



Town of North Yarmouth

COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

SECTION 1 - PURPOSE

This purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the creation, use, and distribution of public communications and social media as a means of informing the citizens of North Yarmouth.

For purposes of this policy, communications and social media are understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, Blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communicative content posed on a Town of North Yarmouth social media site.

SECTION 2 - STATEMENT

The Town of North Yarmouth (Town) has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the Town regarding public and social media.

The chosen means of active communication between the Town and its citizens are local newspapers, electronic newsletters, electronic e-mails, postcards, postal correspondence, postal newsletter, local community posters, public meetings broadcasts, cable channel bulletin board, Facebook, and the Town website.

Content for announcements can be created by town officials, the Town Manager, Department Heads, the Communications Committee, or other town boards and committees. These announcements reflect matters and issues of common public interest and information that relates to the Town's functions, objectives, and mission.

The Select Board, Town Manager, or their designee will approve the content generated by any party other than that provided by town officials. If content is generated by any party other than town officials, it must meet the test of common public interest and must be nonpartisan and noncommercial.

SECTION 3 - GENERAL MANAGEMENT

1. The establishment and use by any Town department of the Town's public and social media are subject to approval by the Town Manager. The establishment and use by any Town committee of the Town's public and social media are subject to approval by the Select Board, Town Manager, or their designee.
2. Town communication and social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the Town and that they follow the town's Communications & Social Media Policy.
3. Wherever possible, Town social media sites should link back to the official Town of North Yarmouth website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the town.
4. The Town Manager or his/her designee will monitor content on the Town communications and social media sites to ensure adherence to both the town's Communications & Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town.

5. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the Town Manager for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date, and identity of the person or organization posting, when available.
6. These guidelines shall be displayed to users and made available by hyperlink.
7. The Town will approach the use of communications and social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.
8. The Town website at <http://NorthYarmouthmaine.org> will remain the Town's primary and predominant Internet presence.
9. All Town public and social media communications and/or sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.
10. All Town public and social media communications and/or sites are subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act. 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.
11. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the Town may be removed.
12. Employees representing the Town via public and/or social media communications must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Town in accordance with all Town policies.
13. When a Town employee responds to a comment in his/her capacity as a Town employee, he/she shall not share personal information about himself/herself or other Town employees.
14. This policy may be amended at any time by the Select Board.

SECTION 4 - CONTENT

As a public entity, the Town must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.

1. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted in or on any Town public and social media form of communications. Town sites are subject to removal and/or restriction by the Select Board, Town Manager, or their designee:
 - a. Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments.
 - b. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and or language.
 - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin.
 - d. Defamatory or personal attacks.
 - e. Threats to any person or organization.
 - f. Comments in support of or in opposition to any political campaigns or ballot measures.

- g. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business product for sale.
 - h. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
 - i. Encouragement of illegal activity.
 - j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 - k. Content that violates a legal ownership, such as copyright, or any party.
2. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Town public or media site is 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.
 3. The Town reserves the right to deny access to Town public or social media sites for any individual who violates Communications & Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
 4. All comments posted to any Town Facebook site are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the Town reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent that Facebook takes appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

Adopted by the Select Board July 21, 2015

