited positions shall accumulate sick leave in ratio to their part-time employment. Sick Leave accrues on a monthly basis in hourly increments. *Sick leave accruals, usage and balances are printed on an employee's weekly Statement of Wages.*

Sick leave may accumulate and be carried forward into subsequent years. Sick leave is for the protection of employees against loss of pay because of illness or injury and shall not be included in termination pay. Probationary employees are allowed to accrue sick leave from the first day of employment but are not permitted to utilize these leave days until the probationary employee status has been completed.

Sick leave will not be accumulated by an employee for any calendar month in which he is absent due to illness, injury or leave of absence for more than twenty (20) consecutive working days.

Sick leave usage must be reported on the payroll forms in order to protect the employee's eligibility for participation in other benefit programs such as Flexible Spending Accounts.

For illness or injury meeting the requirements of the *Federal Family and Medical Leave Act* (FMLA), the employee shall request leave and Human Resources will be notified of such need for leave. Human Resources will then send a letter to the employee regarding rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. All medical documentation regarding FMLA leave will be directed to Human Resources and shall be kept in a file separate and apart from the employee's personnel file. Failure to provide requested certification(s) may result in the employee's not being allowed to charge sick leave and/or disciplinary action.

If the employee's absence due to illness exceeds the amount of accumulated sick leave the employee has, the absence may be charged to vacation at the discretion of the Department Head and with the approval of the employee. Employees who are injured on the job and are receiving Worker's Compensation may request usage of accrued sick leave to make up the difference between the amount received from Worker's Compensation and their regular gross salary as provided under the provisions of Chapter 152 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The total dollar value in work days shall be charged against sick leave credits accordingly.

Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury shall notify their direct supervisor or department head prior to the scheduled start of their workday. (*see 406. Attendance and Punctuality*) The direct supervisor or department head must also be contacted on each additional day of absence. If an employee is absent for three (3) or more consecutive days due to illness or injury, a physician's statement must be provided verifying the medical condition and its beginning and expected ending dates. Such verification may be requested for other sick leave absences as well and may be required as a condition to receiving sick leave benefits. Before returning to work from a sick leave absence of three (3) working days or more, an employee must provide a physician's verification that he or she may safely return to work.

Sick leave will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate at the beginning of the absence and will not include any special forms of compensation. Sick leave does not accrue during periods of unpaid leave.

Sick leave not used at the time of death, resignation, or termination shall lapse, and no payment shall be made thereafter.

Employees employed by the Town prior to July 1, 2004 who retire from the Town and have unused sick leave at the time of retirement shall be compensated according to the following schedule:

- a) 1-74 days at 25%
- b) 75-149 days at 40%
- c) Over 150 days at 50%

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2014 and who have accumulated unused sick leave credits shall be paid, upon retirement only, an amount equal to 20% of the value of such credits, computed by multiplying the number of days sick leave available times the daily rate of salary received by the employee at the time of his/her retirement. Such payment for unused sick leave shall not affect the amount of retirement allowance available to such employee. This payment cannot exceed \$5,000.

Employees or staff hired on or after July 1, 2014 shall not receive compensation for unused sick time balances upon retirement.

An employee who makes a false claim for paid sick leave shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **605. Family and Medical Leave (FML)**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town provides protected family and medical leaves of absence to eligible employees who are unable to work for one of the following reasons: the birth of the employee's child and in order to care for the child; the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition; or for the employee's own serious health condition.

Employees who meet the applicable time of service requirements (employment of one year and 1250 hours) may be granted a total of twelve (12) weeks of family and medical leave (FML). The twelve-month period is measured forward from the date that any such employee's first FML leave begins. Family and medical leave must be taken concurrently with any accrued paid leave, such as annual vacation, personal days, and/or sick leave. The remainder of the leave period will then consist of unpaid leave.

If the employee will be absent from work for more than three (3) work days for a qualifying reason they must immediately notify their department head and Human Resources.

The Town will follow all applicable federal and state laws regarding this issue and policies are subject to change. Employees can contact their department head or Human Resources for more information or to obtain a copy of the town's full *Family and Medical Leave Act* policy.

## **606. Parental Leave**

Revision Date: April 1, 2015

Under Massachusetts law, eligible new parents may take up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid leave for the birth of a child, adoption of a child under the age of eighteen (or a child under the age of twenty-three (23) if the child is mentally or physically disabled), or the placement of a child pursuant to a court order.

Employees are eligible for unpaid leave under this law if they have been employed for at least three (3) consecutive months in a benefits eligible capacity and if they provide the Town with at least two (2) weeks' notice of the need for leave.

Massachusetts laws provides the eight (8) weeks of unpaid leave per child (i.e, sixteen (16) weeks for twins.) However, if both parents work for the Town, only eight (8) weeks' unpaid leave total is granted to both parents.

The Town will follow all applicable federal and state laws regarding this issue.

## **607. Leave Sharing**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town, under certain circumstances, may allow an employee to donate annual leave to a fellow employee who is suffering from an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition which has caused, or is likely to cause, the employee to take leave without pay.

Leave sharing shall be approved by the receiving employee's department head, division director and by Human Resources subject to the following provisions:

- a) The receiving employee has exhausted, or will exhaust, all leave (annual, compensatory, sick, and personal days) due to the illness or injury.
- b) The donating employee may donate any amount of annual leave, provided the donation does not cause the annual leave balance of the donating employee to fall below eighty (80) hours.
- c) The receiving employee may receive a maximum of one hundred sixty (160) hours of shared leave during a twelve (12) month period. A twelve (12) month period includes the past eleven months plus the current month.
- d) Any shared leave not used by the recipient will be returned to the donor(s). Unused shared leave will be divided proportionally among the donors.
- e) The receiving employee will not accrue annual leave or sick leave while on donated leave time.
- f) All donated leave must be given voluntarily. Only annual leave can be donated.

## **608. Small Necessities Leave Act (SNLA)**

Revision Date: January 2014

Massachusetts Small Necessities Act (SNLA) permits employees who have been employed by the town for at least twelve (12) months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the twelve (12) months preceding the date of the requested leave to take twenty-four (24) hours leave during the twelve (12) month calendar year period for the following purposes:

- 1) To participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a son or daughter of the employee, such as parent-teacher conferences or interviewing for a new school;
- 2) To accompany the son or daughter of the employee to routine medical or dental appointments, such as check-ups or vaccinations; or
- 3) To accompany an elderly relative of the employee to routine medical or dental appointments or appointments for other professional services related to the elder's care, such as interviewing at nursing or group homes.

The Town allows employees to take this leave from their available sick leave, thus granting the leave in a paid status. Whenever possible, advance notice must be given to your supervisor or department head. If you have no available sick leave, you may take the leave unpaid.



## **609. Military Leave**

Revision Date: January 2014

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of at least thirty (30) days of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable to provide.

The Town will comply with all provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA), and all Federal and Massachusetts State Statutes related to Military Service. Military Leave will be recognized and afforded to all employees who are U.S. armed forces, national reserves, or National Guard members. Any military duty that exceeds the eligible employee's military leave balance may be taken as annual vacation leave, compensatory time, personal days or unpaid leave of absence.

Continuation of health benefits is available as required by United States Employee Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA) based on the length of the leave and subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible.

Annual vacation leave, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during a paid military leave of absence.

The Town will follow all applicable federal and state laws regarding this issue and policies are subject to change. Employees may contact the Human Resources for more information concerning military leave.

## **610. Voting Time Off**

Effective Date: January 2014

The Town encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by participating in elections. Generally, employees shall vote either before or after their regular work schedule. If an employee's work schedule prevents them from voting in an election during their non-working hours the Town will adjust an employee's work schedule for that day.

Advance notice is required so that the employee's schedule can be adjusted.

## **611. Bereavement Leave**

Revision Date: January 2014

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member shall notify their department head immediately. For purposes of this policy, immediate family is defined as employee's parent, child, spouse, sibling, grandparent and grandchild, including individuals related by marriage (in-law or step relationships).

In the event of a death in an employee's immediate family, the Town will allow the use of three (3) days of sick leave per occurrence to handle family affairs, attend the funeral and burial, and as a period of grieving. Paid bereavement leave will be calculated on the base pay rate at the time of absence and will not include any special forms of compensation. Employees without available or accrued leave may take up to three (3) days of unpaid bereavement leave.

The employee is expected to make arrangements with his/her department head or division director prior to being absent from work.

If more than three (3) days are required, the employee may make a request to the department head to use earned vacation leave or unpaid leave.

The Town reserves the right to request satisfactory documentation to support the need or eligibility to use sick leave for bereavement.

## **612. Jury Duty**

Revision Date: January 2014

In the event an employee is summoned for jury duty, the Town will provide the employee paid leave for the duration of the jury service. Jury service fees paid to the employee by the court will not be deducted from the employee's pay.

To be eligible for jury or witness pay, the employee must provide the department head with a copy of the notice of selection for jury duty or a copy of the subpoena for witness duty within three (3) days of receiving such notice. Upon completion of jury or witness service, the employee may be required to submit a receipt from the court verifying the time served to their department head.

## VII. BENEFITS and GROUP INSURANCE PLANS

### 701. Employee Benefits

Revision Date: January 2014

Eligible employees have a wide range of benefits available to them. Some of the programs (*such as pension and unemployment insurance*) cover all employees in the manner prescribed by law.

Benefits eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors, including employee classification. Details of these programs can be obtained by contacting the benefits specialist in the Treasurer's Office.

The following benefits are available to eligible employees (benefits included in this manual are followed by the corresponding section number):

- Annual Vacation Leave, section 602
- Bereavement Leave, section 611
- Benefits Continuation (COBRA), section 702
- Dental Insurance, section 706
- Deferred Compensation - 457 Plan , section 712
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP), section 709
- Family and Medical Leave, section 605
- Flexible Spending Program – Health Care and Dependant Care, section 707
- Health and Wellness Programs, section 708
- Health/Medical Benefits Plan, section 704
- Holidays, section 601
- Jury Duty Leave, section 612
- Leave Sharing, section 607
- Life Insurance, section 705
- Military Leave, section 609
- Other Optional Individual Insurance Plans through Payroll Deductions, section 713
- Parental Leave, section 606
- Retirement Plan: OBRA, section 711
- Retirement Plan: Plymouth County Retirement System, section 710
- Sick Leave, section 604
- Small Necessities Leave, section 608
- Tuition Waiver (*program in partnership Bridgewater State University*), section 703
- Voting Time Off, section 610
- Workers' Compensation Program, section 503

Most of the benefit programs require some contribution from the employee; while others are either fully paid by the Town (*i.e. – EAP*), or fully paid by the employee (*i.e. – dental insurance*), or partially paid by both the employee and the Town (*i.e. – Health/Medical Benefits*).

Certain benefit programs (*i.e. - medical and dental*) require the employee to notify the Town within

thirty days of a “qualifying event” if they wish to make changes regarding coverage. Examples of qualifying events are: divorce, marriage, death of a dependent, birth or adoption, loss of dependent status, or a change in the employee’s spouse’s employment status.

Town benefit programs are subject to change at any time. Benefits not required by federal or state law are subject to budget appropriation and the Town’s financial condition. Additional benefit programs may be provided to employees to encourage morale and show appreciation for staff.

## **702. Benefits Continuation (COBRA)**

Revision Date: January 2014

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under the Town's health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Town within thirty (30) days of a qualifying event. Failure to notify the Town of a qualifying event could result in a loss of eligibility.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at the Town's group rates plus an administration fee. The Town provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under the Town's health plan.

The COBRA benefit is administered by the Finance Department’s treasury office. Employees should contact the benefits specialist in the Finance Department’s treasury office with questions about the program.

## **703. Tuition Waiver Program**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town offers a tuition waiver for classes taken at Bridgewater State University to all eligible employees upon completion of the probationary period. To maintain eligibility employees must remain on the active payroll and be performing their job satisfactorily through completion of each course. Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for the tuition waiver.

Individual courses or courses that are part of a degree, licensing, or certification program must be related to the employee's current job duties or a foreseeable future position in the Town in order to be eligible for waiver. The Town has the sole discretion to determine whether a course relates to an employee's current job duties or a foreseeable future position.

Tuition waivers for an employee are limited to four (4) credit hours per semester, and must be approved by the applicable department head, Town Manager and Bridgewater State University prior to enrollment in the class.

While education is expected to enhance employees’ performance and professional abilities, the Town does not guarantee that participation in formal education will entitle the employee to an automatic advancement, a different job assignment, or pay increases.

The Town provides tuition waivers to employees with the expectation that the investment be returned

through enhanced job performance.

For more information about Tuition Waiver Program, employees should contact Human Resources.

## **704. Health/Medical Benefits Plan**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town's health/medical benefits plan provides employees and their eligible dependents access to medical and prescription benefits. Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible to participate in the health plan. Eligible employees may participate in the health plan subject to all terms and conditions of the Summary of Benefits Coverage (SBC) document for each applicable health plan.

Details of the health/medical benefits plan are described in the Summary of Benefits Coverage (SBC) document. This document and information on cost of coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees.

Contact the benefits specialist in the Finance Department's treasury office for more information about health/medical benefits.

A change in employment classification that results in loss of eligibility to participate in the health plan may qualify an employee for benefits continuation under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). (*see 702. Benefits Continuation (COBRA)*)

The Town is governed by the rules and regulations of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the provisions of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA).

## **705. Life Insurance**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town provides basic life insurance for benefit eligible employees pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 32B. Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance coverage is provided as part of the basic life insurance. AD&D insurance provides protection in cases of serious injury or death resulting from an accident. The Town contributes 50% of the premium for the basic coverage and the employee shall contribute 50% of the premium.

Additional supplemental life insurance coverage may also be purchased by the employee. Employees selecting the optional life insurance coverage may do so for themselves, spouse or dependent children. Employees shall pay the 100% of the cost of that insurance.

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible to participate in the life insurance plan (*see 301. Employment Categories and Job Classification*). Eligible employees may participate in the life insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between the Town and the insurance carrier.

Details of the basic life insurance plan including benefit amounts are described in the insurance Plan Coverage document available to eligible employees.

Deductions shall be made from the employee's pay on a monthly basis for the basic and optional life insurance coverage.

Basic life insurance coverage is provided by American General Life Insurance (AIG). Additional supplemental life insurance is available through Boston Mutual Life or Colonial Life.

This benefit is administered by the Town. Contact the benefits specialist in the Finance Department's

treasury office for more information about life insurance benefits.

## 706. Dental Insurance

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town provides a basic dental insurance plan for eligible employees. Eligible employees pay 100% of the premium for dental coverage for themselves or coverage for eligible family members.

Regular full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible to participate in the dental insurance plan. Eligible employees may participate in the dental insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between the Town and the insurance carrier.

Details of the dental insurance plan including benefit amounts are described in the dental Summary of Benefits Coverage (SBC) document provided to covered employees. Contact the benefits specialist in the Treasurer's Office for more information about dental insurance benefits.

This benefit is administered by the Town and coverage is provided by Altus Dental.

## 707. Flexible Spending Program – Health Care and Dependant Care

Effective Date: July 2014

A Flexible Spending Account (FSA) lets you automatically deduct from your pay an amount that you choose on a pre-tax basis to cover certain health and childcare expenses. The FSA is designed to help you save money by lowering your taxable income.

A benefit eligible employee, who has completed the probationary period, may enroll in a pre-tax reimbursement account in accordance with Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Service Code, provided all eligibility requirements of the plan are met and the requisite forms have been completed.

Eligible employees may elect to have a pre-determined amount deducted from the employee's paycheck on a pre-tax basis each payroll period to be placed in a medical care flexible spending account, dependent care flexible spending account, or both.

Money set aside in an employee's medical care flexible spending account may be used to cover certain medical, dental, and vision care expenses that are not reimbursable through the employee's insurance plan(s). Money set aside in an employee's dependent care flexible spending account may be used to cover eligible nursery school and day care (*including adult and elder care*) expenses for covered dependents.

To receive reimbursement from an employee's FSA account, a claim for reimbursement and proof that the expense was incurred during the current plan year must be submitted to the Plan Administrator.

An employee's election for the plan year requires a new election form **and** an annual meeting with the FSA Plan Administrator to continue for the next plan year. Refer to the FSA Summary of Benefits Coverage (SBC) document for plan participation requirements and employee contribution limitations.

Contact the benefits specialist in the Finance Department's treasury office for more information about the Town's Flexible Spending Program.

## **708. Health and Wellness Programs**

Revision Date: December 2014

Employees are the Town's most important asset. As the Town values its employees and recognizes that they need to be healthy to do their jobs well, employees are encouraged to employ healthy habits and live healthy active lifestyles.

The Town participates in the Employee Wellness Program through its health joint purchase group Mayflower Municipal Health Group (MMHG). The Employee Wellness Program focuses on promoting awareness and education, motivation for positive behavior changes, and influencing practices and policy to support a healthy environment.

This Employee Wellness Program offers opportunities for employees to take health and wellness classes at no cost or a reduced cost. Program offerings may include Weight Management, Stress Management and physical fitness.

Information on program offerings are sent out regularly by Human Resources.

## **709. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Revision Date: January 2014

Through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the Town provides confidential access to professional counseling services for help with such personal issues as: alcohol abuse, substance abuse, marital and family difficulties, financial or legal troubles, and emotional distress. The EAP is available to all employees and their immediate family members and offers problem assessment, short-term counseling, and referral to appropriate community and private services.

The EAP is strictly confidential and is designed to safeguard privacy. Information given to an EAP counselor may be released only if authorized by the employee in writing. Counselors are guided by a Professional Code of Ethics.

There is no initial cost for employees to consult with an EAP counselor. If further counseling is necessary, the EAP counselor will outline community and private services available. The counselor will also notify employees whether any costs associated with private services may be covered by their health insurance plan. Costs that are not covered are the responsibility of the employee.

Information is available about the Employee Assistance Program is available online at [www.allonehealth.com/MIIAEAP/Assets/Pdfs/MoreInformation/Employers/FAQ.pdf](http://www.allonehealth.com/MIIAEAP/Assets/Pdfs/MoreInformation/Employers/FAQ.pdf).

The program is available to employees and household members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If employees need some assistance, employees are encouraged to call 1-800-451-1834 and speak with one of the counselors at EAP.

## **710. Retirement Benefits: Plymouth County Retirement System**

Revision Date: January 2014

The Town is a member of the Plymouth County Retirement Board. There are more than 100 contributory retirement systems for public employees in Massachusetts. Each system is governed by a retirement board and all boards, although operating independently, are bound by the retirement law - Chapter 32 of the Massachusetts General Laws - which establishes benefits, contribution requirements, and an accounting and fund structure for all systems.



Membership in a contributory retirement system is mandatory for all public employees who are regularly employed for hours which are least 50% of a full-time equivalency and whose employment commences prior to attaining age sixty-five. Each retirement board exercises full jurisdiction to determine an employee's eligibility for membership in cases involving part-time, provisional, temporary, seasonal or intermittent employment.

Certain part-time, seasonal or temporary employees who are ineligible for membership shall be required to participate in an alternative OBRA plan. (*see 711. Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA)*)

Public employees who were employed by another Chapter 32 member employer may transfer their accumulated total deductions and corresponding creditable service from their former Chapter 32 retirement system to the Plymouth County retirement system.

Employees who became members of a Chapter 32 retirement system prior to January 1, 1975 contribute 5 percent of their regular compensation. Employees whose membership commenced on or after January 1, 1975 but prior to January 1, 1984 must contribute 7 percent. Those employees whose membership began on or after January 1, 1984 but prior to January 1, 1996 must contribute 8 percent. Employees whose membership began on or after January 1, 1996 must contribute 9 percent. If an employee's earnings exceed \$30,000 (or \$577.00 weekly), a two percent additional withholding will be made of that portion of the compensation that is in excess of \$30,000. No bonus, overtime, severance pay, any and all unused vacation or sick leave at time of separation, early retirement incentive, or any other payments made as a result of giving notice of retirement are considered part of your regular compensation and are not included in retirement calculations.

Employees are generally eligible for retirement after attaining 10 years of creditable service and reaching age 55. Eligibility may vary depending upon specific circumstances. The retirement allowances are specific percentages determined by employees' age, length of creditable service, the level of average annual rate of regular compensation and group classification.

A refund is a lump sum amount of accumulated total deductions plus eligible accrued interest returned. Employees may request a refund following resignation from public service. There may be substantial federal tax consequences for taking possession of the funds.

Further information regarding retirement benefits may be found on the Plymouth County Retirement Association website ([www.pcr-ma.org](http://www.pcr-ma.org)). Information may also be obtained by mail to: Plymouth County 10 Cordage Park # 234, Plymouth, MA 02360 or by phone at (508) 830-1803.

## **711. Retirement Benefits: Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA)**

Revision Date: January 2014

Part-time (less than 20 hours a week), seasonal or temporary employee of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, are required\* to participate in a Defined Contribution Plan under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA). (*\*exclusions: employees that are currently in or retired from Plymouth County Retirement System or MSAS*).

Employees must make a mandatory contribution at 7.5% of an employee's gross compensation each pay period. The Town does not contribute any matching funds.

Upon leaving the employ of the town, you may request to have your OBRA payments refunded (*20% tax penalty will be assessed*); however, for seasonal employees, you will be asked to repay the money if you return the following year. For more information and basic facts about OBRA, employees may contact the benefits specialist in the Finance Department's treasury office.

## 712. Deferred Compensation (457 Plan)

Revision Date: January 2014

Employees who are eligible for participation in the retirement system and health and life insurance benefits are eligible to participate in the Commonwealth's Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP).

A Deferred Compensation Plan is a resource designed to help employees achieve financial security and independence in their retirement years.

Participation in DCP is voluntary and is 100% at the employee's cost. The plan offers a wide variety of investment options that an employee may select and change as desired, including income funds, mutual funds and a universal life insurance option.

Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) is not a Town-managed benefit. The service is provided through the following vendors:

▪ Great West-Smart Plan:	Vito DeSimone, CRC	401.439.3715
▪ Nationwide Retirement Solutions:	Lorraine Hayes	617.827.8049
▪ Security Benefit:	Scott Mondeau	508.279.8020

Employees may arrange a personal counseling interview with the Client Account Managers. At this interview, the Client Account Manager will explain all aspects of the their Plan, will provide an applicable prospectus and other disclosure information and make available the necessary enrollment forms.

## 713. Other Optional Individual Insurance Plans through Payroll Deductions

Revision Date: January 2014

Colonial offers disability insurance programs to Town employees.

Short-term or long-term disability insurance payroll deductions are available through Colonial Life. Employees may arrange a personal counseling interview with the Client Account Managers. At this interview, the Client Account Manager will explain all aspects of the their Plan, will provide an applicable prospectus and other disclosure information and make available the necessary enrollment forms.

For more information, employees may contact Colonial representative Scott Curtis:

PHONE: 978.456.7717

EMAIL: [scott.curtis@coloniallife.com](mailto:scott.curtis@coloniallife.com)

WEBSITE: [www.coloniallife.com](http://www.coloniallife.com)

## **RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

### **ALL EMPLOYEES:**

Please read, sign and date the following statement acknowledging that you have received your Employee Handbook. Return this page to Human Resources today.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Town of Bridgewater's *Employee Manual: A Guide to Town Employment*. I understand that it contains important information on the Town's policies and practices and on my privileges and responsibilities as an employee. I know that I am responsible for abiding by the contents of this document and I will familiarize myself with its content. I also understand that I am responsible for becoming familiar with and abiding by the Town of Bridgewater's policies and procedures, as well as obtaining and understanding future additions or changes to policies and procedures.

I further understand that neither this manual nor the Town policies and procedures are an employment contract or create any contractual entitlements, and that the Town of Bridgewater may change, rescind or add to any policies, benefits, privileges or practices described in the manual (*other than the employment-at-will policy*) or other policies and procedures from time to time without prior notice.

I understand that my employment with the Town of Bridgewater is not for a specific term and is at the mutual consent of myself and the Town of Bridgewater. Accordingly, either the Town of Bridgewater or I can terminate the employment relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time.

I understand that if I am provided certain types of equipment by the Town—*computers, cell phones, iPads, pieces of safety equipment, etc.*—I may be responsible for replacement costs for loss or damage to such equipment and such costs may be withheld from my paychecks, including my final paycheck. I also understand that failure to turn in equipment by the last day of employment or as directed by the Town will be considered a loss of such equipment and the costs of such equipment may be withheld from my paychecks, including my final paycheck.

I understand that only the duly appointed Town Manager, or his/her designee, for Town of Bridgewater has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specific period of time, or to make any promise of continued employment.

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Employee's Name (please print legibly)

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Employee's Signature

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Date