

**CITY OF BARRE**  
**WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

**PURPOSE**

This policy is designed to ensure that all employees feel comfortable speaking up when they see or suspect illegal or unethical conduct without fear of retaliation. It is also intended to encourage all employees to cooperate with the City in the internal investigation of any matter by providing honest, truthful and complete information without fear of retaliation. Whistleblower protections, including confidentiality and protection against retaliation, will be provided consistent with state and federal law and regulations.

**DEFINITION**

Whistleblower - A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of the City of Barre who reports an activity that the employee considers to be illegal to one or more of the parties specified in this policy. The whistleblower does not have the authority, nor the responsibility, for investigating any suspect activity or for determining illegal or inappropriate activity or corrective measures; the City Manager is charged with these responsibilities.

**PROCEDURE**

**EXAMPLE OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES:**

Examples of illegal activities include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- violations of federal, state or local laws;
- billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered;
- illegal discrimination or harassment relating to employment, or the inappropriate or illegal provision or procurement of municipal goods and services; and
- other fraudulent activities or reporting.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern for possible illegal or fraudulent activities, the employee should contact Human Resources, an immediate supervisor and/or the City Manager, depending on the circumstances. If the suspected illegal activities involve or include concerns about the City Manager, an employee may report his/her concerns to the City Council directly.

**REPORTING VIOLATIONS:**

If an employee believes that retaliation or any other violation of this policy has occurred, or if the employee has questions concerning this policy, the employee shall immediately notify Human Resources, an immediate Supervisor, Department Head or the City Manager in writing with sufficient substance or detail to provide a basis for investigation. If the alleged retaliatory acts involve or include the City Manager an employee may report his/her concerns to the City Council directly.

Upon receipt of such notification, the Human Resources Administrator, Supervisor or

Department Head will immediately notify the City Manager of the allegation.

The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated, nor does it include immunity from false allegations or allegations made in bad faith. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

**RETALIATION:**

No employee should be discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed, intimidated, coerced, or retaliated against in any other manner as a result of his or her making a good faith complaint, or assisting in the handling or investigation of a good faith complaint, that a City policy, the Code of Conduct, or any applicable law, rule or regulation has been violated. Employees who in good faith make a complaint or participate in an investigation or proceeding under this policy, however, remain subject to the same standards of performance and conduct as other employees. The City prohibits retaliation against any whistleblower, even if their complaints are proven unfounded by an investigation, unless the employee knowingly made a false allegation, provided false or misleading information in the course of an investigation, or otherwise acted in bad faith.

**ACTING IN GOOD FAITH:**

Any whistleblower filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed is or may be a violation of a City policy, the Code of Conduct, or any applicable law, rule or regulation. Any allegation which, after investigation, is proved to have been made in bad faith, or with knowledge that the allegation was false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense. Employees have an obligation to participate in good faith in any internal investigation of wrongdoing or retaliation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Violations or suspected violations of conduct addressed by this policy may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

The City takes all complaints of wrongdoing and retaliation for reporting wrongdoing in good faith very seriously. All such complaints will be reviewed promptly and an investigation, if warranted, shall be within seven (7) to ten (10) work-days. The City Manager or designated staff will notify the person who submitted a complaint and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation. If warranted by the investigation, appropriate corrective action will be taken.

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