

Town of Bellingham - Social Media Policy

The Town of Bellingham has established guidelines for the creation and use of the Town's social media sites. Maintaining and updating social media sites will be used strictly for conveying information about the Town to the public. The Town of Bellingham's official website (www.BellinghamMA.org) will be the primary internet presence. Other Social Media sites may be used upon authorization from the Town Administrator and the Director of Information Technology. Wherever possible, all authorized Social Media sites shall link back to the Town of Bellingham's official website.

Social Media refers to the creation and exchange of information amongst individuals through Internet based applications. This includes but is not limited to information in the form of text, pictures, links to other sites or any other type of communication posted to the approved Social Media site. Examples of Social Media sites include: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube etc.

The establishment and use by any Town department, division or employee of an official Town of Bellingham Social Media site is subject to approval by the Town Administrator and the Director of Information Technology. Once a site is requested and established by a Town department, the department head shall be the Site Administrator of said site unless he/she designates another member of the department. It is the responsibility of the department head to monitor and assure that the established site is abiding to all guidelines outlined in this policy.

Before a Social Media site is established, the Site Administrator must meet with the Director of Information Technology to review this policy. They must also submit Social Media account credentials to the Director of Information Technology upon creation and any time credentials may change.

The Town shall be the sole owner of all Social Media accounts and reserves the right to remove any postings which contain inappropriate content including but not limited to:

1. That which promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, physical and mental disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, family status, military status, or source of income.
2. Defamatory or personal attacks.
3. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
4. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law, rule or regulation;
5. Encouragement of illegal activity

Any content that is deemed to not be in the best interest of the Town will be removed.

Any Town Employee who is not a Site Administrator and would like specific content posted to the Town's Social Media site(s) shall submit their request to the Director of Information Technology.

If a Site Administrator receives a request requiring a response from the Town, the Site Administrator may direct the request to the Town Administrator, Director of Information Technology or the appropriate department for response.

Content posted by a member of the public to any Town Social Media site shall not reflect the opinions or policies of the Town.

The Town reserves the right to deny access to any individual who violates the Town's Social Media Policy without prior notice.

Political endorsements and for-profit advertisements or products for sale shall not be posted. It shall be understood that the Town of Bellingham's Social Media sites are not maintained 24x7 and immediate responses to any requests via post, email etc may not occur.

When a Town employee posts or responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a Town employee, the employee should do so in the name of the Town department, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees except as required for Town business.

It shall be understood that any official Town of Bellingham Twitter account will not automatically 'follow' people who follow us. The Town reserves the right to reply or decline to reply to any/all comments posted to the Twitter account(s).

All Social Media Accounts are deemed public records under the Massachusetts General Laws. All content posted shall adhere to the State of Massachusetts public records retention policies. Any content that was posted and then removed shall also be retained by the site administrator as per state retention policy. Any content maintained in a Social Media format that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to violations of law and disciplinary action where appropriate.

This policy shall take effect immediately. _____
Date

Michael J. Connor, Chairman

Jerald A. Mayhew

Michael J. Soter, Vice Chairman

Daniel M. Spencer

Edward F. Featherston