



Social Media Policy

Town of Atkinson New Hampshire

Adopted: September 4 2015

Description:

The purpose of this policy is to govern the use of Atkinson specific social media by Town of Atkinson employees.

Please note: This Town of Atkinson, New Hampshire Policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle and modified if necessary to maintain consistency with RSAs and current business practices. In addition, the policy may change with or without prior notice at any time. However, the Town of Atkinson will make a reasonable effort to seek input prior to any changes.

Policy Update Log:

Last Update	Action Taken	By Whom
9/4/2015	Approved	BoS
4/11/2016	Amended adding ref. to Volunteer Social Media Coordinator	Bos
1/23/2023	Reviewed, format updated	Bos
3/25/2024	Expanded to include RTK, non-town sites and added detail	Bos

David Pacquette
 David Pacquette, Chair

Greg Spero
 Greg Spero

William M. Baldwin
 William M. Baldwin, Vice Chair

Wendy Barker
 Wendy Barker

Robert Worden
 Robert Worden

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to govern the use of Atkinson social media by Town of Atkinson employees. Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. It is intended to create an environment that enables improved communication with Atkinson residents wherever they are located and whenever the need or arises.

Applicability and Scope Statement:

This policy applies to all Town of Atkinson employees and volunteers. It applies to the use of social media used for Town business and includes, but is not limited to, Facebook and Vimeo accounts.

Background:

The use of social media is an effective way to communicate directly with residents in a timely manner. The use of social media technology follows the same standards of professional practice and conduct associated with everything else we do.

Definition:

"Social Media" is an umbrella term that encompasses the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation.

Policy:

The following policy applies to comments posted through any social media outlet of the Town:

1. As a public entity, the Town shall serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
2. Social media sites are established to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its residents. The town's website at <https://www.town-atkinsonnh.com/> will be the primary internet presence.
3. Social media sites established by the Town, and communication made by Town representatives while operating under their official Town capacities on social media, may be subject to RSA 91-A:4 *Minutes and Records Available for Public Inspection*. Therefore, information communicated for Town business on social media should be factual and approved by the authorized representative of the Town. Retention of social media information should follow the schedule as specified in the Town's Record retention Policy.
4. Approval by the Board of Selectmen or the Town Administrator is required for the establishment or use of any social media site to disseminate town information. Approval will be based on the following:
 - The department head owning the information source shall approve use of the site and is responsible for the content posted on the site.
 - A plan shall be provided which details the purpose of using the social media site and the information to be provided on the site. The employee(s) responsible for maintaining the social media site and or its information will be identified.
5. The town's IT Policies and Procedures shall be followed in any site creation or modification.

6. Town social media sites should link back to the official Town's website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town.
7. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and policies.
8. Comments made by individual employees from their personal accounts are personal expressions and not Town representations. Employees shall avoid providing town information that has not been approved for public dissemination.
9. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Town social media site is the opinion of the commentator, 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.
10. The Town reserves the right to deny access to Town social media sites for any individual who violates the Town's social media policy at any time and without prior notice.
11. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Town sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the Town Administrator.
 - a. Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments.
 - b. Profane, obscene, 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 or 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 interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
 - l. Redundant or repetitive comments, with the same or similar content posted multiple times under various posts.
 - m. Personal health information protected under HIPPA or other privacy laws.
12. Town department heads shall monitor their social media sites periodically during normal business hours for comments requesting responses from the Town and for comments in violation of this policy.
13. Town department heads, employees and certain officials may post content in their official capacity, if authorized to do so. When doing so, they shall log in as a Town social media administrator and sign the comment with their initials. If there is a question as to whether an item may be acceptable, the Town Administrator should be contacted.

All comments posted to any Town social media site are bound by that site's guidelines, and the Town reserves the right to report any violation of the site's guidelines to that site with the intent of that site taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.