



**TOWN OF HADLEY**  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
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Date: March 18, 2020  
To: All Departments for the Town of Hadley  
From: Select Board, Town of Hadley  
Subject: Fraternalization in the Work Place

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### **Applicability**

This policy applies to all employees (regardless of status) under the authority of the Select Board. The Select board encourages all boards, committees and elected officials to adopt this policy.

### **Definitions**

Fraternalization – the act of developing relationships that display unusual or unprofessional familiarity between co-workers, workers and managers, or other relationships that poses a risk to conflict of interest, actual or perceived favoritism, and other themes that pose a threat to workplace comfort and public confidence. Fraternalization is most commonly seen as a romantic, sexual or dating relationship between employees of unequal positions. It may also include friendships and blood relations.

Nepotism - the practice among those with power or influence of favoring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs.

Cronyism - the appointment of friends and associates to positions of authority, without proper regard to their qualifications.

### **Policy Statement**

The Town of Hadley supports its work force and encourages all employees to have meaningful and positive relationships in all aspects of their lives. This policy outlines expected behaviors in the work place consistent with a professionalized, government work force.

### **Prohibition of Fraternalization**

The Town of Hadley is committed to preserving a workplace free from conflict and promoting the utmost professionalism and courtesy possible – including an environment free of unlawful harassment, discrimination, real or perceived favoritism, nepotism and cronyism, and conflicts of interest. It is therefore the town's policy to prohibit romantic or sexual relationships in the work place, especially where there is an inherently unequal position between the parties

including supervision, direction or influence. Examples include (but not limited to):

1. Managers having dating/romantic relationships with supervised employees
2. Employees engaging in dating/romantic relationships with interns
3. Employees having any personal relationships with non-employees that demonstrates a perceived or actual conflict of interest, or
4. Where an employee directs the activities or programs meant for constituents (Senior Center, community health groups, activity directors and coaches, etc.)

At no time will managers or their supervised staff engage in romantic/dating behaviors. Employees in the same working unit should refrain from engaging in romantic/dating behaviors among peer groups to prevent disturbances in the work place. Intimate contact such as hand holding, kissing, cuddling is not conducive to work place behavior and sexual contact of any nature will not be tolerated.

No individual will engage in the hiring, managing, or supervision of another individual with whom they have an established friendship, familial relationship, or dating, sexual or marital relationship. These practices are referred to as nepotism and cronyism. These practices expose officials to biased decisions, exerting undue influence, conflicts of interest and many other ethical implications that violate the values of a professionalized, government organization.

There is a zero-tolerance policy for any employee (regardless of paid or volunteer status) to have a dating/romantic relationship with a student-intern (regardless of education level or age), volunteer, work study intern, tax work-off recipient, or other similar personnel.

This policy also applies to relationships not of a romantic/dating nature anytime the relationship causes a disturbance in town operations, disturbs other workers, or brings unnecessary attention from the public.

All dating/romantic relationships between town employees are to be disclosed to HR. This information will be protected. Disclosing the relationship to HR will allow the HR Director to ensure the dating relationship does not pose any risks discussed in this policy.

The town reserves the right to make management decisions in relation to this policy. The town has the vested interest, in protecting employment and personal rights, and to make the best possible decision for all parties involved. Management decisions include:

1. Involuntary transfer to a position of equal pay and responsibility
2. Assignment of new supervisor(s)
3. Suspension with or without pay
4. Demotion
5. Termination

## **Exceptions**

Exceptions to this policy may apply when the relationship exists prior to a personnel

action (promotion, vote, appointment, etc.) or the publication of this policy. When anyone seeking a position or promotion has a familial, friendship or romantic/dating relationship with another employee in the Town of Hadley, they will report the relationship to HR. This information will be protected. Disclosing the details to HR will allow the HR Director to ensure the dating relationship does not pose any risks discussed in this policy. In the event that there is a real or perceived conflict the town will make all efforts to mitigate the conflict. This is not a guarantee of a favorable decision for the personnel action. All relevant qualifications are to be considered without regard to the relationship.

### **Additional Guidance**

Any questions may be directed to the Director of Human Resources or the Town Administrator. Any employee seeking assistance to resolve violations of this policy are encouraged to do the same.

In an instance where there is a conflict of interest with a senior management official, the Select Board reserves the right to hold an executive session after announcement in open meeting to discuss the matter, along with any other matters the Select Board deems necessary.

### **APPROVAL**

Effective: Immediately until revoked or amended by the Select Board  
Adopted this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of March, 2020.

HADLEY SELECT BOARD

*Jorge A. Chunga*  
*Molly A. Keegan*  
*Clinton Staley*  
*Dan Kne*  
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