

# Town of Ashland

## Social Media Policy & Guidelines

### Policy #59

#### I. Purpose of the Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to set policy guidelines related to Town of Ashland social media sites and applications. The primary mission of the Town's Social Media efforts will be focused on providing information on Town services and programs to the public.

#### II. Departments affected:

All Town Departments, Boards, Commissions, and Committees, except the Ashland Water & Sewer, Ashland Public Library, and Ashland Electric. Each creator of a Town Social Media site can have additional guidelines for their site so long as those guidelines do not conflict with any of the terms of these guidelines.

#### III. Definitions:

**Public Body:** any duly appointed/elected board, commission, and/or committee of the Town of Ashland.

**Social Media:** any blogs, other types of self-published online journals, and/or collaborative web-based discussion forums and networking platforms. Social Media facilitates an environment for the Town and users of such site to share opinions and information about Town related issues, events, and subjects. The Town supports participation in Social Media as an additional method by which to promote its services and resources. Example are, but not necessarily limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

#### IV. Policy:

It is the policy of the Town of Ashland to ensure that certain standards are set with respect to Social Media to serve all its constituents in a positive, productive manner. The Town supports the use of Social Media as a method to communicate information to its citizens regarding its Town government.

#### V. Procedures:

- 1) The primary mission of the Town's Social Media efforts will be focused on providing information on Town services and programs to the public.
- 2) Town Departments will assign appropriate personnel to manage individual department Social Media sites.
- 3) Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Town of Ashland Social Media sites and are subject to removal by the Town Administrator or his/her designees.

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- 4) Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments.
  - a. Profane, obscene, or pornographic content and/or language.
  - b. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination based on race, creed, color, age, religion, gender or national origin.
  - c. Defamatory or personal attacks.
  - d. Threats to any person or organization.
  - e. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures.
  - f. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
  - g. Encouragement of illegal activity.
  - h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety and security of public systems.
  - i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
  - j. Redundant or repetitive comments, with the same or similar content posted multiple times under various posts.
  - k. Content that would violate any other policy of the Town of Ashland.
  
- VI.** A comment stating an opinion, posted by a member of the public on any Town of Ashland Social Media site, is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement, or agreement by, the Town of Ashland, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town of Ashland.
  
- VII.** The Town of Ashland reserves the right to deny access to Town of Ashland Social Media sites for any individual who violates the Town of Ashland's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.
  
- VIII.** Town of Ashland Department Heads and public body chairs shall monitor their Social Media sites periodically during business hours for comments requesting responses from the Town and for comments in violation of this policy.
  
- IX.** Town of Ashland Department Heads, employees and officials may post content on their respective department's Social Media pages in their official capacity, if authorized to do so by their Department Head or by a majority vote of respective public body. Comments made by individual employees from their personal accounts are personal expressions and not Town representations. Such comments on personal accounts should clearly state that

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they are solely the expression of the individual.

- X.** Multiple member Boards, Committees, and Commissions should be sensitive to the use of Social Media in such a way so as not to inadvertently violate the spirit and intent of RSA 91-A, the State’s Right to Know Law, particularly as it pertains to public meetings.
  
- XI.** All comments posted to any Town of Ashland Social Media sites are bound by the respective statements of rights and responsibilities associated with those sites and the Town of Ashland reserves the right to report any violation of these statements to the appropriate Social Media site with the intent of the site taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action. This provision includes Twitter and similar services utilized by the Town.
  
- XII.** This policy shall be administered through the Selectmen’s Office. Specific questions regarding this policy may be directed to the Town Administrator’s office.
  
- XIII. Privacy:**  

The Town does not collect, maintain, or otherwise use the personal information stored on any third-party site in any way other than to communicate Town related information with users of that site. Users may remove themselves at any time from the Town’s “friends,” “follow,” or “fan” lists, or request that the Town remove them. Users should be aware that third party websites have their own privacy by not posting personally identifying information, such as last name, school, age, phone number, or address.
  
- XIV. Liability of Use:**  

The Town of Ashland assumes no liability regarding any event or interaction that takes place by any participant in any Town-sponsored Social Media and does not endorse content outside of the pages maintained by the Town and the posts created by Town staff during their work duties. The Town reserves the right to use any comments, posts, and messages on the Town’s Social Media sites for use in public relations and marketing materials. The Town is not responsible for other people viewing or accessing personal accounts/profiles that are left open on computers.
  
- XV. Participation:**  

Participation in the Town of Ashland’s Social Media implies agreement with all Town policies, including its Social Media Policy, and the terms of service of each individual third-party service. By posting a comment or other content you agree to indemnify the

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Town of Ashland and its officers, agents, and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred which arise out of or are related to the content that you post.

**XVI.** Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Town of Ashland is not obligated to take any of the actions contained in this Policy & Guidelines and will not be responsible or liable for content posted by any subscriber in any forum, message board, or other area within the Town's Social Media.

**XVII.** If a user does not agree to these terms, they are not to use the services provided.

**XVIII. Ongoing Use Evaluation:**

The role and utility of Social Media in relation to the goals and purposes of the Town of Ashland will be evaluated periodically by the Town staff and Board of Selectmen and may be terminated at any time without notice to subscribers.

**XIX. Severability:**

To the extent that any provisions of this policy conflict with State law, then State law shall prevail.

Approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018. Effective: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frances Newton, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Harold Lamos, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leigh Sharps

\_\_\_\_\_  
Casey Barney

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen DeWolfe

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**Acknowledgement of Receipt Form**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

**Department/Office/Public Body:** \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge the receipt of the Town of Ashland Social Media Policy & Guidelines dated \_\_\_\_\_. I have read the Social Media Policy & Guidelines, and I agree to comply with the policies contained in therein.

I understand that I have no expectation of privacy in my use of the Town of Ashland's Information Systems, including but not limited to its computers; computer network; e-mail accounts, Social Media accounts as defined in the Policy, access to the Internet and tools found on or transmitted over the Internet such as search engines, and Instant Messaging; or any file I may create, store, or transmit using any of those or related technologies. I am aware that the Town of Ashland may monitor or audit my use of those items or systems to ensure compliance with this Policy at any time in its sole discretion.

I understand that should the content of this Policy be changed in any way; the Town of Ashland may require an additional signature from me to indicate that I am aware of and understand any new policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

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**Account Registration Form**

(Please Print)

**Requestor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department/Office/Public Body:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Designated person to manage the Account:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Account to be created:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the Account to be created:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any alias or alternative name for the Account:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose/goals of the Account and/or designated target audience for the Account:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Start date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End date (if any):** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of the Requestor**  
(Dept. Head or Chair of a Public Body)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Approved:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Town Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**