

Town of Royalston

Standard Operating Procedures

Adopted by the Select Board

Dissemination of SOPs

The administrative assistant will send an electronic copy of these standard operating procedures to all new town officials and employees, and a blanket e-mail to all officials and employees with the changes highlighted whenever the document is revised. The town webmaster will maintain a current edition of this list on the town's website. It is the responsibility of all town officials and employees to follow their provisions.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Town Facilities

Use of Town Hall

The senior luncheon program may use the kitchen and first-floor meeting room each Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Town committees and officials may also use these facilities, but must inform the administrative assistant in advance of any non-routine use or any change in scheduled use.

Other town entities, community groups and private parties wishing to use town hall must fill out an application available online and in the administrative office at least 30 days before the event, though that requirement may be waived by the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant may approve this application, or may refer it to the Select Board.

Fees for the use of town hall are shown on the application. The Select Board will ordinarily waive these fees for town and community groups, but also reserves the right to increase them for special events and to require renters to show proof of event insurance.

Organizers who wish to use the kitchen facilities must also obtain a permit from the Board of Health. Organizers who wish to serve or sell alcohol must apply for a separate special liquor license.

No parking is permitted on either side of Memorial Circle in front of town hall, except at the one handicap accessible site. The individual who reserves the hall is responsible for enforcing this rule.

When more than one group is using town hall, each will respect the rights of the others to use the facilities, take reasonable care with noise levels, and enter each other's space with as little interruption as possible.

All users must adhere to the posted capacity limits of both the dining hall and the upper hall. All users must also leave the facilities in standard condition, per the rules posted by the administrative assistant. The individual who reserves the hall is responsible for implementing this policy and for any damages that might occur.

The administrative assistant will check the condition of town hall after use. If problems, damage, or other violations of rules are observed, the organizers may lose their security deposit (if any), be assessed for damages, or be denied future permits.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended July 17, 2012; October 15, 2013; August 26, 2014; September 1, 2015

Use of Other Town Facilities

Town entities, community groups and private parties who wish to use other town facilities must fill out the application available online and in the administrative office at least 30 days before the event, though that requirement may be waived by the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant may approve this application, or may refer it to the Select Board.

Fees for such use are shown on the application. The Select Board will ordinarily waive these fees, and fees for necessary police details, for town and community group events. The Select Board reserves the right to increase facility use fees for special events and to require renters to show proof of event insurance.

Organizers who wish to serve or sell alcohol must apply for a separate one-day liquor license. The application for this license can be found on the town's website or obtained from the Select Board's office. A police detail will be required if liquor is served or sold, and the cost of that detail will be paid by the sponsoring group.

All users must leave the facilities in clean, standard condition. The individual who signs the application is responsible for implementing this policy and for any damages that might occur.

*Adopted September 1, 2015
Amended December 21, 2021*

Alcohol on Town Premises

Anyone who wishes to serve or sell alcoholic beverages in any town facility or on town-owned land must apply to the Select Board for a separate one-day liquor license at least 30 days before the event. The application for this license can be found on the town's website or obtained from the Select Board's office. A police detail will be required and the cost of that detail will be paid by the sponsoring group. The application will be forwarded to other departments for sign-off or imposition of special conditions. Within 10 days of approval, licenses will be forwarded to the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. The license will be dated with a four-day window, to allow for proper delivery, storage and disposal of the alcoholic beverages. Applicants are also reminded that they must purchase the alcohol from a state-authorized source (list available on ABCC website).

*Adopted October 15, 2013
Amended October 6, 2015
Amended December 21, 2021*

Restricted Areas of Town Offices

At town hall, no one other than the Select Board, the administrative assistant(s), or their designee is permitted behind the Select Board's table, nor can anyone but these officials sit at or stand behind the administrative assistant(s) desk. No one is permitted to open any drawer or cabinet or handle any documents or materials in the Select Board's office except board members, the administrative assistant(s) or their designee.

At Whitney Hall, no one other than the Select Board, town clerk, treasurer, tax collector or their designated assistants are permitted behind the counter in the treasurer/collector's office, unless accompanied by one of these officials, nor can anyone but these officials open any drawer or cabinet or handle any documents or materials except as authorized by these officials. No one but the Select Board, Board of Assessors, assessors' clerk, or town accountant is permitted in the assessors' office unless one of these officials is present, nor can anyone but these officials open any drawer or cabinet or handle any documents or materials except as authorized by these officials.

Fire and police personnel are exempt from these provisions in emergencies.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended February 21, 2012; July 17, 2012

Amended August 16, 2022

Smoking Outside Key Town Buildings

Smoking is prohibited within 50 feet of Town Hall, Whitney Hall, and the Phineas S. Newton Library and within the whole of Memorial Circle.

Adopted November 19, 2013

Keys and Locks

The administrative assistant will keep a master set of labeled keys and a master list of lock combinations for all town buildings, rooms, cabinets, safes, gates, etc. in a secure lock box. He or she will also maintain a list of who has what keys and who is privy to lock combinations. Any town department, official or employee who changes a lock or combination must promptly provide a copy to the administrative assistant and help ensure that the discontinued key is disposed of. Keys may be issued to individuals by the Select Board, committee chairs, or department heads as need requires; such keys must be returned promptly when the reason for the issuance is complete.

With the authorization of the Select Board, keys to town hall may also be loaned out by the administrative assistant, who will maintain a list of such loans and specify the time when they must be returned. With the authorization of a financial officer or one member of the Select Board, keys to Whitney Hall or any of its offices may be loaned out in an emergency by the administrative assistant, who will maintain a list of such loans and specify the time when they must be returned. Whenever possible, the emergency responder should be accompanied by an official or employee in the affected office, a member of the Select Board, or the administrative assistant.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended February 21, 2012; July 17, 2012

Town Dog Pound

Dogs picked up by the animal control officer will be held at the pound for 10 days while the officer seeks to identify the owner. After 10 days, the officer will make every effort to find someone to adopt the dog, a pound with long-term facilities to take it in, or a rescue group willing to take it. If these efforts are unsuccessful within 30 days after the dog was impounded, the officer will inform the Select Board, who may authorize that it be euthanized. In the case of a pregnant female dog, the grace period is extended for 8 weeks after she gives birth.

Adopted July 17, 2012

Town Vehicles and Equipment

Titles and Registrations of Motor Vehicles

Fire vehicles are to be registered to the fire department and carry FD plates. Police vehicles are to be registered to the police department and carry PD plates. Highway vehicles are to be registered to the town and carry "official" plates. Emergency management equipment not obviously associated with fire or police is to be registered to the town and carry "official" plates. Titles for all town-owned vehicles are to be turned over to the administrative assistant as soon as they are received by the purchasing department. The administrative assistant will keep them in a secure place. Registrations for all town-owned vehicles are to be carried in the vehicles.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Owner's Manuals

The user of any town equipment or service that comes with an owner's manual is responsible for that manual and for making it available to anyone servicing the equipment and any subsequent user. Department heads are responsible for the owner's manuals of equipment used by more than one person.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Town-Issued Cell Phones

The Dispatch Committee determines who receives town-issued cell phones, keeps a master list of numbers, and controls who may be informed about those numbers, a list which should include all members of the Select Board. Such cell phones are to be used only for town business.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Use of Town Computers

Town officials and employees may use town-owned computers only for town business. Any town-owned computer is subject to review by the Select Board or its designee; if such review is necessary, the Board will make every reasonable effort to have the computer user present. In the event of the death or incapacitation of a user of a town computer, the Select Board may authorize a qualified technical person to access town data.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended February 21, 2012

Financial Matters

Budget Schedule

By January 1 of each year, town departments and committees shall submit their budget requests to the Select Board and (per Section XVIII of town bylaws) their capital requests to the Capital Planning Committee. By February 1, the Capital Planning Committee shall submit their recommendations to the Select Board, and by April 1, the Select Board shall create an executive budget to present to the Advisory Committee.

Adopted October 15, 2013

Notification of Wages and Status Procedures

By June 15 of each fiscal year, any department with employees shall submit to the accountant and the treasurer a list of employees with their current wages and the wages they will receive as of July 1. Department heads need not include themselves on this list if their own wages are covered by contract or by a line item in the annual budget, and any department with union employees need not include them because their wages are determined by contract.

If the wages or status of any employee changes for whatever reason during the fiscal year, the department head will immediately fill out a Payroll Change Notice and submit it to the Select Board, who will in turn send it to the treasurer and accountant. Change in status includes change of address, sick leave beyond four consecutive days, an approved leave of absence, voluntary termination, dismissal, retirement, or death. (Include the employee's social security number *only* if this is a new hire.)

The treasurer will maintain a master list of all employees and their wages or salaries and submit this list to the Select Board and the finance director whenever it changes.

Adopted August 7, 2018

Amended September 3, 2019

Payroll Practice

Hourly pay or annual salary for non-union employees is negotiated on an individual basis according to the requirements of the position and the experience of the employee. The town has an Employment Benefits Policy for non-union employees and a contract with union employees. All payments of salaries and stipends will be issued through Direct Deposit.

Adopted March 5, 2019

Amended July 18, 2023

Retirement Policy for Royalston Police Officers and Fire Fighters

Firefighters in the Royalston Fire Department and police officers in the Royalston Police Department shall retire at age 65. Emergency medical technicians may continue to perform first responder medical duties only. Employees of either department beyond the age of 65 may continue in office or managerial positions at the discretion of their chief. This policy will take effect on July 1, 2023.

Adopted March 21, 2023

Town Purchases

Officials or employees authorized to make purchases should seek vendors who accept net 30 days as standard terms. If the preferred vendor will not accept those terms, the purchaser should seek the advice of the Select Board.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Procurement Practice

The Town of Royalston is required by Massachusetts law to follow the regulations set forth in Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) Chapter 30B, known as the Uniform Procurement Act, which establishes standard procedures for use by “governmental bodies” to procure supplies and services, to dispose of surplus supplies, and to acquire and dispose of real property. For supplies and services subject to certain exceptions, Chapter 30B provides for:

- Use of sound business practices for contracts under \$10,000;
- Solicitation of three quotes or proposals for contracts in the amount of \$10,000 up to \$50,000; and
- Invitations for sealed bids or request for proposals for contracts in the amount of \$50,000 or more.

In addition to MGL Chapter 30B, the Town of Royalston’s procurements comply with several other laws enacted in Massachusetts to prevent procurement fraud, waste and abuse, including:

- MGL Chapter 7: Public building projects design services;
- MGL Chapter 30, Section 39M: Public works (non-vertical) construction; and
- MGL Chapter 149: Building (vertical) construction.

Adopted March 5, 2019

Use of Town Charge Accounts

Only authorized town agents may use town charge accounts with outside vendors. Any use of these cards must include the purchaser’s name and department on the sales slip.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Submission of Bills for Payment

It is the responsibility of department heads to review all bills to ensure that they are correct and that prior payments are acknowledged. Department heads must complete the “Schedule of Departmental Bills Payable” and fill in the “amount paid” box on the payment slip, sign the bill receipt (*not* the payment slip), and submit the original receipt, sales slip or bill to the town accountant for the next available warrant. Requests for reimbursement of mileage must be submitted within 48 hours at the end of each month.

When the accountant notices an error, he or she will flag and initial it, and return the submission to the department head for correction and resubmission.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended February 21, 2012; July 17, 2012; January 22, 2013; October 15, 2013

Cash Payments to the Town

Special care must be taken with cash payments to the town. The tax collector, the town clerk, and the building department will use a three-part receipt system, with one receipt going to the payer, one to the treasurer when the funds are turned over, and one to internal records. The Board of Health will use a dual-tape cash register. (*Note:* The donations jar at the library is exempt from these requirements.)

*Adopted December 12, 2011
Amended August 7, 2012*

Energy-Related Purchases

In other than emergency situations, any upgrade of an energy system or purchase of energy-using equipment (e.g., a furnace for a town building) will be submitted to the Energy Committee for review. If necessary, the committee will schedule a special meeting to consider the purchase. If time is not of the essence, the committee will have 30 days to complete its recommendation. The final decision, however, rests with the purchasing department or the Select Board.

Adopted August 7, 2012

Grant Awards and Receipts

The Select Board should be notified of grant applications made in the town's name by any official, committee or employee. If a grant is awarded, the Select Board will sign it and forward a copy to the town accountant.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Short-Term Debt Contracts

The Select Board shall send copies of short-term debt contracts to the town treasurer and town accountant as soon as they are signed.

Adopted June 21, 2016

Stabilization Fund

To the extent possible, the Town will maintain its General Stabilization Fund at a level approximately equal to 10 percent of the current year's operating budget, not including short or long term debt.

Adopted January 2, 2018

Emergency Management

NIMS Training

Certain town officials – all members of the Select Board and the Board of Health; all police officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, highway personnel and CERTs (Community Emergency Response Team members); and the emergency management director (EMD), the animal control officer, and the building inspector – are required to take basic training through the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training Program. The EMD, senior police and fire personnel and the highway superintendent are required to take additional levels of training. Refer to the EMD and current FEMA guidelines to determine what level(s) of training are required. Officials and employees should give the EMD and the administrative assistant a copy of their certificate(s). (*Note: The building inspector is not included on the NIMS list, but in Royalston this official's training could prove useful.*)

Adopted December 12, 2011

Key Emergency Personnel

Key emergency personnel – the emergency management director, the fire chief, the police chief, and the highway superintendent – should inform the Select Board of absences from town of more than 24 hours; they should also inform the board if they will not be available during predicted, potentially dangerous weather events.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Emergency Management

In emergencies other than strictly medical, fire, police or highway situations, the Select Board retains emergency command. In the absence of the chair of the Select Board, another member may sign a declaration of emergency. The police chief, fire chief and highway superintendent will be in charge of their respective responses; in their absence, a pre-established chain of command takes over. The emergency management director (EMD) will act as resource manager and communications liaison, particularly with state and federal agencies. The EMD will also oversee the opening and operation of a warming center or shelter if need arises and if a town facility can offer these services. He or she will also maintain a list of town residents who may be in need of special services and if possible arrange for those services to be delivered. In the absence of the EMD, the Select Board or its designee will handle these functions.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Emergency Response Reports and Plans

Within 30 days after a local, state, or national emergency, the Emergency Management Team should present a report to the Select Board, along with an action plan including (1) recommendations for improvement, (2) designation of who is responsible for implementing each recommendation, and (3) a timeline for implementation. The discussion with the Select Board may result in additional recommendations. Both the Select Board and the emergency management director are responsible for keeping copies of these plans. Both are also responsible for monitoring the action plan and maintaining awareness of long-term recommendations.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Traffic Flow Interruptions

The Select Board and police, fire and highway departments must be notified in advance of any non-emergency changes to normal traffic flow. This includes, but is not limited to, drills for emergency personnel, unusual parking provisions for special events, outsize vehicles being escorted through town, etc. If time constraints do not permit notification of the Select Board, notification should still go to the police, fire and highway departments.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Miscellaneous

Access to Town Counsel

No town official or committee may contact town counsel without the prior consent of the Select Board. Before requesting such service, officials should consider other sources of information, such as the state Ethics Commission, the local district attorney, the state attorney general, the town's state representative or senator, etc.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Identification Codes

The administrative assistant will maintain a list of identification codes (the case number of a grant application, DUNS numbers, FID numbers, CCR numbers, etc.). It is the responsibility of any official, department or committee who uses such codes to provide them to the administrative assistant.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended February 21, 2012

Right of First Refusal on Chapter Lands

When the town receives notice of its right of first refusal on chapter lands, the administrative assistant will immediately send that notice to the Select Board, the Board of Assessors, the tax collector, the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Open Space Committee. Authority to act on this right remains solely with the Select Board.

Adopted December 12, 2011

Amended July 17, 2011

New Employee Procedures

When a new employee is hired, the department head will *immediately* inform the financial team of the employee's name, contact information, job title, and starting wage. Any new employee *must* contact the treasurer to receive and fill out pre-employment paperwork. He or she may *not* begin work until this paperwork is completed.

Adopted October 2, 2012

Amended August 7, 2018

Employment-Related Policies

The office of the Select Board will provide a new employee with copies of the following employment-related policies: Employment Policy, Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, Workplace Bullying Policy, IT Policy and, if applicable, Employee Benefits Policy. The employee's supervisor is responsible for receiving the signed receipt attached to each packet.

The supervisor should keep this receipt and make it available to the Select Board, if so requested

Adopted September 4, 2018

Amended September 18, 2018

Sick or Injured Animals

If the animal control officer is responding to a problem of a sick or injured animal whose owner cannot be identified, he or she is authorized to contact a veterinarian or to take the animal to a clinic and to direct the bill to the Select Board. If the animal must be hospitalized, the animal control officer should contact the chair of the Select Board (or another member, if the chair is unavailable) as soon as possible in order to determine how much care the town will authorize.

Adopted January 8, 2013

Town-Issued Identification Cards

The following town officials and employees are required to obtain a town identification card from the Town Clerk. Individuals who hold more than one of these positions should be issued a separate card for each role.

- **Elected officials:** members of the Select Board, Board of Assessors, Board of Health and Sewer Commission, plus Constables, the Town Clerk and the Tree Warden
- **Full- and part-time employees:** members of the Department of Public Works, employees of the transfer station and the clerk to the Board of Assessors
- **Appointed employees:** the Administrative Assistant, Animal Control Officer, Animal Inspector, Building Inspector, Alternate Building Inspector, Department of Public Works Supervisor, Electrical Inspector, Alternate Electrical Inspector, Emergency Management Director, Plumbing/Gas Inspector, Alternate Plumbing/Gas Inspector, Town Treasurer
- **Appointed officials:** members of the Conservation Commission and the chair of the Council on Aging
- **Public safety personnel:** all members of the Fire Department and volunteer CERTs (Members of the Police Department carry state identification cards and thus do not require town IDs.)

ID cards for elected officials will show the month and year when the term expires (e.g., April 20xx); other cards will not be dated, but must be turned in when an individual leaves town service.

It is the responsibility of department heads to ensure that all those under their supervision who must have IDs obtain them in a timely fashion, to require those under their supervision who have changed significantly in appearance to obtain a new card, and to retrieve the ID when an individual leaves town service.

Adopted June 17, 2014

Complaints

When town officials or employees receive a verbal complaint, they should ask that it be put in writing and forwarded to the Select Board office. The Select Board will then deal with the issue itself or refer it to the relevant department head.

Adopted April 18, 2018

Town of Royalston Policy for Town-Owned Flagpoles

The Royalston Selectboard authorizes the following flags to be flown on Town-owned flagpoles in the Town of Royalston, as an official expression of the Town's governmental speech, to which the strictures of the First Amendment do not apply:

The official flag of the United States of America;
The official flag of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
The official flag of the Town of Royalston;
The official MIA-POW flag.

No other flags shall be allowed to be flown on Town-owned flagpoles, as those flagpoles and this policy are not intended to establish or serve to create a forum for private speech or expression. For the purposes of this policy, the flagpoles at the following locations are considered Town-owned flagpoles:

- Town Hall
- Fire and Police Station
- Post Office
- Raymond Building
- Department of Public Works Facility
- South Royalston Park
- Whitney Hall

Adopted by vote of the Selectboard on: February 6, 2024
Policy to go into effect on: February 7, 2024

Royalston Select Board

Public Comment Procedure

Royalston's Select Board welcomes everyone to its meetings. To provide meeting attendees the opportunity to share information with the Board, while ensuring the Board's ability to conduct business in an orderly manner, a Public Comment Period will occur at the beginning of each meeting as follows:

1. Public Comment will be held for up to a total of 10 minutes.
2. Participants will be allowed up to two (2) minutes each to speak. At his or her sole discretion, the presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit.
3. Speakers shall identify themselves, including their name, address, town of residence, and if representing a group, the name of that group.
4. The Select Board Vice Chair will time the public comment session. The Select Board Clerk will note the speaker's name and the topic raised for follow-up as necessary.
5. Public comments are not required to pertain to an agenda item for that meeting. However, comments must pertain to a matter within the public body's jurisdiction.
6. All remarks will be addressed to the presiding Chair of the meeting.
7. When each speaker has finished, the Chair will thank the speaker for their comments. Select Board members will refrain from further commenting.
8. The Select Board may choose to add any issue raised to a future meeting agenda.
9. Once Public Comment is closed the Select Board meeting will proceed without public participation.

This procedure may be reviewed on the Town website www.royalston-ma.gov

Adopted March 21, 2023