

2018



# Web Site Publishing Policy

TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
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## 1 Purpose

To address the increasing importance of the Internet and the changes it brings to the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Town of Southborough departments, boards & committees may consider using web site publishing tools to reach a broader audience.

Department Heads and boards/committees should carefully consider the commitment in time and resources that maintaining such a site will entail before embarking on it. Who will create it and add content? Will there be interaction with the public, and how will that be managed and moderated? Do the people involved have enough time available to properly oversee and maintain the site?

The Town of Southborough has an overriding interest in deciding what is published on behalf of the town on websites sites. Therefore, this policy establishes guidelines for the web site publishing.

The purpose of this policy is to provide notice to employees as well as appointed and elected board and committee members that their use of web site publishing must conform to the law and this policy. This policy is designed to promote and govern the professional and personal use of web site publishing in a responsible manner and to avoid uses that can: (1) breach confidentiality by revealing protected information about the Town, its citizens, or its employees; (2) expose the Town to liability for behavior that may be harassing, offensive, or maliciously false; or (3) interfere with productivity and/or ability to perform the duties and responsibilities as Employees and Officials of the Town.

This policy shall be reviewed by the Municipal Technology Committee annually. Any changes to this policy shall be presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

## 2 Definitions

- **Primary Website** - The Town of Southborough Technology Department will maintain a website at [www.southboroughtown.com](http://www.southboroughtown.com) (or similar), where all departments, boards, and committees shall have at least minimal content to include any minutes and agendas posted by the Town Clerk's Office.
- **Secondary Website** - In the case of some department/board/committees, it may be necessary to maintain a website hosted independent of the primary website. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, functionality provided by a third party, which is otherwise unavailable on the Primary Website, membership in regional organizations, etc.
- **Unofficial Website** - Unofficial Websites are those that have not been approved by the Town and are not maintained by any Town body (board/committee/department).
- **Parked Domain** - Refers to the registration of an internet domain name without that domain being associated with any services such as e-mail or a website.

## 3 General Provisions

- Official Town Websites (both Primary & Secondary) may only be used to further the official business of the Town.
- Such sites shall not be used to promote any political candidate or ballot initiative with the exception of official board/committee positions.

- With the exception of service provider information, no commercial entity shall be given preferred advertising on any official Town Web Site.

## 4 Creating a Secondary Website

The following steps shall be followed to establish a Secondary Website

- The Requesting entity (board/committee/department) will create a request for an Secondary Site to include:
  - A list of features not available on the Primary Website which require the use of a third-party website
  - Proposed third-party solution(s) including annual costs
  - A proposal on funding for the secondary site including, but not limited to, Hosting, Domain Name, Archiving, and Security Certificates.
- Request shall be presented to the Municipal Technology Committee (MTC) for evaluation of requested site.
- The requesting entity shall present a formal request to the governing body with a recommendation from the MTC.
- Upon receiving all required approvals, Administrator level permissions shall be granted to the Technology Manager
- Once the site is ready for the public, a link will be provided from the Primary Website

All Secondary Websites shall contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- A prominent link to the Town's Primary Website
- Distinguishing elements, such as the Town Seal, colors pallet, etc
- Contact information for the primary webmaster.

## 5 Maintaining Primary Website

### 5.1 News & Announcements

As the News & Announcements feature is one of the primary drivers of the eAlerts functionality, some care should be used to include the following elements when creating a new post:

- Department / Board / Committee Name in the Title. This will help recipients distinguish the information quickly.
- Clearly indicated effective dates (if applicable)

If it becomes necessary to modify an earlier post, content may only be altered or removed if users are clearly informed that such a change has been made. This may be accomplished in the following ways:

- Strike through the error and provide the corrected information; or
- Create a new post containing the corrected information, providing a link to the new post from the outdated post.

### 5.2 Minutes & Agendas

Members of the Town Clerk's Office are the only staff authorized to post Minutes and Agendas. This includes the attachment of meeting packets and other supporting documents.

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Refer to the Town Clerk's Office for proper procedures.

### 5.3 Calendar Events

**Meetings** – Posted only by the Town Clerk's Office with a properly submitted Agenda

**Public Events** – Public events, which do not fall under public meetings can be posted by a website editor

### 5.4 General Information

It is important to keep the information posted on any Town Website current. Remove pages/information when it is no longer relevant to Town Operations. This is not intended to remove information simply due to age. For example, minutes, agendas, decision documents, etc. should remain available for at least as long as the record retention requirements state. However, information for specific events, such as event fliers, should be removed once the event has past.

On the primary site, items should not be deleted, rather utilize the unpublish feature. This will allow for future recovery of the item.

## 6 Maintaining Secondary Websites

While the Technology Manager shall have administrative access to all Secondary Websites, it shall be the sole responsibility of the board/committee/department to maintain the Secondary Site.

For items such as Minutes & Agendas and Meeting Postings, Secondary sites should provide a link back to the Primary Site rather than post the Items independently

## 7 Domain Names

- The Technology Manager shall be responsible for maintaining all Domain Name Registrations.
- The cost of maintaining Domain Names may be charged back to Individual boards/committees/departments
- Once a Domain Name is no longer needed, it will be parked (ownership maintained by the Town) for a period of not less than 3 calendar years.
- The MTC shall review all parked domain names annually and provide a recommendation on continued maintenance.

## 8 Violations

Employees and Officials who fail to comply with the provisions of this Policy may be prohibited from, creating, managing, or posting content on official web sites.

Additionally, Any User who violates this Policy shall be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination of employment. The Town intends to follow each provision of this Policy but reserves the right to change any provision at any time if circumstances warrant or require. A failure to enforce this Policy does not constitute a subsequent waiver of any violation of this Policy. This Policy shall be read and interpreted in conjunction with all other Town policies and procedures.

## 9 Acknowledgement

I have read the Town of Southborough Information Technology Web Site Publishing Policy and understand its terms and conditions.

I have been given a copy of this policy and I agree to abide by this policy. I understand that my failure to abide by the policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my employment and or fines to recoup losses incurred by my abuse of this policy.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To be included in employee's personnel file.