

TOWN OF LYMAN

Communications & Social Media Policy

Adopted: January 7th, 2019

Amended: June 2, 2025

PURPOSE

The 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 Lyman. 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, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, YouTube, X (formerly known as Twitter), and LinkedIn. For purposes of this policy “comments” include information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communication content posed on a Town of Lyman’s social media site.

STATEMENT

The Town of Lyman (Town) has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the Town regarding public and social media. Active communication between the Town and its citizens may include local newspapers, electronic newspapers, electronic emails, electronic signs, postcards, postal correspondence, postal newsletter, local community posters, public meetings, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and the Town Website.

Content for announcement can be created by Town Officials, Town Employees. These announcements reflect matters and issues of common public interest and information that relates to Town’s functions, objectives, and missions. The Town Manager will approve the content generated by any party. 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.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

The establishment and use by any Town department of the Town’s public and social media are subject to the approval of the Town Manager. Town communication and social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the Town, and they follow the Town’s communication and social media policy. The Town Manager (or their designee) will monitor the content on the Town communications and social media sites to ensure adherence to both the Town’s communications and social media policy and the interest and goals of the Town. The Town will approach the use of communications and social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.

Whenever possible, Town social media sites should link back to the official Town of Lyman’s website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct

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business with the Town. The Town's website at www.lyman-me.gov will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet presence.

All Town public and social media communications and/or sites shall adhere to applicable Federal, State and local laws, regulations, and policies. 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 and subject to public disclosure.

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. When a 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.

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 for a reasonable period of time including the time, date and identity of the person or organization posting, when available. This policy may be amended at any time by a majority vote of the Select Board.

CONTENT

As a public entity, the Town must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner. 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 agreements by, the Town, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions of policies of the Town.

All comments posted to any Town Facebook site are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities. The Town reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statements of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent that Facebook takes appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

ACCEPTABLE USE OF OFFICIAL TOWN SOCIAL MEDIA

The appropriate use of official Town social media accounts is dependent on employee status and role. No individual who is not an authorized user, as defined in this policy, may create, maintain, administer, or utilize any official Town social media platform.

Authorized users must treat all content and communications shared via official Town social media accounts as formal communications from the Town of Lyman. As such, great care must be

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taken to ensure content aligns with all applicable Town policies, including but not limited to, those governing records retention, public records law, and professional conduct. Authorized users should have no expectation of privacy when operating or accessing Town social media accounts.

The Town Manager has the authority to create, manage, oversee, or terminate any official Town social media account as deemed necessary. They may use these accounts to communicate matters relevant to the operations of the Town. The Town Manager may also delegate these responsibilities to another employee as appropriate.

All official Town social media use must adhere to the following standards:

- Comply with all Town workplace policies.
- Respect privacy, copyright, and trademark laws.
- Maintain respectful, professional, and courteous communication with the public and all viewers.
- Avoid profanity, vulgar or disrespectful language, and obscene or explicit content.
- Refrain from using slang, idioms, or phrases that may have inappropriate or offensive connotations.
- Use accessible fonts and color schemes considerate of individuals with visual impairments.
- Follow all terms of use for the respective social media platform.
- Comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws, including those related to public access and records retention.
- Follow all relevant Town policies, particularly regarding confidential or protected information.
- Abide by the terms of any contracts or agreements the Town has entered into.
- Ensure all communications relate directly to Town operations, services, or initiatives.
- Ensure that only authorized users post on behalf of the Town.
- Avoid content that could harm the Town's reputation or relationships with the public, vendors, or other stakeholders.

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APPROPRIATE USE OF PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA BY TOWN EMPLOYEES

The Town recognizes that employees may use social media in their personal lives and respects their right to do so, including protections under constitutional and statutory law. However, when such activity interferes with the Town's ability to carry out its responsibilities, it may be subject to review and corrective action. Personal use of social media outside of work is at the employee's discretion; however, employees must not represent or imply that they are speaking on behalf of the Town. Employees should also avoid using personal social media in ways that could negatively affect the Town's reputation with the public, clients, or partners due to their association with the Town. This includes, but is not limited to, posting or distributing content that is illegal, threatening, or disclosing confidential or private information that is not classified as a public record under Maine law. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using social media on Town-owned devices or systems. Additionally, harassment, threats, or other inappropriate conduct on personal social media may lead to discipline if it impacts the workplace. Use of personal social media during working hours must not interfere with job performance, and access to personal accounts on Town-owned devices is prohibited without Town Manager approval. Any social media activity—whether on official Town platforms or personal accounts—that violates this policy or any other policy, may result in disciplinary measures.

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Effective: Immediately