

ORDINANCE 2018 – O - 17

**AN ORDINANCE EXTENDING THE PERIOD FOR FILING CLAIMS
INVOLVING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Public Act 100-0554, the Village adopted a formal policy prohibiting sexual harassment by Ordinance 2018-O-1; and

WHEREAS, Public Act 100-1066 was recently enacted into law, and it extends the period for filing claims of discrimination, including sexual harassment, with the Department of Human Rights from 180 days to 300 days; and

WHEREAS, the Village is required by statute to modify its adopted policy to reflect this change in the limitations period; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it Ordained by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Winthrop Harbor Illinois as follows:

SECTION ONE: Chapter 31 of the Winthrop Harbor Municipal Code is hereby amended as set forth on the attached Exhibit A “Sexual Harassment Prohibition Policy”, with additions underlined and deletions stricken.

SECTION TWO: This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval and publication as required by law.

**PASSED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF WINTHROP HARBOR,
ILLINOIS, ON THIS 20TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2018.**

ATTEST:

DR. MICHAEL BRUNO, MAYOR

JULIE RITTENHOUSE, VILLAGE CLERK

EXHIBIT A

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PROHIBITION POLICY

§ 31.160 STATE REGULATIONS ADOPTED.

The regulations of Public Act 100-0554 (hereinafter referred to as the “Act” in this subchapter), are hereby adopted by reference and made applicable to the elected officials, officers and employees of the village to the extent required by the Act.

§ 31.161 POLICY ADOPTED.

As required by the Act, the following policy provisions (§§ 31.160 – 31.170) are hereby adopted, and are expressly applicable to all elected officials, officers and employees of the Village:

§ 31.162 PROHIBITION ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is unlawful to harass a person because of that person’s sex. The courts have determined that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination under Title VII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991. All persons have a right to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable misconduct which affects individuals of all genders and sexual orientations. It is a policy of the Village of Winthrop Harbor to prohibit harassment of any person by any municipal official, municipal agent, municipal employee or municipal agency or office on the basis of sex or gender. All municipal officials, municipal agents, municipal employees and municipal agencies or offices are prohibited from sexually harassing any person, regardless of any employment relationship or lack thereof.

§ 31.162 DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This policy adopts the definition of sexual harassment as stated in the Illinois Human Rights Act, which currently defines sexual harassment as:

Any unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors or any conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment,
- (2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or

- (3) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Conduct which may constitute sexual harassment includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Verbal: sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, insults, humor, and jokes about sex, anatomy or gender-specific traits, sexual propositions, threats, repeated requests for dates, or statements about other employees, even outside of their presence, of a sexual nature.
- Non-verbal: suggestive or insulting sounds (whistling), leering, obscene gestures, sexually suggestive bodily gestures, "catcalls", "smacking" or "kissing" noises.
- Visual: posters, signs, pin-ups or slogans of a sexual nature, viewing pornographic material or websites.
- Physical: touching, unwelcome hugging or kissing, pinching, brushing the body, any coerced sexual act or actual assault.
- Textual/Electronic: "sexting" (electronically sending messages with sexual content, including pictures and video), the use of sexually explicit language, harassment, cyber stalking and threats via all forms of electronic communication (e-mail, text/picture/video messages, intranet/on-line postings, blogs, instant messages and social network websites like Facebook and Twitter).

The most severe and overt forms of sexual harassment are easier to determine. On the other end of the spectrum, some forms of sexual harassment are subtler and depend, to some extent, on individual perception and interpretation. The courts will assess sexual harassment by a standard of what would offend a "reasonable person." The village administration, in enforcing this subchapter will utilize that same standard.

§31.163 PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

An employee who either observes sexual harassment or believes herself/himself to be the object of sexual harassment should deal with the incident(s) as directly and firmly as possible by clearly communicating her/his position to the offending employee, and her/his immediate supervisor. It is not necessary for sexual harassment to be directed at the person making the report.

However, persons wishing to make a report of sexual harassment and who are uncomfortable with reporting it within the ordinary chain of command may (for this sole purpose) ignore the chain of command and make the report with any supervisory person described in this section, and may do so anonymously. This provision is specifically intended to include instances where the alleged harasser holds a supervisory position over the reporting person.

Any employee may report conduct which is believed to be sexual harassment, including the following:

- *Electronic/Direct Communication.* If there is sexual harassing behavior in the workplace, the harassed employee should directly and clearly express her/his objection that the

conduct is unwelcome and request that the offending behavior stop. The initial message may be verbal. If subsequent messages are needed, they should be put in writing in a note or a memo.

- *Contact with Supervisory Personnel.* At the same time direct communication is undertaken, or in the event the employee feels threatened or intimidated by the situation, the problem must be promptly reported to the immediate supervisor of the person making the report, a department head, a director of human resources, an ethics officer, the Village Administrator, or the Mayor.

The employee experiencing what he or she believes to be sexual harassment must not assume that the employer is aware of the conduct. If there are no witnesses and the victim fails to notify a supervisor or other responsible officer, the municipality will not be presumed to have knowledge of the harassment.

- *Resolution Outside Municipality.* The purpose of this policy is to establish prompt, thorough and effective procedures for responding to every report and incident so that problems can be identified and remedied by the municipality. However, all municipal employees have the right to contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for information regarding filing a formal complaint with those entities. An IDHR complaint must be filed within ~~180~~ 300 days of the alleged incident(s) unless it is a continuing offense. A complaint with the EEOC must be filed within 300 days.

Documentation of any incident may be submitted with any report (what was said or done, the date, the time and the place), including, but not limited to, written records such as letters, notes, memos and telephone messages.

All allegations, including anonymous reports, will be accepted and investigated regardless of how the matter comes to the attention of the municipality. However, because of the serious implications of sexual harassment charges and the difficulties associated with their investigation and the questions of credibility involved, the claimant's willing cooperation is a vital component of an effective inquiry and an appropriate outcome.

§31.164 PROHIBITION ON RETALIATION FOR REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT ALLEGATIONS

No municipal official, municipal agency, municipal employee or municipal agency or office shall take any retaliatory action against any municipal employee due to a municipal employee's:

1. Disclosure or threatened disclosure of any violation of this policy,
2. The provision of information related to or testimony before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any violation of this policy, or
3. Assistance or participation in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy, retaliatory action means the reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, denial of promotion or transfer, or change in the terms or conditions of employment of any municipal employee that is taken in retaliation for a municipal employee's involvement in protected activity pursuant to this policy.

No individual making a report will be retaliated against even if a report made in good faith is not substantiated. In addition, any witness will be protected from retaliation.

Similar to the prohibition against retaliation contained herein, the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/15-10) provides whistleblower protection from retaliatory action such as reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, or denial of promotion or transfer that occurs in retaliation for an employee who does any of the following:

1. Discloses or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or to a public body an activity, policy, or practice of any officer, member, State agency, or other State employee that the State employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule, or regulation,
2. Provides information to or testifies before any public body conducting an investigation, hearing, or inquiry into any violation of a law, rule, or regulation by any officer, member, State agency or other State employee, or
3. Assists or participates in a proceeding to enforce the provisions of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

Pursuant to the Whistleblower Act (740 ILCS 174/15(a)), an employer may not retaliate against an employee who discloses information in a court, an administrative hearing, or before a legislative commission or committee, or in any other proceeding, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation. In addition, an employer may not retaliate against an employee for disclosing information to a government or law enforcement agency, where the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a State or federal law, rule, or regulation. (740 ILCS 174/15(b)).

According to the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/6-101), it is a civil rights violation for a person, or for two or more people to conspire, to retaliate against a person because he/she has opposed that which he/she reasonably and in good faith believes to be sexual harassment in employment, because he/she has made a charge, filed a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

An employee who is suddenly transferred to a lower paying job or passed over for a promotion after filing a complaint with IDHR or EEOC, may file a retaliation charge – due within ~~180~~ 300 days (IDHR) or 300 days (EEOC) of the alleged retaliation.

§ 31.165 CONSEQUENCES OF A VIOLATION OF THE PROHIBITION ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In addition to any and all other discipline that may be applicable pursuant to municipal policies, employment agreements, procedures, employee handbooks and/or collective bargaining agreement, any person who violates this policy or the Prohibition on Sexual Harassment contained in 5 ILCS 430/5-65, may be subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 per offense, applicable discipline or discharge by the municipality and any applicable fines and penalties established pursuant to local ordinance, State law or Federal law. Each violation may constitute a separate offense. Any discipline imposed by the municipality shall be separate and distinct from any penalty imposed by an ethics commission and any fines or penalties imposed by a court of law or a State or Federal agency.

§ 31.166 CONSEQUENCES FOR KNOWINGLY MAKING A FALSE REPORT

A false report is a report of sexual harassment made by an accuser using the sexual harassment report to accomplish some end other than stopping sexual harassment or retaliation for reporting sexual harassment. A false report is not a report made in good faith which cannot be proven. Given the seriousness of the consequences for the accused, a false or frivolous report is a severe offense that can itself result in disciplinary action. Any person who intentionally makes a false report alleging a violation of any provision of this policy shall be subject to discipline or discharge pursuant to applicable municipal policies, employment agreements, procedures, employee handbooks and/or collective bargaining agreements.

In addition, any person who intentionally makes a false report alleging a violation of any provision of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act to an ethics commission, an inspector general, the State Police, a State's Attorney, the Attorney General, or any other law enforcement official is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor. An ethics commission may levy an administrative fine of up to \$5,000 against any person who intentionally makes a false, frivolous or bad faith allegation.

§ 31.167 EXISTING ORDINANCES OR POLICIES.

This subchapter shall be deemed to supersede any and all existing ordinances or policies which regulate the conduct of village elected officials, officers or employees, but only to the extent of the regulations set forth in this subchapter.

§ 31.168 FUTURE AMENDMENTS.

Any amendment to the Act that becomes effective after the effective date of this subchapter shall be incorporated into this subchapter by reference and shall be applicable to the regulated activities. However, any amendment that makes its provisions optional for adoption by

municipalities shall not be incorporated into this subchapter by reference without formal action by the corporate authorities of the village.

§ 31.169 FUTURE ACTS DEEMED UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

(A) If the Illinois Supreme Court declares the Act unconstitutional in its entirety, then this subchapter shall be repealed as of the date that the Illinois Supreme Court's decision becomes final and not subject to any further appeals or rehearings. This subchapter shall be deemed repealed without further action by the corporate authorities of the village if the Act is found unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court.

(B) If the Illinois Supreme Court declares part of the Act unconstitutional but upholds the constitutionality of the remainder of the Act, or does not address the remainder of the Act, then the remainder of the Act as adopted by this subchapter shall remain in full force and effect; however, that part of this subchapter relating to the part of the Act found unconstitutional shall be deemed repealed without further action by the corporate authorities of the village.

§ 31.170 PENALTY.

Any person found to be violating any provision of this subchapter for which no other penalty is specified shall be fined not less than \$50.00 nor more than \$750.00.