

## Open Meeting Policy and SOP for all Grand Isle Town Boards and Commissions

### Objective:

The Grand Isle Selectboard has enacted this policy to ensure consistency throughout all Town board and commission meetings held by Grand Isle officials. This includes ensuring similarities with board Agenda formats, Minutes, Zoom recordings and Clerk Minutes while certifying the Town stays in compliance with all Open Meeting Laws, Freedom of Information Act, Municipal Code of Ethics and all Town of Grand Isle Policies, Procedures and Town Ordinances.

### Open Meeting Law Training:

State of Vermont open meeting laws and regulations can be found here:

<https://aoa.vermont.gov/sites/aoa/files/Boards/VCC/Vermonts%20Open%20Meeting%20Law%20VCC%2011-20-20.pdf>

In Act 133 (2024), the Legislature made permanent changes to the Open Meeting Law. Effective January 1, 2025, the law requires annual Open Meeting Law training for State chairs of decision-making (non-advisory) bodies and for local chairs of legislative bodies, municipal managers and mayors. All applicable positions must complete this mandatory training no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year. This mandatory training can be completed here:

<https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/>

It is imperative to the Town of Grand Isle that all board members are trained and comply with Open Meeting Laws. Due to this, the Selectboard has mandated all board members to complete the Open Meeting Law training provided by VLCT and / or the State of Vermont no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year. The Selectboard Administrator will send details of the VLCT training to all board clerks and chairs as information is released each year. The chair of each board is required to record the required training completion and progress of each board member. All records shall be kept on the "Open Meeting Law Training Log". A copy of this document can be found here: "[Open Meeting Law Training Log.xlsx](#)". Chairs are required to send a completed "Open Meeting Law Training Log" to the Selectboard Administrator no later than May 15<sup>th</sup> of each calendar year.

### Open Meeting Law Compliance Instructions:

- Agendas - Agendas are still posted online and physically in at least 2 locations within 24 hours for an emergency meeting and 48 hours for a standard meeting. Grand Isle's procedure is to post our agendas in 3 locations, which are: Town Office, Library window inside the foyer, and the Emmons Grocery board near gas pumps. If the Library is closed, slip the agenda into a sheet protector, and tape to the outside of the window instead. All boards must use a similar set up and template for their meetings as shown in "Grand Isle Selectboard Agenda TEMPLATE" document. A copy of this document can be found here: "[Grand Isle Selectboard Agenda TEMPLATE.docx](#)". All Agenda's must also be posted electronically to Clerk Minutes (instructional video for posting agendas, zoom recordings and creating and editing minutes can be found here: "[Tutorials](#)"). All regularly scheduled board meetings already have a meeting set up in Clerk Minutes for the clerk to post an

agenda, minutes and Zoom recording. This scheduled meeting is also set up on the Town website by the Selectboard Administrator. Once you have posted your agenda in Clerk Minutes, the public will be able to view automatically via the link on the applicable board page on the Town website **(an additional posting to the Town website is NO longer required to be completed by the clerks)**. If your board is canceling, rescheduling or needs a special meeting – please contact the Selectboard Administrator ASAP to set up or correct the meeting in Clerk Minutes and add the link to the Town website.

- Hybrid / Zoom Requirements - All public bodies are required to offer a hybrid meeting option, which specifically means offering an in-person meeting location as well as a virtual/remote location. All Zoom meetings must be recorded with the Zoom recording posted online for the public for a minimum of 30 days following approval of minutes. All Zoom recordings will be posted to Clerk Minutes (as shown in instructional video posted in Agenda section). Any clerks needing assistance on how to host a Zoom meeting, record a meeting or any other technical issue relating to Zoom, please contact the Selectboard Administrator. A quorum of members may meet virtually, as long as at least one member is present at the physical location listed on the agenda to host members of the public, should they choose to attend in person.
  - The one exception is for Emergency Meetings. All members of the local public or advisory body may meet virtually without a physical location in the event of an Emergency Meeting, but there are specific procedures to follow for announcing what the emergency is as well as announcing the Emergency Meeting.
- Minutes and Zoom recordings – Effective 3/3/2025 all boards must use and implement the AI service provided in Clerk Minutes to generate a first draft of board minutes. Draft minutes must be posted on Clerk Minutes no later than 5 calendar days from the date of the meeting **(an additional posting to the Town website is NO longer required to be completed by the clerks)**.

### **Freedom of Information Act Compliance:**

The Grand Isle Selectboard enacted the Town of Grand Isle Public Records Inspection, Copying and Transmission policy to comply with the Freedom of Information Act. This Policy can be found here: <https://grandislevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Public-Records-Inspection-Copying-and-Transmission-Policy-3.18.2024.pdf>. The Grand Isle Selectboard further requires all Town employees, board members and clerks to save all documents and emails to the Grand Isle Microsoft G1 licensing account provided to them, (i.e., Initial.LastName@grandislevt.gov). This includes storing all documents to the Town-owned OneDrive associated with your .Gov email login. Board members who do not yet have a G1 .Gov license and .gov email login will receive this no later than 7/15/2025. It is the responsibility of the clerk on each board to send all requests to the Selectboard Administrator when a board member has left the board or has been added to the board. The Selectboard Administrator will ensure the Microsoft license is handled correctly for compliance as well as producing or transferring applicable licenses for members.

## **Municipal Code of Ethics:**

Act 171 (H.875), an Act establishing a municipal ethics framework in Vermont, went into effect on June 10th, 2024.

The Act establishes a statewide municipal code of ethics and allows the State Ethics Commission to provide municipalities with free training and advisory services. It also requires municipalities to investigate and record ethics complaints, which can be filed either with the municipality or with the Ethics Commission (complaints filed with the Ethics Commission will be referred to the municipality for investigation); to appoint an Ethics Liaison (an existing employee or select board member) to receive complaints and serve as a point of contact for the Ethics Commission; and for municipal officers to complete a free basic ethics training, which is available through the Ethics Commission's website.

The primary purpose of the bill is to set minimum statewide standards while allowing municipalities to adopt supplemental (or maintain existing) ethics policies that do not conflict with the statewide code, and develop individualized policies and procedures related to complaint investigation and tracking. Many municipalities may already have such policies or procedures in place.

The Town of Grand Isle adopted the "Town of Grand Isle Code of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance" on 3/3/2025. A copy of this ordinance can be found here: <https://grandislevt.org/ordinances-policies/>.

## **Mandatory Municipal Code of Ethics Training**

As of January 1, 2025, all members of legislative bodies; quasi-judicial bodies; chief administrative officers; mayors; and town and city managers are required to complete training on the new statewide municipal code of ethics. Municipal officers who are in office on January 1, 2025, must complete the training no later than September 25th, 2025, and every three years thereafter. Municipal officers who start after January 1, 2025, must complete the training within 120 days of the start of their position, and every three years thereafter.

While training is required only for the municipal officers listed above, The Town of Grand Isle Selectboard requires that all municipal officers subject to the statewide Municipal Code of Ethics take the training. Municipal officers subject to the Code are: members of municipal legislative bodies, members of municipal quasi-judicial bodies, advisory budget committee members, auditors, building inspectors, cemetery commissioners, chief administrative officers, tax collectors, department heads, first constables, listers, assessors, town clerks, treasurers, mayors, department heads, moderators, planning commission members, road commissioners, town or city managers, village or town trustees, trustees of public funds, and water commissioners.

Required Training can be found here: Once a member has completed the training course each member is required to send an electronic copy of the complete training certificate to the Town of Grand Isle Community Ethics Liaison. Lynda Morgan Gardiner has been appointed by the

Selectboard to fill this position. Completed certificates must be emailed to [L.Morgangardiner@grandislevt.gov](mailto:L.Morgangardiner@grandislevt.gov)

### **Town of Grand Isle Ordinances and Policies**

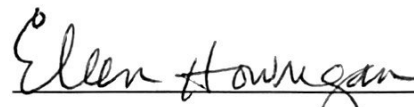
The Town of Grand Isle Selectboard has enacted many new town policies and procedures in 2024 and 2025. The Selectboard will continue to work on compliance and policies throughout the next few years. We ask all town employees and board members to review the Ordinances and Policies listed on the Selectboard website electronically and periodically check for updates. They can be found here: <https://grandislevt.org/ordinances-policies/>

The foregoing Policy is hereby adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Grand Isle, Vermont on this day of March 3, 2025.

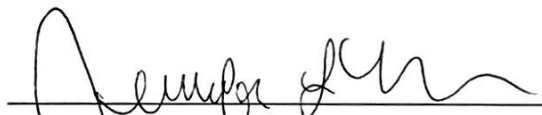
This policy is effective as of this date until amended or repealed.

Grand Isle Selectboard for the Town of Grand Isle

  
Jeff Parizo – Selectboard Chair

  
Ellen Howrigan – Selectboard Vice Chair

  
Josie Leavitt – Selectboard Member

  
Jennifer Morway – Selectboard Member

  
Ron Bushway – Selectboard Member