

# **VEHI Board Conflict of Interest Policy**

## **Policy**

It is the ethical and legal duty of all VEHI Board members to avoid conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts of interest.

## **Definitions**

"Conflict of interest" means a significant pecuniary interest of a director or such an interest, known to the director, of a member of his or her immediate family or household or of a business associate, in the outcome of any particular business or matter pending before the Board of Directors. The term "conflict of interest" does not include any pecuniary interest which is no greater than that of other persons generally affected by the outcome of such business before the Board of Directors.

## **Implementation**

In order to comply with the obligations thus imposed, the Board and its members will adhere to the following recommended standards:

1. A board member will not give the impression that he or she would represent special interests or partisan politics for personal gain.
2. A board member will not give the impression that he or she has the authority to make decisions or take action on behalf of the Board or the organization.
3. A board member will not use his or her position on the Board to promote business or personal financial interests or the financial interests of immediate family members or members of his or her household.
4. A board member will not solicit or accept anything of value in return for taking particular positions on matters before the Board.
5. A board member will not give the impression that his or her position on any issue can be influenced by anything other than a fair presentation of all sides of the question.
6. Board members will be familiar with, and adhere to, those provisions of Vermont law that regulate VEHI.
7. Annually, at the reorganizational meeting, each member of the Board shall complete a conflict of interest disclosure statement.
8. Any organization with a designated seat on the VEHI Board that is also receiving financial compensation under contract with VEHI shall represent their organization in any discussion of their organization's contract and shall abstain from making any motion or voting on their organization's contract as a member of the VEHI Board.

### **Avoiding Conflicts**

When a board member becomes aware that he or she is in a position that creates a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest as defined in state law or this policy, he or she will declare the nature and extent of the conflict or appearance of conflict for inclusion in the board minutes, and will abstain from voting or participating in the discussion of the issue giving rise to the conflict.

### **Complaints of Conflict of Interest**

When a conflict of interest claim against a board member is brought to the board in writing and is signed by another board member or a member of the public, and the board member against whom the claim is made does not concur that a conflict in fact exists, the following board procedures will be followed.

1. Upon a majority vote of the remaining board members, or upon order of the chair, the board will hold an informal hearing on the conflict of interest claim, giving both the board member and the person bringing the claim an opportunity to be heard.
2. At the conclusion of the informal hearing, the remaining board members will determine by majority vote whether to:
  - a. Issue a public finding that the conflict of interest charge is not supported by the evidence and is therefore dismissed;
  - b. Issue a public finding that the conflict of interest charge is supported by the evidence and that the member should disqualify him or herself from voting or otherwise participating in the board deliberations or decision related to that issue, as required by Vermont statute; and/or
  - c. Issue a public finding that the conflict of interest charge is supported by the evidence and the board member should be formally censured or subjected to such other action as may be allowed by law.

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