

A Resolution to Ensure Openness and Transparency among Enfield Town Advisory Committees

RESOLUTION #2021-_____

Whereas, the Town of Enfield has long relied upon citizen advisory committees to provide this Town Board valuable public input as to issues affecting this Town as well as to how this Town Board should respond to those issues; and

Whereas, these advisory committees, established from time to time as the need arises, often find their membership comprised as a hybrid of Town Board members, Town employees, and unelected Enfield residents; and

Whereas, these advisory committees often address substantive issues of public concern, matters in which Town Board member presence on said committee(s) and/or participation in committee discussion carries the potential for actions or recommendations that would constitute actions to “conduct public business,” as defined by, and thereby triggering the provisions of, the New York State Open Meetings Law; and

Whereas, this Town Board owes an obligation to provide its residents the highest degree of openness and transparency in Town governance and to dispel any suspicion that its leaders, elected or otherwise, conduct Town business in secret; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Enfield Town Board hereby adopts the following policy to be known as the “**Policy to Ensure Openness and Transparency among Enfield Town Advisory Committees.**” And that to enact the provisions of this policy, be in further

Resolved, that the Enfield Town Board hereby declares and reaffirms that all scheduled meetings of its Board-established advisory committees, including but not limited to, the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Cemetery Committee, the Renewable Energy Advisory Committee, the Water Protection Committee, and any such other advisory committees this Board may in the future establish, are to be considered Public Meetings, their attendance open to all, including to any and all members of this Town Board; and be it further

Resolved, that to ensure the openness and transparency of said advisory committee meetings; this Town Board establishes the following procedural requirements and protocols for all said committees:

- That meetings of each advisory committee shall be publicized in advance in accordance with the rules New York State law and also the policies this Board has established for meetings of the Enfield Town Board; rules that require advance notice of said meetings at a minimum of at least 48 hours of their occurring, with said notices to include a committee meeting’s designated time, place, and manner of meeting, with said information posted at the Town Hall and made available in an appropriate location on the Town’s website as determined by the Town Clerk;
- That each advisory committee shall designate a secretary, whose responsibility shall be to record minutes of each meeting held, meeting minutes to include, but not necessarily limited to: the date and time of each meeting held; the attendance by committee members as well as by Town elected and appointed officials; a brief summary of the matters discussed; the text of any Resolutions presented for action; and a record of any recorded votes taken, including how each committee member voted on a particular Resolution;

- That in rare instances of the secretary's absence, the advisory committee may request the Town Clerk or his or her designee record said minutes, depending upon the Clerk staff's availability;
- That recorded minutes of an advisory committee, when properly approved by committee membership at a subsequent meeting of the committee, shall be made available for public review and inspection in a manner to be determined by the Town Clerk; and
- That no advisory committee shall exert its authority in such a manner or to such a degree that would supplant the normal governing power State Law properly vests in this Town Board.

And be it further

Resolved, that these afore-stated policies and procedures shall take effect immediately upon this Resolution's adoption by the Town Board.

###