

TOWN OF BOW, NH, SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide (govern) the creation, use, administration, and oversight of Town Social Media sites to aid disseminating Town specific information to the public and facilitate better communications. This policy to social media in general, as technological advancements will likely create new platforms that this policy will also be applicable to. This policy does not have any bearing on the use of the official Town Website (<http://bownh.gov>) that will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet resource.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Post:** Content and individual/organization shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on the internet.
2. **Social Media:** A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace), microblogging sites (Twitter), photo- and video-sharing sites (Instagram, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites.

GUIDELINES

1. The creation of Town Social Media accounts is subject to approval by the Department Head or the Town Manager. (Request/Approval form included)
2. Maintenance/administration/overview of the Town Social Media accounts and content shall only be done by a representative appointed by the Department Head or the Town Manager.
3. Where possible, only Town authorized contact information should be used for Social Media account set-up, monitoring, and access. In case of a personal email use, the Department Head or the Town Manager should serve as backup administrator.
4. The Town of Bow reserves the right to edit the content or terminate any Town Social Media account at any time without notice.
5. All posts/comments/shared posts on the Town Social Media accounts shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and policies, as well as policies set by each individual platform that the Town Social Media page is based on.
6. The content posted on Town Social Media accounts should pertain to Town-sponsored or Town-endorsed announcements, activities, events, services, or programs. Any content generated by any party other than town officials (e.g. shared content) must meet the test of common public interest and must be nonpartisan and noncommercial.
7. Any content maintained on Town Social media accounts that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communications, and communication submitted for posting, may be considered public record.
8. Employees representing the Town on Town Social Media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative of the Town in accordance with all applicable Town policies. Town employees posting on Town Social Media accounts on behalf of the Town shall express the views of the Town and not their own personal views.

9. Any comments made on the Town Social Media accounts not by the appropriately authorized personnel would be the opinion of the commentator or poster only and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town. A relevant disclaimer should be posted on all Town owned Social Media accounts.
10. All Town owned Social Media accounts should clearly indicate that posted content /comments will be monitored by the Town and are subject to public disclosure.
11. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any comments/content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.
12. Postings to Town Social Media accounts shall **NOT** contain any of the following:
 - a. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin, sexual orientation
 - b. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content.
 - c. Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - d. Potentially libelous statements
 - e. Plagiarized or copy-written material
 - f. Private personal information published without consent of individual
 - g. Comments not related to the original topic, including random unintelligible comments
 - h. Commercial promotion, advertising, or spam
 - i. Comments in support of or in opposition to any political campaigns or ballot measures.
 - j. Encouragement of illegal activity or violation of any federal, state, or local law.
 - k. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.

NON-OFFICIAL/PERSONAL USE

Town employees who use social media and social networking services and tools for strictly personal use outside of the workplace do not require approval to do so. However, the Town recognizes that these types of tools can sometimes blur the line between professional and personal interactions. Therefore, employees are reminded that as representatives of the Town the above rules and guidelines must be taken into consideration when participating in these services at any time, particularly when identifying themselves as employees of the Town or when context might lead to that conclusion. Employees should use discretion and common sense when employing social media to help prevent inadvertently compromising professional, legal, or ethical standards. Employees should refrain from using social media services and tools for personal use while on work time or when using Town provided equipment, unless it is work-related as authorized by the Department Head. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using social media sites at the workplace, or when using Town computers, systems or other technology. The Town reserves the right to access, view, and act upon any information on its computers, systems or other technology without notice. In a publicly accessible forum, Town employees may not disclose any Town-related information that is not already considered public information. This rule applies even in circumstances where password or other privacy controls are implemented. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action. When Town employees participate in a discussion on a publicly accessible forum that is not Town owned, they need to clearly identify themselves as Town representatives when speaking on behalf of the Town. This policy does not, however, prevent Town

employees from discussing the terms or conditions of their employment, unfair labor practices, or otherwise exercising their rights and expressing their personal views when speaking as private citizens.

COMPLIANCE

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action as set forth in the Town of Bow Personnel Policy.

POLICY CHANGES

The Town reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.