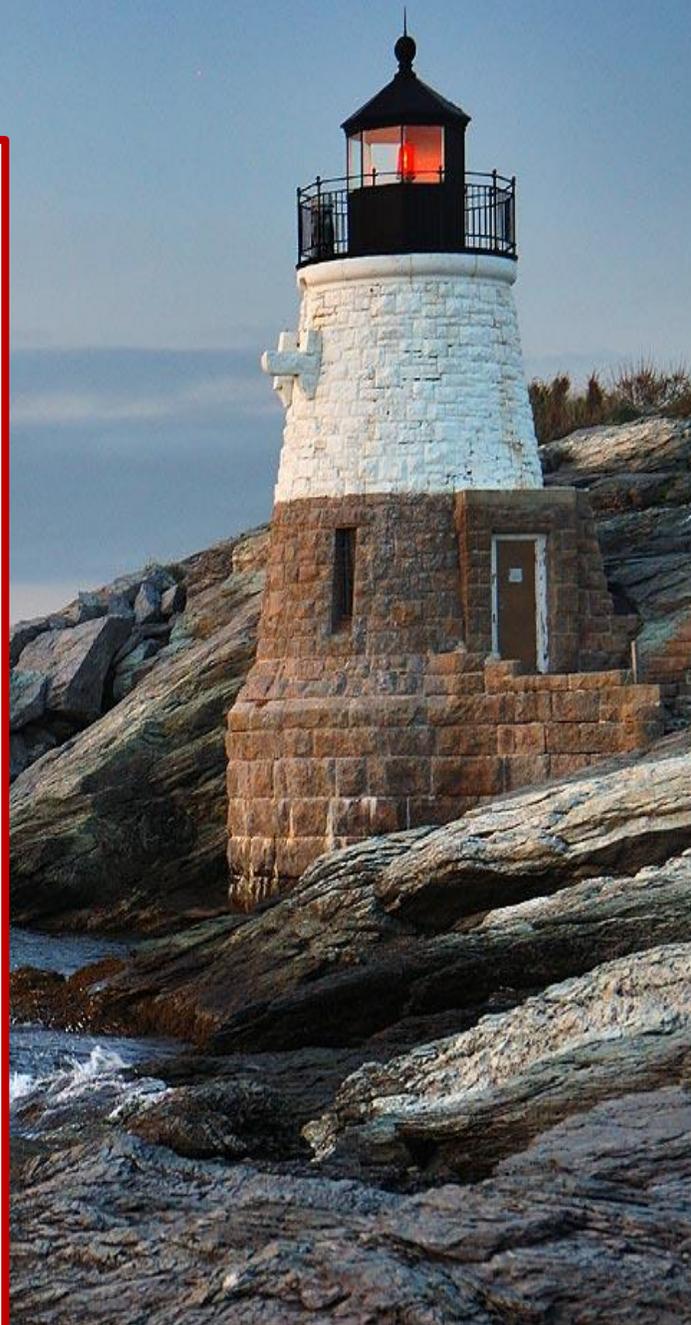


RHODE ISLAND ETHICS COMMISSION

2024 ADVISORY OPINION DIGEST



Rhode Island Ethics Commission

2024 Advisory Opinion Digest



INTRODUCTION

This digest contains brief summaries of the advisory opinions that were issued in calendar year 2024 by the Rhode Island Ethics Commission. The full-length opinions can be found on the Ethics Commission's website, along with all of the opinions issued since 1995.

An advisory opinion is a legal interpretation of the Rhode Island Code of Ethics, rendered by the Ethics Commission, which provides specific guidance to a person subject to the Code of Ethics about a particular and pending circumstance in which he or she is involved. It is based upon the specific facts represented by, or on behalf of, the person making the request and is not the result of adversarial or investigative proceedings. An advisory opinion is only applicable to the situation on which it was based and, therefore, may only be relied upon by the person for whom it was issued.

A request for an advisory opinion should be made before taking any official action on the matter in question. An advisory opinion does not address past conduct. To request an advisory opinion, you must contact the Ethics Commission with a letter containing the following information: your name, telephone number, and email address; the name, jurisdiction, and powers of your entity; your official position and a description of your duties; the nature of the potential conflict; a summary of relevant facts; and any time constraints. Draft advisory opinions are reviewed by the Ethics Commission at a public hearing, which you are strongly encouraged to attend, and require an affirmative vote by a majority of the members of the Ethics Commission to be approved and issued. Both the advisory opinion issued and the written request seeking it are public records.

Rhode Island Ethics Commission ■ 40 Fountain Street, 8th Floor ■ Providence, RI 02903
Tel. (401) 222-3790 (Voice/TT) ■ ethics.email@ethics.ri.gov ■ <https://ethics.ri.gov>
Office Hours: Monday through Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

2024 Digest Index

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-1	Paul M. Rodrigues	Middletown Town Council	Municipal Elected	Financial Interest	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 (36-14-7001)
2024-2	Matthew McGeorge, AIA, LEED AP	East Greenwich Historic District Commission	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception Historic Architect	§ 36-14-5(e) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-3	David A. Ursillo, Esq.	Town of Smithfield	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception Public Forum Exception	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.3 (36-14-7003)
2024-4	James Rhodes, Esq.	Rhode Island Senate	State Employee	Lobbying Post-Employment Private Employment Revolving Door	§ 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-2(12) § 36-14-2(13) § 36-14-5(e) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-5	Christian J. Lachapelle-Miller	Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families	State Employee	Dual Public Roles	§ 36-14-2(2) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(b) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a)
2024-6	Joshua D. Ferreira	Tiverton Fire Department	Municipal Employee	Family: Public Employment Family: Supervision Nepotism	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 (36-14-5004)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-7	Melanie Reeves	Block Island School	Municipal Employee	Conflict of Interest Family Member Nepotism	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 (36-14-7001) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002) 520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 (36-14-5004)
2024-8	Mark Aramli	Newport City Council	Municipal Elected	Hardship Exception	§ 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-9	Stanley Robert Traverse Jr.	Rhode Island Secretary of State	State Employee	Public Employment Revolving Door	§ 36-14-5(o) 520-RICR-00-00-1.5.6 (36-14-5017)
2024-10	Nicholas Anderson	Cumberland Fire Department	Quasi-Public Appointed	Nepotism Recusal	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 (36-14-5004)
2024-11	Jessica Purcell	Chariho Regional School Committee	Municipal Elected	Business Associate Solicitation Transactions with Subordinates	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002) 520-RICR-00-00-1.4.4 (36-14-5011)
2024-12	The Honorable Teresa Tanzi	Rhode Island House of Representatives	State Elected	Class Exception	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) § 36-14-7(b)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-13	Brianna Dixon	Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families	State Employee	Secondary Employment	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-2(12) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(b) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)
2024-14	Neal Murphy	New Shoreham Town Council	Municipal Elected	Class Exception	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) § 36-14-7(b)
2024-15	The Honorable Katherine S. Kazarian	Rhode Island House of Representatives	State Elected	Financial Interest	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a) § 36-14-7(b) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 (36-14-7001)
2024-16	Kelley Morris Salvatore, Esq.	Town of Cumberland	Municipal Appointed	Business Associate Private Employment Recusal	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-17	The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson	Rhode Island Senate	State Elected	Class Exception	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) § 36-14-7(b)
2024-18	Edward A. Mello	Town of Jamestown	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception	§ 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-19	Paul Jordan	Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management	State Employee	Property Interest	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a)
2024-20	Christian Lachapelle-Miller	Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families	State Employee	Private Employment	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(b) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)
2024-21	Philip L. Hervey, AICP	Town of Barrington	Municipal Appointed	Family Financial Interest Nepotism	§ 36-14-2(1) § 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 (36-14-5004) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-22	Scott Millar	Exeter Planning Board	Municipal Appointed	Financial Interest	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 (36-14-7001)
2024-23	Patrice Milos	Rhode Island Life Science Hub	State Appointed	Hardship Exception Revolving Door	§ 36-14-5(b) 520-RICR-00-00-1.5.1 (36-14-5006)
2024-24	Adam M. Millard, Esq.	East Greenwich Historic District Commission	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception	§ 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-25	Dennis Turano	Middletown Town Council	Municipal Elected	Financial Interest	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 (36-14-7001)
2024-26	Leon Amarant	Middletown Planning Board	Municipal Appointed	Business Associate Family Member Financial Interest	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 (36-14-7001)
2024-27	William Nash	Middletown Planning Board Middletown Public Schools Building Committee	Municipal Appointed Municipal Appointed	Dual Public Roles	§ 36-14-2(2) § 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-28	Joseph Graziano	Rhode Island Department of State Rhode Island House of Representatives	State Employee Candidate	Campaign Contributions	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(g) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.4.4 (36-14-5011)
2024-29	Frederick M. Bodington, III	Little Compton Department of Public Works	Municipal Employee	Private Employment	§ 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-2(12) § 36-14-2(13) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-30	Sagree Sharma	Rhode Island Department of Administration	State Employee	Dual Public Roles	§ 36-14-2(2) § 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a)
2024-31	Joshua Berry	Rhode Island Department of Housing	State Employee	Secondary Employment	§ 36-14-2(12) § 36-14-2(13) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(b) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-32	Gregory Mark Dantas	East Greenwich Historic District Commission	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception	§ 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-33	Gregory Mark Dantas	East Greenwich Historic District Commission	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception	§ 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)
2024-34	Andrew D. Kettle, NRP, I/C	Town of Charlestown	Municipal Appointed	Secondary Employment	§ 36-14-2(8) § 36-14-2(9) § 36-14-2(12) § 36-14-2(13) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(b) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.3 (36-14-2002) 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)
2024-35	Derrick Trombley	Warren Town Council	Municipal Elected	Business Associate Conflict of Interest	§ 36-14-2(3) § 36-14-2(7) § 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)
2024-36	Shelley Peterson	Providence City Council	Municipal Elected	Secondary Employment	§ 36-14-5(a) § 36-14-5(b) § 36-14-5(d) § 36-14-7(a) 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 (36-14-5002)

No.	Name	Government Agency	Position	Substantive Issue(s)	Code Citations
2024-37	David Sisson	Pawtucket Historic District Commission	Municipal Appointed	Hardship Exception	§ 36-14-5(e) § 36-14-6 520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 (36-14-5016)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-1

Re: Paul M. Rodrigues

SUMMARY

A member of the Middletown Town Council was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in town council discussions and decision-making regarding the proposed revision of an ordinance relating to short-term rental properties in Middletown, notwithstanding the proximity between the Petitioner's property and three short-term rental properties.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 Reasonable Foreseeability \(36-14-7001\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-2

Re: Matthew McGeorge, AIA, LEED AP

SUMMARY

A former member of the East Greenwich Historic District Commission, who in his private capacity was an architect, qualified for a hardship exception pursuant to General Commission Advisory 2010-1, that would allow him to represent his client before the Historic District Commission prior to the expiration of one year following the severance of the Petitioner's position with that agency.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws § [36-14-5\(e\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-3

Re: David A. Ursillo, Esq.

SUMMARY

The assistant solicitor for the Town of Smithfield was allowed to attend and speak at public hearings before the Smithfield Planning Board and, potentially, the Smithfield Zoning Board and the Smithfield Town Council, regarding the proposed development of property located in close proximity to his personal residence, based upon a finding that the unique facts as represented justified the application of the hardship exception as provided in R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-5(e)(1) and the public forum exception as provided in Commission Regulation 520-RICR-00-00-1.2.3 Public Forum Exceptions (36-14-7003), and consistent with the provisions laid out in the advisory opinion.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.3 Public Forum Exceptions \(36-14-7003\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-4

Re: James Rhodes, Esq.

SUMMARY

A former committee attorney in the Rhode Island Senate Legal Counsel Office was prohibited by the Code of Ethics from representing or lobbying on behalf of his new private employer before the entire Rhode Island General Assembly, including the Rhode Island Senate and the Rhode Island House of Representatives, prior to the expiration of one year after leaving his employment with the Senate.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-2\(12\)](#); [36-14-2\(13\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-5

Re: Christian J. Lachapelle-Miller

SUMMARY

The chief implementation aid to the director of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families, who was appointed to serve as a member of the Providence Juvenile Hearing Board, was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from simultaneously serving in both positions.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(2\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(b\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-6

Re: Joshua D. Ferreira

SUMMARY

The proposed alternate supervisory chain of command, as modified within the advisory opinion, was sufficient to insulate a captain in the Tiverton Fire Department, who had been recommended by the Tiverton Fire Chief to become the Tiverton Deputy Fire Chief, from conflicts of interest arising out of the captain's anticipated position, given that the captain's mother was employed by the Tiverton Fire Department as the fire chief's administrative assistant.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 Prohibited Activities – Nepotism \(36-14-5004\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-7

Re: Melanie Reeves

SUMMARY

The finance director at the Block Island School could carry out her duties as described in the advisory opinion in conformance with the Code of Ethics, notwithstanding that her spouse was expected to submit a bid in response to a request for proposal relating to a project at the school, because the Petitioner's limited duties relative to the project were ministerial in nature and would not directly financially impact her spouse.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 Reasonable Foreseeability \(36-14-7001\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 Prohibited Activities – Nepotism \(36-14-5004\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-8

Re: Mark Aramli

SUMMARY

A member of the Newport City Council qualified for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition against representing himself before the Newport Historic District Commission and the Newport Zoning Board of Review, both municipal agencies over which the City Council had appointing authority, in order to request approval of repairs and renovations he had planned for a home that he purchased in Newport.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-9

Re: Stanley Robert Traverse Jr.

SUMMARY

The senior advisor/director of civic programming and special projects for the Rhode Island Secretary of State was not prohibited from accepting a paid position as a second assistant coach to the women's softball team at Rhode Island College, given that the unique circumstances justified the application of the exception contained in R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-5(o)(5).

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws § [36-14-5](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.5.6 Revolving Door, "Employment" Defined \(36-14-5017\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-10

Re: Nicholas Anderson

SUMMARY

The proposed alternate supervisory chain of command was deemed sufficient to insulate the fire chief of the Cumberland Fire Department from conflicts of interest arising out of his brother's anticipated promotion to the rank of deputy chief of the same fire department.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 Prohibited Activities – Nepotism \(36-14-5004\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-11

Re: Jessica Purcell

SUMMARY

A member of the Chariho Regional School Committee, who in her private capacity was a member of the board of directors of Friends of Chariho for the Future, a non-profit organization, was instructed to follow the Ethics Commission's guidelines as outlined in the advisory opinion relative to the proper management of any conflicts of interest that might arise as a result of her simultaneous service in both positions.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.4.4 Transactions with Subordinates \(36-14-5011\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-12

Re: The Honorable Teresa Tanzi

SUMMARY

A member of the Rhode Island House of Representatives was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from submitting, discussing, and voting on legislation that would establish a regional parity floor whereby all Rhode Island hospitals, physicians, and advanced practice providers would be paid materially equivalent rates to those paid to their counterparts in Massachusetts and Connecticut, notwithstanding that the Petitioner's spouse was a practicing physician in Rhode Island who would be directly financially impacted by the passage of that legislation, given that the circumstances described in the advisory opinion justified the application of the class exception as set forth in Rhode Island General Laws § 36-14-7(b).

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); [36-14-7\(b\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-13

Re: Brianna Dixon

SUMMARY

A social caseworker with the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from accepting secondary employment as a clinician with The Inner You Counseling Center, a private entity, where she would provide therapeutic services to adolescents, provided that she followed the guidelines relative to the proper management of any conflicts of interest that might arise as result of her secondary employment.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-2\(12\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(b\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-14

Re: Neal Murphy

SUMMARY

A member of the New Shoreham Town Council was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in town council discussions and voting regarding a proposed ordinance regulating residential short-term rental properties, notwithstanding that his mother was a short-term rental property owner who would be subject to the ordinance if it passed, given that the circumstances justified the application of the class exception as set forth in R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-7(b).

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); [36-14-7\(b\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-15

Re: The Honorable Katherine S. Kazarian

SUMMARY

A legislator serving in the Rhode Island House of Representatives could participate in discussion and decision-making relative to proposed legislation that, if passed, would prohibit commercial motor trucks with a gross weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more from traveling on Route 114A, East Providence between Pawtucket Avenue and the Massachusetts state line, notwithstanding that her mother owned and resided in a home along this section of 114A.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); [36-14-7\(b\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 Reasonable Foreseeability \(36-14-7001\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-16

Re: Kelley Morris Salvatore, Esq.

SUMMARY

Consistent with the Petitioner's representations, the Code of Ethics would permit another attorney in the law firm by which the Petitioner, the solicitor for the Town of Cumberland, was employed to represent a private client before Cumberland's planning board, mayor, and town council.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-17

Re: The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson

SUMMARY

A legislator serving as a member of the Rhode Island Senate was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in the Senate's floor votes on legislation relating to the Rhode Island Pension System, notwithstanding that she was formerly employed as a teacher by the East Providence School Department and was serving in her private capacity as president of the National Education Association of Rhode Island, given that the circumstances justified the application of the class exception as set forth in R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-14-7(b).

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); [36-14-7\(b\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-18

Re: Edward A. Mello

SUMMARY

The town administrator for the Town of Jamestown qualified for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition against representing himself before the town planner and the zoning/building official over whom he had appointing and supervisory authority, given that the Petitioner wanted to add a garage to the home that he intended to become his personal residence, and that certain aspects of that project fell within the purview of the town planner and the zoning/building official.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-19

Re: Paul Jordan

SUMMARY

A data analyst with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, who as part of his public duties served as the assistant state liaison officer to the National Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund, was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from reviewing an application submitted by the Town of South Kingstown for the conversion of the use of a town lot for the construction of a new high school, notwithstanding that the Petitioner was a resident of the town.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-20

Re: Christian Lachapelle-Miller

SUMMARY

The chief implementation aide to the director of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families, who in his private capacity was the chief executive officer and founding president of Generous Heart, a private, non-profit organization, was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in Generous Heart's implementation of a memorandum of understanding between Generous Heart and Communities for People, a vendor to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(b\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-21

Re: Philip L. Hervey, AICP

SUMMARY

The Barrington town manager was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in the oversight, discussions, and decision-making relative to a redevelopment project in town under circumstances where the only developer to bid on the project initially intended to engage a real estate firm for the marketing and sale of certain real estate units that would be developed under the project, and notwithstanding that the Petitioner's spouse was employed by the real estate firm as its office manager.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(1\)](#); [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.3.1 Prohibited Activities – Nepotism \(36-14-5004\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-22

Re: Scott Millar

SUMMARY

A member of the Exeter Planning Board was permitted by the Code of Ethics to continue drafting proposed amendments and to later participate in discussions and decision-making relative to a possible amendment of the Exeter Rural Residential Compound ordinance, notwithstanding that the ordinance applied to his property.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 Reasonable Foreseeability \(36-14-7001\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-23

Re: Patrice Milos

SUMMARY

A member of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Life Science Hub could accept and serve in the position of interim president of the Life Science Hub until a permanent president/CEO was found and confirmed by the Rhode Island Senate, based on the Ethics Commission's finding that, under the circumstances, disallowing the Petitioner's employment in that position would have created a substantial hardship for the Life Science Hub.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws § [36-14-5\(b\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.5.1 Employment from Own Board \(36-14-5006\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-24

Re: Adam M. Millard, Esq.

SUMMARY

A member of the East Greenwich Historic District Commission qualified for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition on representing himself before his own agency in order to seek a certificate of appropriateness for planned renovations to his home.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-25

Re: Dennis Turano

SUMMARY

A member of the Middletown Town Council was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in town council discussions and decision-making regarding the revision of an ordinance regulating residential short-term rental properties, notwithstanding that the Petitioner owned such a property, given that the revised ordinance, if passed, would have applied only to new residential short-term rental properties and not to existing ones.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 Reasonable Foreseeability \(36-14-7001\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-26

Re: Leon Amarant

SUMMARY

A member of the Middletown Planning Board was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in planning board discussions and decision-making regarding the revision of an ordinance regulating residential short-term rental properties, notwithstanding that the Petitioner, his parents, and certain of his business associates owned such properties, given that the revised ordinance, if passed, would have applied only to new residential short-term rental properties and not to existing ones.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.5 Reasonable Foreseeability \(36-14-7001\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-27

Re: William Nash

SUMMARY

A member of the Middletown Planning Board who was also a member of the Middletown Public Schools Building Committee was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from participating in planning board discussions and decision-making on matters in which he had participated and voted on as a member of the building committee.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(2\)](#); [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-28

Re: Joseph Graziano

SUMMARY

A senior public information specialist for the Rhode Island Department of State who had declared his candidacy for the Rhode Island House of Representatives was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from receiving campaign contributions from lobbyists, notwithstanding that in the course of his public employment the Petitioner was tasked with discretionary duties involving lobbyists, given that the Petitioner intended to recuse from those duties.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(g\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.4.4 Transactions with Subordinates \(36-14-5011\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-29

Re: Frederick M. Bodington, III

SUMMARY

The Petitioner, who was offered the position of director of the Little Compton Department of Public Works, and who in his private capacity owned and operated a property management company for which he held a trash hauler permit, collected trash for private clients and disposed of it at the town's transfer station over which the Department of Public Works director had supervisory authority, was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from accepting the director position and continuing to dispose of trash at the town's transfer station.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-2\(12\)](#); [36-14-2\(13\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-30

Re: Sagree Sharma

SUMMARY

The Capital Projects Fund administrator in the Pandemic Recovery Office of the Rhode Island Department of Administration was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from becoming a member of the Providence Historic District Commission and from then serving simultaneously in both positions.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(2\)](#); [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-31

Re: Joshua Berry

SUMMARY

The chief of municipal planning and programming at the Rhode Island Department of Housing was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from accepting other employment providing part-time town planner services on a contractual basis to the Town of New Shoreham, consistent with the conditions set forth in the advisory opinion.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(12\)](#); [36-14-2\(13\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(b\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-32

Re: Gregory Mark Dantas

SUMMARY

A member of the East Greenwich Historic District Commission qualified for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition on representing himself before his own board in order to allow him to seek a certificate of appropriateness for the construction of a structure consisting of a three-car garage and a living space above it on his residential property located in the East Greenwich historic district.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-33

Re: Gregory Mark Dantas

SUMMARY

A member of the East Greenwich Historic District Commission who in his private capacity owned and operated a real estate brokerage firm, qualified for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition on representing himself, either personally or through a representative, before his own board, in order to allow him to seek a certificate of appropriateness for the installation of solar panels on a building that housed the headquarters of his firm and was located in the East Greenwich historic district.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-34

Re: Andrew D. Kettle, NRP, I/C

SUMMARY

The Code of Ethics precluded the Petitioner from accepting the position of emergency management director for the Town of Charlestown, given that the Petitioner was privately employed, and intended to remain privately employed, as chief of Charlestown Ambulance-Rescue Service, a nonprofit corporation that at that time contracted with the town to provide emergency medical services.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(8\)](#); [36-14-2\(9\)](#); [36-14-2\(12\)](#); [36-14-2\(13\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(b\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.3 Additional Definitions \(36-14-2002\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#); [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-35

Re: Derrik Trombley

SUMMARY

A member-elect of the Warren Town Council, who in his private capacity served as a trustee of the George Hail Free Library in Warren, a private entity, was advised to follow the Ethics Commission's guidelines relative to the proper management of any conflicts of interest that might arise because of his simultaneous service in both positions.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-2\(3\)](#); [36-14-2\(7\)](#); [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-36

Re: Shelley Peterson

SUMMARY

A member of the Providence City Council was not prohibited by the Code of Ethics from accepting private employment with a state vendor in a position that worked with the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency on municipal grant management, while continuing to simultaneously serve on the city council.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(a\)](#); [36-14-5\(b\)](#); [36-14-5\(d\)](#); [36-14-7\(a\)](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.2.1 Additional Circumstances Warranting Recusal \(36-14-5002\)](#)

ADVISORY OPINION 2024-37

Re: David Sisson

SUMMARY

A member of the Pawtucket Historic District Commission qualified for a hardship exception to the Code of Ethics' prohibition on representing himself before his own board in order to allow him to seek a certificate of appropriateness for maintenance and repair to his residence.

Code Citations

R.I. Gen. Laws §§ [36-14-5\(e\)](#); [36-14-6](#); and [520-RICR-00-00-1.1.4 Representing Oneself or Others, Defined \(36-14-5016\)](#)