



TOWN OF NEW IPSWICH

661 Turnpike Rd, New Ipswich, NH 03071

Board of Selectmen



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose

The Town of New Ipswich supports the use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and exchange of information to best meet the needs of the Town and its inhabitants. This social media Policy is intended to establish guidelines for the creation and use of social media accounts/sites by the Town of New Ipswich and its staff.

This policy shall apply to:

All staff of the Town of New Ipswich, where "staff" is defined as:

- Regular full-time employees
- Part-time employees
- Interns
- Temporary/ Seasonal employees
- Appointed officials
- Volunteers

Elected officials of the Town are still subject to all State and Federal laws and regulations

Definitions

- 'Social media/ sites/ socials': Refers to a network, website, application, platform, or some combination in which content is created and shared by individuals or groups to facilitate user participation, networking, collaboration, or dissemination of information.
- 'Town social media sites': Refers to web-based sites and accounts established and maintained by the Town and over which the Town has control over all postings, except for advertisements or messaging by the media site's owners or vendors. The Town social media sites will supplement and not replace the Town's standard methods of communication and disbursement of information.
- "Post" or "posting" refers to information, images, articles, videos and any other communication shared by a social media account.
- "Account managers" refers to a designated Town employee trusted and tasked with the management of the Town's online presence across various social media or web-based sites platforms. An account manager may be responsible for one or all Town accounts.

General Policy

The Town's official website shall remain the Town's primary means of web-based communication and disbursement of information. Town social media accounts serve the primary purpose of providing information to constituents related to town updates, events, services, and local initiatives. Employees and volunteers representing the Town or acting in their capacity for the Town are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in online spaces and in accordance with State and Federal laws regarding web-based interactions. The Town reserves the right to deny access to Town social media sites to any individual who violates the Town's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.

Recommended Protocols and Procedures

Account ownership and management:

- No social media sites or accounts shall be created to represent the Town or its subsequent departments without the prior approval of the Board of Selectmen or their designee(s). Any such sites are considered property of the Town.
- Town social media sites will be maintained and operated by an assigned individual or designated few employees, referred to as 'account managers.' These individuals, designated by the Board of Selectmen or their designee(s), will have access to all account credentials (including usernames and passwords). Account managers are expected to keep this information in a secure location and are not permitted for any reason to store Town account credentials on personal devices.

Account Credentials and Security:

- All Town social media accounts and sites shall utilize authorized Town contact information and devices for account set-up, monitoring, and access.
- All usernames and passwords should be stored in a secure location and shared with the Town Administrator along with answers to security questions, if applicable, to the account so that at least two Town employees have access to the account at any given time.
- Content to be posted to Town maintained accounts only.

Guidelines of Engagement:

Employees representing the Town on official Town social media sites shall conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with all Town policies. Town social media sites must clearly state they are maintained and operated by the Town and thus operate in compliance with the Town's Social Media Policy. Social media sites representing the Town and its subsequent departments shall link back to the Town's website for forms, documents, online services, and other information needed to conduct business with the Town whenever possible.

Town social media sites are expected to comply with the user terms and conditions of each respective site as required by the provider, including its privacy policies. Town media sites shall adhere to applicable state, local, and federal laws. All Town social media sites are subject to the New Hampshire Right to Know Law (NH RSA 91-A).

Content of Town social media is subject to oversight by the Board of Selectmen or their designee(s).

Town of New Ipswich staff, whether operating under the Town's social media account or their personal account, are prohibited from sharing any data or information they may have access to due to their employment with the Town that is confidential, private, or otherwise not for public distribution. Town of New Ipswich staff shall not use the Town of New Ipswich's social media sites for personal use or to express their personal views. Any questions related to the status of information should be directed to the employee's supervisor, Board of Selectmen or their designee(s). All communications related to their role shall be conducted through designated, official Town accounts (email, social media, etc.) to maintain credibility and avoid confusion.

Content Guidelines:

Employees shall refer to the below for guidance about content for posts on Town social media accounts:

- **Accuracy and truthfulness:** Information posted should be accurate, verified, and consistent with official Town data and messaging.
- **Professionalism:** Posts must remain professional and respectful in tone. Employees will refrain from the use of inflammatory or explicit language on Town accounts.
- **Topic:** Posts should focus on information related to town services, events, and initiatives. Use of Town accounts to express personal opinions or promote ideological or political agendas is prohibited.
- **Compliance with laws and policies:** Adhere to all relevant laws and regulations regarding privacy, copyright, trademark protections, data protection, and open records.

- **Public Comment:** All public comments must be turned off for any posts made upon adoption of this policy. Any existing comments cannot be deleted.

Personal use of social media:

The Town recognizes and shall not infringe on an employee's right to have and manage personal social media accounts. However, employees should exercise caution when engaging online. Employees should keep in mind that posts, once shared, are public and may remain as such for a long period of time or forever. Any posts or comments made or shared by a Town of New Ipswich employee to their personal account are personal expressions and not reflective of the opinions or policies of the Town.

If a personal email, posting, or other electronic message could be construed to be an official communication of the Town, the following disclaimer is required: "The views and opinions expressed are my own and do not reflect those of the Town of New Ipswich."

Employees are prohibited from utilizing personal accounts for professional matters related to the Town.

Employees should refrain from reference to their position, role, or employment with the Town when commenting or acting in a personal capacity on social media.

Disclaimer

The Town does not collect, maintain, or otherwise use the personal information of individuals stored on any third-party application or site in any way other than to communicate town-related information to users on that respective site. Users may at any time remove themselves from the Town's "friends", "follow", or "fan" list, or any other group associated with the town or ask that the Town remove them. Users should be aware that each third-party website and application has its own privacy policies outside of the Town's control. Users are subject to the site's terms and conditions when they create their accounts and are encouraged to do their own research into protecting their privacy. Users are further encouraged to protect their privacy by not posting on publicly accessible sites information such as first and last name, school, age, phone number, email, or phone number.

The Town reserves the right to terminate any Town social media site/ account at any time and without notice.

Original approved May 27, 2025

Amended

~~Approved~~ on January 27, 2026

Jason Somero, Chair:



Shawn Talbot :



Lou Alvarez:



