	POLICY	
	Administration	Effective: November 14, 2019
Town of Wendell Communications Plan Version 1.0		Supersedes: New
		Prepared By: Megan Howard, Town Clerk Stephanie Smith, Assistant to the Town Manager Amber Langston, EWTV
		Approved By: Marc Collins, Town Manager

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and expectations for the Town of Wendell employees and their work on behalf of the organization.

The Town of Wendell strives to provide clear direction on how information is disseminated to the public. This plan will address how to handle day-to-day communications as well as guidance on how crisis communications are handled on a staff level.

The Town of Wendell will offer prompt, immediate attention to those who live, play and work in Wendell, and provide clear, concise, and accurate information.

According to its Vision Statement: The Town of Wendell is clean, safe, vibrant, and full service with a diverse population. Our citizen-friendly reputation is assured by the quality of our facilities and professional staff who work efficiently to provide great customer service. We have a knowledgeable Town Board that works efficiently to incorporate input from Citizen Advisory Boards and staff to be responsible stewards of our tax dollars through leveraging, by watching return on investments and maintaining our fund balance. This policy supports the Vision of the Town by formalizing and enhancing the way staff communicates information both internally and externally.

II. Scope

This procedure is for internal use by the Town of Wendell employees. Employees must adhere to this policy to maintain consistency in service and quality across the organization.

III. Definitions

- **Two-Way Communication** – Information is shared through the community and the town emphasizing two-way informational flow through encouraging feedback and engagement.

- **Community Problem Solving** – Provide citizens with accurate information that allows them to offer input and suggestions that helps the Town correct issues.
- **Proactive Communication** – The Town provides facts and accurate information instead of relying on others to interpret actions, issues and decisions.
- **Inclusive Communication** – The effort to include everyone who is willing to participate and to provide a feeling of belonging, eliminating the "us vs. them" mentality.
 - **Primary Targeted Audience** -
 - Wendell residents are the main target of the majority of information produced by the Town. Residents are the beneficiaries of the programs, events and services provided by the Town. Ensuring they receive information is crucial to the success of Town operations.
 - Town Board Members & Citizen Advisory Board Members: An important part of local government that allows citizens to get involved in the process of town government. Citizen Advisory Board Members help provide feedback and potential resolutions to elected officials after discussing, analyzing and evaluating specific topics/issues dealing with the Town. Town Board Members (Commissioners) receive information from Citizen Advisory Boards and staff and set policy and directives for staff to implement and execute.
 - Town Employees are representatives of the Town, and therefore need to know important information to be able to share appropriately with the community.
 - News media help share information with the community beyond what the Town communications tools can achieve. A strong partnership is important to ensure critical information reaches as many people as possible.
 - **Secondary Targeted Audience** - People who do not live in Wendell town limits but who work or are active in the town, other local governments, groups, associations and organizations in Eastern Wake County. Visitors to the area are also secondary targeted audiences.

IV. Organizational Rules or Policy

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

V. Strategies and Actions

Current:

- a. **Communications Audit** – Review current communications tools in place and determine what is working and where there is opportunity for improvement. Once adopted, annually review Communications Plan in an effort to consistently improve how target audiences are reached.
- b. **Market Research** – Annually collect data from target audiences to determine how information is being received and adjust communications tools appropriately to meet the needs of those receiving information from the Town. Data will be collected through annual meetings with each department, then compiling an internal report to compare to previous years data.

Proposed:

- a. **Staff Media Training** – Provided to at least 1 representative from each department, training on how to respond to and work with the media.
- b. **Social Media Policy** – Provide guidance on expectations surrounding posting to social media platforms, as well as a process to create new social media accounts. As part of the Social Media Policy implementation, provide training to all staff who have access to social media accounts to include expectations on what/when to post and how to respond to comments.
- c. **Reinforce Internal Communications Tools** – Provide information to staff on where information is available.
- d. **Utilize Employee Intranet for Employee News** – Increase awareness of Employee Intranet and add information about employee news and events.
- e. **New Employee Onboarding Process** – Educate new employees on where resources are available; provide new employee information to all staff with photo, email and short biography so fellow staff are aware of new hires.
- f. **Increase Homeowners Association (HOA) Collaboration** - Promote communications with HOA newsletters to reach communities through their outreach tools.
- g. **Media Law Guidelines:** to protect the Town from copyright infringement.
- h. **Marketing Budget:** for design creation software costs.

VI. Communications Tools

This list includes the most frequently used ways information is disseminated to the public regarding Town of Wendell programs, events and information. Other tools may be used, as needed, at the discretion of Administrative staff.

Current:

- **Website:** Comprehensive website designed to allow anyone access to information dealing with the town. This includes, but is not limited to events, department listings, staff names / contact information, calendar of town meetings, agendas and minutes, and news releases. It's one-stop-shopping for details about the town's programs, services, and documents like policies, codes and public notices.
- **Town Board Meetings/Public Meetings:** Regularly scheduled Town Board meetings take place every other week. Each meeting includes an opportunity for public comment. In addition to the regularly scheduled town board meetings, other public meetings to address specific issues are also held as needed. This allows residents to learn more, express opinions and give input about specific issues.
- **Bi-weekly Staff Meetings:** Town officials, including a representative from each of the town's departments, gather the morning after board meetings to go over what was decided / discussed in the meeting, talk about employee relations and areas of potential improvement. It allows all employees to be represented without being present.
- **Town-Wide Staff Meetings:** Regularly scheduled meetings are held for all employees to receive information and share feedback on current or proposed Town initiatives.
- **Annual Employee Benefits Meeting:** An internal Town staff tool that keeps employees informed on their HR benefits. **Town Generated Email:** Intended to update citizens, town employees, and anyone else who signs up. Used to keep

everyone involved and informed in what has already taken place, road closures/construction, and events planned for the future.

- East Wake Television (EWTV): Public access television used to provide information on cable television and on social media platforms. Records and broadcasts all Town Board Meetings. Meetings are replayed until the next Town Board Meeting. EWTV staff promotes and covers Town events on social media platforms, as well as on their channel. EWTV also assists with the production of Town of Wendell videos, to be used to inform, educate and entertain the public.
- Printed Materials: Includes, but is not limited to: brochures, flyers, door hangers, postcards and maps. They are created in-house and are placed in Town Hall and passed out during Town-sponsored events.
- Electronic Sign: Attracts attention and enhances community participation with up-to-date messages about what's going on in the Town. Residents will be able to get essential information in a timely, quick fashion. See Electronic Sign Policy under Section XII Appendices.
- US64 Billboard: The Town has a public service partnership with Lamar Corporation in which it is able to post Town events at no charge as a public service.
- Social Media: Intended to update citizens, Town employees, and anyone else who follows the Town's accounts. Used to keep everyone involved and informed in what has already taken place, updates on road closings/construction, UDO/policy reminders and events planned for the future. Town social media includes: LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.
- Accela/TellWendell: Accela is used primarily by Public Works and the Police Department to respond to citizen concerns/requests for service. The Tell Wendell app is managed through Accela and is used as a public information tool and means to submit citizen requests.
- Email Blasts: Internal and External newsletters (*Wendell Buzz*, *Town of Wendell Newsletter*, *When in the Dell*) that update the Town Board, Citizen Advisory Boards, and the public on town events, sports registration, and staff accomplishments. iContacts, Civic Rec and Microsoft Outlook are currently used to send out this information.
- Canva: A graphic design tool used to create social media graphics, flyers, and newsletters for web and print promotional purposes.
- NC Works and GovJobs: Used to post job openings for Town positions.
- Signs, Letters and Public Notices: Posted for Special Use Permits (SUPs), Rezoning, Variances, Text Amendments, and Annexations as required by state law.
- Bluebeam: electronic plan review that allows the Planning Department to send market up plans with all comments to the applicant.
- Agendas, Agenda Packets, and Meeting Minutes: Posted on the Town's website and kept in print in the Town Clerk's office recording the agenda items for the Town Board Meetings.
- EnerGOV: Online permitting tool that allows applicants to track the status of their applications and submit information to the Planning Department.
- YouTube: Currently managed by EWTV and used to upload video content to the Town's YouTube account.

Proposed:

- News Releases (emergency and non-emergency): A written form of communication about town events, issues, and incidents distributed to the local news media. News releases should be timely, relevant and contain the basic information of who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Merge/Update Email Blast Notifications: Combine current email notification groups into one comprehensive email blast notification group and increase use of email notifications. This would consolidate the current practice of multiple newsletters emailed to multiple email groups. Could include recommendation for new notification software.
- Annual Print Mailing: Send a document to all residents annually with important updates that have occurred in the past year, as well as a reminder on who provides services to residents (contact information for City of Raleigh for water/sewer service, Waste Industries for trash/recycling service)
- Website Enhancements:
 - New Resident Button on Homepage: promoting utility information for new residents. Online applications: for planning permits and job applications with the Town. Online Development Tracking Map: for current development projects in town.
 - Site Translator: translates website information into Spanish and other languages.
- Social Media Scheduling Software: to have different departments submit requests to Admin for content creation, timeline expectations to be communicated, and all Social Media platforms to be streamlined into one user interface for scheduling post publications.
 - Website Redesign: with either Municode or Granicus in addition to Agenda Prep software that streamlines publication of meeting documents, scheduling, etc.

VII. Crisis Communications

A disaster can happen at any time and without warning. The Town is dedicated to providing the public with the most accurate information in a timely manner to keep everyone safe. The most frequent tools of communication during an emergency are news releases, social media posts and activating the Town's emergency call list.

When an incident occurs, the following notification procedure will be followed:

- The Town Manager will begin notification procedure as needed when an incident occurs and notify staff directly involved.
- The Town Manager will then notify the Mayor and Board Members, providing pertinent information and talking points as needed, should they be contacted by the public or media.
- The Town Manager will notify Department Heads with instructions on if and when to notify staff.

Once everyone has been notified as appropriate, the Public Information Policy will be followed.

VIII. Public Information Policy/Media Relations

It's important for the Town of Wendell to have a positive, working relationship with the local media, including television/radio stations as well as online and print outlets. In order to do that, effort will be made to maintain positive relationships with reports and media representatives, so that they can assist in disseminating information during a crisis.

- For Town-managed incidents, the Town Manager, or Incident Commander will act as spokesperson for any crisis. Process will differ when Wendell Fire/EMS is lead on scene.
- Town staff will maintain a list of media contacts including email addresses and phone numbers. The Town Manager and communications staff will use the contacts during crisis situations.
- News releases will be issued to media contacts in the event of an emergency, and should be factual, informative, and to-the-point. Avoid legalese and technical terms as much as possible. If warranted, include maps, pictures and videos. Releases should include the who, what, where, when and why of an incident, with as much detail as is appropriate and can be released.
- Once a news release is issued, the information included in the release will be posted to social media.
- If necessary, the Town Manager will activate the Town's emergency call list.
- All outreach (news releases, social media posts, interviews, etc.) should be reviewed and approved by the Town Manager, or their designee, before being released to the public.
- **Any media inquiry should be referred to the Town Manager and communications staff.**

For emergency events, the Town should follow the Wake County Hazard Mitigation Plan as needed. The Town of Wendell Hazard Mitigation Plan can be found in Section 9 of the plan, located at <http://www.wakegov.com/em/Pages/hazardmitigation.aspx>.

IX. Town Website Review

The Town's website is a main source of information for its citizens. Review of each Department's webpages from the Town's website should occur on at least a monthly basis. Each department will have assigned personnel review the content, links, and photos for each page.

Content Review: All content should be reviewed for grammatical and informational errors. Content and page organization should be relevant to the user and easy to navigate.

Photo Review: All photos should be reviewed and kept up to date in accordance with relevancy of information. If the photos need to be changed with the season, departments should make those changes.

Link Review: All links and page redirections should be checked for accuracy and that the redirection is not broken or links to the wrong site.

See Communications Tools for current and recommended website tools.

X. Social Media Policy

Social networking and Internet services have become popular forms of communication. The Town of Wendell believes that effective and efficient interaction with the public, stakeholders and organizations may be enhanced by using online technology to present, discuss and collaborate matters of interest in the Town.

The Town of Wendell has an overriding interest in deciding what is conveyed on behalf of the Town on social media sites. This policy is designed to define social media, the process of using social media and the rights and responsibilities of the Town and its employees in using social media.

See Social Media Policy under XII Appendices.

XI. News Releases (Non-Crisis)

News releases are intended to keep the public informed about what is happening in Town through the media. All news releases will be sent out by the Town Manager, their designee, or communications staff. For routine news releases (non-crisis), releases should be drafted by department staff, then sent to communications staff for review and feedback. Once finalized, the release will be sent to the Town Manager for final approval.

Staff should be mindful of the timing of news releases, and plan to give enough time for internal review and feedback before the release will be approved and issued to the media. Typically, releases should be sent to communications staff 2-3 weeks prior to the event or program being promoted.

Staff should use the press release template as a guide on what information to include. See Section XII Appendices for template.

XII. Public Records Policy

It is important for Town employees to be aware of North Carolina Public Records Law, and how it applies to the records they maintain.

According to Section 132-1 of the North Carolina Public Records Law:

§ 132-1. "Public records" defined.

(a) "Public record" or "public records" shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data-processing records, artifacts, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business by any agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions. Agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions shall mean and include every public office, public officer or official (State or local, elected or appointed), institution, board, commission, bureau, council, department, authority or other unit of government of the State or of any county, unit, special district or other political subdivision of government.

(b) The public records and public information compiled by the agencies of North Carolina

government or its subdivisions are the property of the people. Therefore, it is the policy of this State that the people may obtain copies of their public records and public information free or at minimal cost unless otherwise specifically provided by law. As used herein, "minimal cost" shall mean the actual cost of reproducing the public record or public information. (1935, c. 265, s. 1; 1975, c. 787, s. 1; 1995, c. 388, s. 1.)

In Section 132-6 of the North Carolina Public Records Law states that an agency in charge of public records must make them available "at reasonable times and under reasonable supervision by any person, and shall, as promptly as possible, furnish copies thereof upon payment of any fees as may be prescribed by law."

§ 132-6. Inspection, examination and copies of public records.

(a) Every custodian of public records shall permit any record in the custodian's custody to be inspected and examined at reasonable times and under reasonable supervision by any person, and shall, as promptly as possible, furnish copies thereof upon payment of any fees as may be prescribed by law. As used herein, "custodian" does not mean an agency that holds the public records of other agencies solely for purposes of storage or safekeeping or solely to provide data processing.

(a1) A public agency or custodian may satisfy the requirements in subsection (a) of this section by making public records available online in a format that allows a person to view the public record and print or save the public record to obtain a copy. If the public agency or custodian maintains public records online in a format that allows a person to view and print or save the public records to obtain a copy, the public agency or custodian is not required to provide copies to these public records in any other way.

(b) No person requesting to inspect and examine public records, or to obtain copies thereof, shall be required to disclose the purpose or motive for the request.

(c) No request to inspect, examine, or obtain copies of public records shall be denied on the grounds that confidential information is commingled with the requested nonconfidential information. If it is necessary to separate confidential from nonconfidential information in order to permit the inspection, examination, or copying of the public records, the public agency shall bear the cost of such separation.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, public records relating to the proposed expansion or location of specific business or industrial projects may be withheld so long as their inspection, examination or copying would frustrate the purpose for which such public records were created; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to permit the withholding of public records relating to general economic development policies or activities. Once the State, a local government, or the specific business has announced a commitment by the business to expand or locate a specific project in this State or the business has made a final decision not to do so, of which the State or local government agency involved with the project knows or should know, the provisions of this subsection allowing public records to be withheld by the agency no longer apply. Once the provisions of this subsection no longer apply, the agency shall disclose as soon as practicable, and within 25 business days, public records requested for the announced project that are not otherwise made confidential by law. An announcement that a business or industrial project has committed to expand or locate in the State shall not require disclosure of local government records relating to the project if the business has not selected a specific location within the State for the project. Once a specific location for the project has been determined, local government records must be disclosed, upon request, in accordance with the provisions of this section. For purposes of this section, "local government records" include records maintained by the State that relate to a local government's efforts to attract the project.

Records relating to the proposed expansion or location of specific business or industrial projects that are in the custody of the Department of Commerce or an entity with which the Department contracts pursuant to G.S. 143B-431.01 shall be treated as follows:

(1) Unless controlled by another subdivision of this subsection, the records may be withheld if their inspection, examination, or copying would frustrate the purpose for which the records were created.

(2) If no discretionary incentives pursuant to Chapter 143B of the General Statutes are requested for a project and if the specific business decides to expand or locate the project in the State, then the records relating to the project shall not be disclosed.

(3) If the specific business has requested discretionary incentives for a project pursuant to Chapter 143B of the General Statutes and if either the business decides not to expand or locate the project in the State or the project does not receive the discretionary incentives, then the only records relating to the project that may be disclosed are the requests for discretionary incentives pursuant to Chapter 143B of the General Statutes and any information submitted to the Department by the contracted entity.

(4) If the specific business receives a discretionary incentive for a project pursuant to Chapter 143B of the General Statutes and the State or the specific business announces a commitment to expand or locate the project in this State, all records requested for the announced project, not otherwise made confidential by law, shall be disclosed as soon as practicable and within 25 days from the date of announcement.

(e) The application of this Chapter is subject to the provisions of Article 1 of Chapter 121 of the General Statutes, the North Carolina Archives and History Act.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (a1) of this section, the inspection or copying of any public record which, because of its age or condition could be damaged during inspection or copying, may be made subject to reasonable restrictions intended to preserve the particular record. (1935, c. 265, s. 6; 1987, c. 835, s. 1; 1995, c. 388, s. 2; 2005-429, s. 1.1; 2014-18, s. 1.1(c); 2014-115, s. 56.1; 2017-10, s. 2.9(b).)

State law lists the town clerk as the "custodian of all city records," and each department head as being in charge of all records made, sent and received in his / her department by current and former employees.

§ 160A-171. City clerk; duties.

There shall be a city clerk who shall give notice of meetings of the council, keep a journal of the proceedings of the council, be the custodian of all city records, and shall perform any other duties that may be required by law or the council. (1917, c. 136, subch. 13, s. 1; C.S., s. 2826; 1941, c. 103; 1949, c. 14; 1971, c. 698, s. 1.)

§ 132-2. Custodian designated.

The public official in charge of an office having public records shall be the custodian thereof. (1935, c. 265, s. 2.)

All information dealing with the Town is property of the Town. It is subject to being reviewed, copied and submitted for public records requests. The Town Manager has the right to request and access any and all information on town-issued computers, laptops, cell phones, email accounts, and social media accounts. All town employees, including part-time and temporary employees, as well as volunteers, are subject to these policies. Technology and the means to communicate changes regularly. The Town encourages its employees to use these policies as a guide but to utilize a "common sense" approach when it comes to representing and promoting the Town.

XIII. Appendices

1. Electronic Sign Policy
2. Social Media Policy
3. Press Release Template


Adopted: July 12, 2015
Supersedes:
Policy Number: 103



TOWN OF WENDELL ELECTRONIC MESSAGE BOARD POLICY

Effective Date:

1. **Purpose:** In 2014, the Town of Wendell authorized the design and construction of an Electronic Message Board sign at 3040 Wendell Boulevard. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the intended use of this (or future) Town-owned Electronic Message Board sign(s).
2. **General Use Policies:** The duration and design of all content displayed shall be at the discretion of the Town Manager or his/her designee. Section 3 (provided below) details the type of content which may be displayed on such signs.
3. **Content Regulations:**
 - A. **Permitted Content:**
 - i. Governmental meetings/workshops/information
 1. Examples: road closings, trash pickup, citizen board applications, weather, meetings, etc.
 - ii. Chamber events/announcements
 1. Examples: Harvest Festival, Business of the Month
 - iii. Community-wide (free) events/information/announcements
 1. Examples: International Food Festival, Easter Egg Hunt, Camps
 - iv. Other events deemed appropriate in the promotion of economic development and the community.
 - v. Fundraising events such as bake/food sales/golf tournaments for non-profits, located within the corporate limits, are permitted once a year, with a two week notice.
 - B. **Prohibited Content:**
 - i. Advertisements specific to a business
 - ii. Advertisements for individual non-profit services, such as vacation bible schools, preschools, etc.

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	Administration	Effective: November 14, 2019
Town of Wendell Social Media Policy Version 1.0	Supersedes: New	
	Prepared By: Megan Howard, Town Clerk Stephanie Smith, Assistant to the Town Manager	
	Approved By: Marc Collins, Town Manager	

I. Purpose

Social networking and Internet services have become popular forms of communication. The Town of Wendell believes that effective and efficient interaction with the public, stakeholders and organizations may be enhanced by using online technology to present, discuss and collaborate matters of interest in the Town.

The Town of Wendell has an overriding interest in deciding what is conveyed on behalf of the Town on social media sites. This policy is designed to define social media, the process of using social media and the rights and responsibilities of the Town and its employees in using social media.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all officers, agents and employees of the Town of Wendell, referred to collectively in this policy as “Employees” for ease of reference only. Employees who choose to participate in social media must adhere to this policy. The policy applies to currently available social networks as well as future networks and opportunities.

In the event that an individual department believes more stringent guidelines/policies are necessary for that individual department, the Department Head must seek approval from the Town Manager. Departments may not implement internal guidelines/policies for social media without such approval. Additional approved guidelines/policies must be in writing and provided to all affected Employees.

III. Definitions

- **Social Media/Social Network** – A group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content.
- **Social Media Platform** – A program, tool or application that allows users to exchange information and ideas. Examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn.
- **Social Media Action Plan** – An internal operating plan that departments develop in collaboration with the Administration Department that outlines the purpose, goals, tactics, success metrics, and frequency of use for each social media account.
- **Blog** – An abridgement of the term web log, a blog is a website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video.
- **Contributors** – Approved and trained staff who distribute content on social media.

- **Post** – Information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on a social media site.
- **Tag** – A method to assign a person, place or organization to a social media post. Tags are by the author of a post or may be added by others.

IV. Organizational Rules

Section 1: Oversight and Enforcement

- A. The Town's official website, www.townofwendell.com (or any domain owned by the Town) will remain the Town's primary means of internet communication. Department or other Town social media accounts should link back to the Town's official website for forms, documents, online services as frequently as possible.
- B. Town contact information (email accounts and phone numbers) will be used for account set-up, monitoring and access.
- C. Approved accounts (see approval process Chapter IV: Section 2: A), must be monitored by department contributors at regular intervals and new content must be posted on a regular basis, as agreed upon in the applicable Social Media Action Plan.
- D. Accounts should clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Town of Wendell and shall include:
 - Town branding;
 - Town contact information for the responsible department, such as a direct link to the department web page, mailing address and phone number;
 - A link to the Social Media Disclaimer on the Town's website; and
 - The Town's disclosure statement: *Town of Wendell social media accounts are subject to applicable public records laws. Any interaction with this account is a public record and may be disclosed upon request.*
- E. The Town of Wendell's Administration Department will monitor content on Town social media sites intermittently to ensure adherence to the Town's Social Media Policy, the applicable Social Media Action Plan and the interest and goals of the Town.
- F. The Town of Wendell reserves the right to terminate any Town social media accounts, or individual user access at any time.
- G. Town administration reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.
- H. Employees should follow the guidelines set forth in Article XII. Information Technology Policy of the Town of Wendell Personnel Policy.

Section 2: Professional Use

The Town of Wendell encourages departments to consider social media and social networking sites to further organizational goals and the missions of departments, where appropriate.

- A. Any employee or group of employees who would like to create a social media account/site must:
 1. receive initial approval from his or her department head,
 2. collaborate with the Administration Department on the development of a Social Media Action Plan,

3. receive approval of the Social Media Action Plan from their Department Head and the Town Manager, and
 4. complete social media training regarding the terms of this policy – before new accounts are created.
- B. Remain focused on customers, existing commitments and achieving the mission of your department and the Town. Use of social media should never interfere with your primary job duties, with the exception of where it is a primary duty to use these tools to do your job.
 - C. Always consider whether it is appropriate to post comments that commit themselves or the Town to a course of action.
 - D. Social media should not be used to circumvent other agency communication policies, including news media release requirements/processes.
 - E. Contributors may not publish information on Town social media sites that includes:
 1. confidential information,
 2. copyright violations,
 3. profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments,
 4. political views, or
 5. endorsements or advertising of any kind.
 - F. Never tag individuals in posts. Partner organizations may be tagged, with prior approval by their representatives, only if the tag would not imply an endorsement.
 - G. Never comment on areas that are NOT within the realm of your job responsibility, or that are opinion in nature.
 - H. All posts and content must comply with:
 1. usage rules and regulations required by the site provider, including privacy policies, and
 2. applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.

Section 3: Records Retention

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the Town of Wendell and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to NCGS 143-A. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (digital text, photos, audio, video, etc.).

Section 4: Moderation of Third Party Content

The Town of Wendell social media accounts serve as a *limited public forum* and all content published is subject to monitoring. User-generated posts will be reviewed by staff and posts may be removed, if they are off topic or inappropriate.

Section 5: Personal Use

The Town of Wendell acknowledges employee rights to privacy and free speech that may protect online activity conducted on personal social networks. However, what is published on such personal sites should not be attributed to the Town and should not appear to be endorsed by or originated from the Town. It is important that Employees avoid giving the appearance that the Town endorses or supports their private thoughts and opinions on any subject.

Employees should take caution that their social media activity does not impair working relationships of the Town or their Department, for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or interfere with the regular operation of the Town.

Social Media Action Plan

Employees should always keep in mind that their behavior, especially while in uniform, wearing Town logos, or operating Town vehicles, has the potential to reflect on the Town.

Employees with leadership responsibilities, by virtue of their position, must be especially cognizant of whether their profile and related content (even if of a personal and not official nature), is consistent with how they wish to present themselves as a professional, and is appropriate given the public trust associated with their position.

Guidelines for Employees:

- A. Honesty (or dishonesty) will be noticed quickly on social media.
- B. Employees should be thoughtful when using their personal social media to share Town content or promoting Town programs and events as it blurs the line between personal and professional audiences.
- C. Assume that speech and related activity will reflect on your position and the Town of Wendell. You are responsible for ensuring your profile, content and social media interactions are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues, residents and other stakeholders.
- D. Do not share information learned on the job that is confidential, or has not been disclosed to the general public.
- E. If you publish content outside of the Town of Wendell and it has something to do with your work, or subjects associated with the Town, use a disclaimer to clearly state that postings on the site are your own and do not necessarily represent the Town's positions or opinions. Please note that the use of a disclaimer does not absolve you from violations of this policy. In some situations, a disclaimer may mitigate adverse effects on the Town; however, in other situations the gravity of the offense or the position of the Employee may make such a disclaimer ineffective.
- F. Those in leadership positions should be cognizant that the nature of their positions may invite increased scrutiny by the public.

Section 6: Failure to Abide

Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

V. Appendices

1. Social Media Action Plan (SMAP) Template



Social Media Action Plan

Need help? Contact Town Clerk Megan Howard at mhoward@townofwendell.com or 919-366-6894.

Section I: Department Information

For all new social media pages, departments must submit this form to the Administration Department. It is helpful to have a conversation with the Town Clerk and your supervisor before filling out a Social Media Action Plan (SMAP).

Please allow five (5) business days for a response and plan accordingly. It is recommended that each department have a SMAP on record for the social media pages being used to engage the public online, and that they are reviewed annually.

1. Department:			
2. Your Name:		3. Email:	
4. Your Manager:		5. Email:	
6. Today's Date:		7. Launch Date:	
8. Provide a brief overview of your project or ongoing work, and explain why you feel the social media platforms you are proposing are a good fit for this work. If you would like the launch to coincide with another event, please include that information.			

Social Media Action Plan

Section II: Strategy

Departments should have a full communications plan that includes social media and aligns with the Town of Morrisville Strategic Plan. This SMAP is designed to be a conversation starter and can help teams identify goals, target audiences, success metrics, and more related to new social media pages.

GOALS	1. What do you want to accomplish by having this account?
TACTICS	2. What specific actions will help you achieve your goals? How often will you post to this channel?
TARGET AUDIENCE	3. Who will you be talking to? How does social media enhance your conversations with them?
SUCCESS METRICS	4. What does success look like? What will you measure to gauge your performance?

Section III: Process and Management

Town departments should have social media pages that complement existing communications strategies and reach key audiences online.

<p>PROMOTION</p>	<p>1. How will you promote and integrate social media into your routine communications?</p>
<p>PUBLISHING</p>	<p>2. Who is authorized to use this page? How much time should they spend on it?</p>
<p>ENGAGEMENT</p>	<p>3. How will your page engage followers (graphics, photos, polls, video)? Are any additional trainings or resources needed?</p>
<p>INFLUENCERS</p>	<p>4. Which partner organizations or stakeholders can you interact with online?</p>
<p>TRAINING, SECURITY & RECORDS RETENTION</p>	<p>5. Follow these steps to ensure your page meets training, security and records retention guidelines.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users who are new to using town social media accounts must be trained. • Social media platforms do not have password requirements to ensure security. To ensure consistency with town security practices accounts will be set up by the Community Relations Liaison and department users will be given access. Password changes will be coordinated regularly. • Account users should never change the permissions within an account. They should seek guidance in changing headers and profile pictures to ensure consistency with brand standards. • The Town of Morrisville uses a cloud-based application called ArchiveSocial to ArchiveSocial media content and direct communications to ensure compliance with

Social Media Action Plan

	N.C. Public Records laws. The Community Relations Liaison will add your accounts to Archive Social.
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Section IV: Appendix

Statistics below were published by Pew Internet Research in June 2015.

Trends and demographics for the big five social networks (U.S. only):

- **Facebook** – Largest social network by far, better for women, above average for Hispanics and low-income users, below-average for blacks.
- **Twitter** – Smallest social network of the big five, better for men than women, above average for blacks and Hispanics, below average for whites and low-income users.
- **Instagram** – Better for women and young people, significantly higher use by blacks and Hispanics, above average for low-income users, below average for whites.
- **LinkedIn** – Better for high-income and highly educated whites, above average use by Hispanics, very low use by blacks and low-income users.
- **Pinterest** – Better for high-income white women, very low use by blacks, Hispanics, low-income users and men.

Social networks appropriate for town use:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Nextdoor
- ***Don't see yours?*** Let's talk about it.

Social media pages and what they're good for:

Name	Easy to manage	Good for employees	Good for web traffic	Good for community	Good for video	Good for images
Facebook	•	•	•	•	•	•
Twitter	•	•	•	•		
YouTube		•			•	
Pinterest	•	•	•	•		•
Instagram	•	•		•		•
LinkedIn	•	•	•	•		
Nextdoor	•			•		

- Attachments: Article 12 Personnel Policy

ARTICLE XII. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set standards for appropriate use of Town information technology resources and to safeguard the integrity of computers, networks, and data.

Definitions

E-mail: The distribution of messages, documents, files, software, or images by electronic means over a phone line or a network connection. This includes internal e-mail, external e-mail, Internet e-mail, instant messaging (IM) and all forms of electronic correspondence.

- A. **Local Drive:** The primary drive of staff computers, which is used for the storing of programs. All data and information is stored on the server.
- B. **Network:** A system by which all Town computers are connected together. The Town network allows employees access to authorized areas on different computer systems. This includes access to printers and shared drives.
- C. **Outside Data Source:** Any file, program, image, picture, or document received on media (diskettes, CD ROM, or tapes), email, through the Internet (including Internet email), or through file transfer.
- D. **Town Management:** Refers to the Town Manager or designee
- E. **Streaming media:** Streaming media refers to video, audio, or broadcasts that play immediately when accessed, without requiring a full download before playback (e.g., video news clips, or radio stations accessed through the internet.)
- F. **“Push” Technology:** “Push” technology is a type of streaming media through which a PC receives daily, hourly or continuous updates via the Internet; e.g., news, stock quotes, weather, and similar information.

Section 2. Appropriate Use of Technology

It is the policy of the Town to provide its employees with the information technology resources necessary to do the work of the organization. This policy covers the use of all information technology resources belonging to the Town whether individually controlled or shared, stand alone or networked. It includes all computer systems of any size and function and their attached peripherals, projectors, telephones, faxes, voice mail systems, e-mail systems, network resources and Internet resources.

All technology resources and all information transmitted by, received from, or stored on Town systems are the property of the Town and as such, are subject to inspection by Town management. The Town reserves the right to access all systems for review and monitoring for appropriate use.

At all times when an employee is using Town technology resources, he is representing the Town. The same good judgment used in written correspondence or in determining appropriate conduct should be applied to use of information technology resources.

- A. While in the performance of work-related functions, while on the job, or while using publicly owned or publicly provided technology resources, Town employees are expected to use them responsibly and professionally.
- B. Individuals may have access to the World Wide Web and web browser software to display information, obtain data or software, and access interactive data systems provided by external or internal resources.

Section 3. Public Record

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 132, Public Records – e-mail and any attachments, sent in conjunction with the conducting of official business, as well as any e-mail that may be sent in response to it, is considered public record and as such are subject to request for public review. All activities of the Town are in the public domain, therefore employees should have no expectation of privacy when using any information technology resources (e.g., e-mail, faxes, telephones, voice mail, Internet, cell phones, or computers).

Section 4. Limited Personal Use

The following limited personal use is authorized for all employees.

- A. Internet: Internet access is provided for Town business purposes. Occasional or casual use of the Internet on a limited basis is acceptable so long as it is not a detriment to one's job performance or a distraction to others.
- B. Email: Personal use of e-mail must not cause congestion, delay or disruption of service to any Town system or equipment. Employees should establish their own personal email account and direct personal communication to that address. The following applies to employee use of Town email:
 - 1. Employees using Town e-mail for personal purposes must not represent themselves as acting in an official capacity.
 - 2. Employees should not give out their Town e-mail address for personal purposes, particularly when "registering" at various Internet sites. Registering may result in the employee receiving unwanted e-mail, which in turn could further strain the network resources.
 - 3. Broadcast transmissions, mass mailings or bulletin boards for personal use are prohibited.
 - 4. Employees should refrain from reference to the Town when establishing a personal email address, website address or other technological identification which could result in confusion between personal use and approved Town technology use.

Section 5. Prohibited Uses of Technology Resources

Other provisions Town Personnel Policies covering political activity, secondary employment, sexual harassment, and solicitations, applies to the use of all Town information technology resources. The following items are strictly prohibited:

- A. Loading Unauthorized Software - Software may not be loaded onto any Town computer system without prior approval of the Town management. This includes shareware, freeware, personal software (such as tax preparation programs, computer games, etc.) or Internet distributed programs. An Information Technology impact analysis must be performed for a program or project that has a software requirement before that software can be installed or used.
- B. Inappropriate Uses - Using any Town technology resource, especially email, for activities that are illegal, inappropriate, offensive, or violates the civil rights of any person, such as the use of sexually explicit material or material or remarks that ridicule others on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, disability, age, political affiliation, national origin or sexual orientation.
- C. Sexually Explicit Material - Access of any sexually explicit material will not be tolerated. Sexually explicit material may not be displayed, archived, stored, distributed, emailed, edited or recorded using the Town network or computing resources.
- D. Transmission of Confidential Information - Anytime information is transmitted through e-mail, over the Internet, or through other electronic media; there is the possibility that it could be intercepted. Therefore, no confidential Town information may be transmitted electronically without the prior approval of the Town management. If the employee is uncertain whether information is confidential, err on the side of caution and obtain approval before transmitting.
- E. Posting of Personal Opinions - Employees are prohibited from using Town provided access to the Internet to present their personal views in a way that would lead the public to interpret it as an official Town position. This includes posting to external news groups, bulletin boards, or other public forums (e.g., posting to a blog using your ... @Town.org email address for response.)
- F. Streaming Media - Live stream use of the Internet strains the network, significantly slows network speed, degrades network performance, and interferes with official business. Employees must exercise caution and good judgment concerning when and how to use the Internet as a radio, music or video player, using "push" technology on the Internet, or other continuous data streams.
- G. Security - Each employee is responsible for all actions taken on a PC while using his user profile or password. Sensitive or confidential information should remain password protected. Employees should make every effort to safeguard passwords.

Section 6. Altering Files on Other Computers

Except as provided elsewhere in this policy the examination, modification, copying, or deletion of files and/or data belonging to other employees without their prior consent is prohibited.

Section 7. Privacy of E-mail

Access to electronic mail on the Town's network of computers that involves reading electronic mail may occur only where authorized by the Town Manager, or designee, by the appropriate officials designated below and only for the following purposes:

- A. Troubleshooting hardware and software problems, such as rerouting or disposing of undeliverable mail, if deemed necessary by the Technology Officer(CIO) or Security Officer or his or her authorized designee;
- B. Preventing or investigating unauthorized access and system misuse, if deemed necessary by the CIO or the Security Officer;
- C. Investigating reports of violation of Organizational policy or local, state, or federal law* ;
- D. Investigating reports of employee misconduct;
- E. Complying with legal requests for information, such as subpoenas and public records requests;
- F. Retrieving information in emergency circumstances where there is a threat to health, safety, or organizational property involved.

The extent of the access will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to acquire the information for a legitimate purpose.

When an employee leaves employment from the Town, a system administrator may, with approval of the unit head to which the employee was assigned, remove the departing employee's email files from the Town's email systems in order to conserve space or for other business purposes. An employee's email may be retained and accessed by the unit as necessary for use in connection with Town business. In all such cases the extent of the access will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to acquire the information for a legitimate purpose. Units and departments are encouraged to make arrangements for disposition of email files with departing employees in advance of their departure.

Section 8. Disclosure Statement Regarding E-mail Retention and Access

In order to comply with federal wiretap laws the Town requires all employees to sign an acknowledgement statement indicating that the employee is aware of how e-mails are captured and retained by the Town's information technology system prior to delivery to the recipient. Such as statement shall be as follows:

“Users should be aware that electronic messages (E-mail) coming into the Town's system are captured by an archiving system before the e-mail reaches the e-mail server and individual mailboxes. This is done for the purpose of backing up files.”



YOUR NAME HERE, Title
Town of Wendell
15 E Fourth Street
Wendell, NC, 27591
(919) 365-4450

For Immediate Release

HEADLINE

(WENDELL, N.C., Date) — Lede paragraph should capture the news elements. Why should they want to publish this? Typically, lede paragraphs range from two to four sentences depending on the topic and where the news release is being sent.

Body paragraph(s) should contain facts that are clearly and concisely stated. A good release avoids the use of overly descriptive language, superlatives, jargon, and ineffectual quotes. The release reflects the practitioner and sponsoring organization. Misspellings and grammatical errors can lead to credibility problems, so the release should be *carefully* proofread.

“Quotes are another very important aspect of any news release. They provide a personal perspective on the story and amplify certain elements of the lede. Quotes can be from experts, firsthand accounts, and reviews. It’s generally best to give more than one quote in a news release, allowing the media to ‘pick and choose.’ Write quotes that sound conversational and contain information that is relevant to the story,” said Megan Howard, Town Clerk.

If pictures / videos / maps / graphics are included with the release, indicate that there are attachments and explain when those pictures / videos were taken. Give news / media outlets permission to use the attachments and request they courtesy the Town of Wendell for the items.

-more-

Commented [MH1]: This is known as the release time. On occasion, you will NOT want the news release shared until a certain time by using an embargo. For example, if we didn’t want the information in the release shared until a certain date, we would write: EMBARGO UNTIL MARCH 1.

Commented [MH2]: The headline is informative, in capital letters, bolded, centered and double-spaced lines. From this point on, we use double-spaced lines.

Commented [MH3]: This is called a dateline. Important rules to remember: According to AP style, datelines should contain a city name, entirely in capital letters, followed by the name of the state. The city is based on where the information was obtained, not where it was written. Always include an EM dash (—) after the dateline.

Commented [MH4]: An effective news release lede (lead) should contain the who, what, where, why, when, and how of the story in one or two sentences.

Commented [MH5]: A news release should be written in the traditional inverted pyramid style, with the most important or interesting information conveyed first, followed by information that is increasingly less important. Sentences and paragraphs should be kept short

The first part of a release includes the most important information. The following section contains secondary information like attribution or background material. The third part elaborates or amplifies items mentioned in the first part. And the fourth and final part is supplemental information that may be related to, but not necessarily critical to, the intended message.

Commented [MH6]: Always end a quote with a comma and always give a job title or description of who this person is.

Commented [MH7]: If there is more to the news release that goes beyond one page, add a footer that says “-more-” to indicate there is more information on the following page.

By now, you might have noticed that the paragraphs are not indented. This is correct and known as full block format. Instead of indenting to signify a new paragraph, a line space between paragraphs is used. News releases are generally written in a twelve-point Times New Roman font. Double spaced, they rarely exceed three pages in length. Eliminate the Oxford Comma. For example: the event hosts games, pumpkins and music. Use AP style when writing a news release (a copy of the 2018 AP Style Guide is available in the clerk's office.)

The specific elements to a news release are (1) timeliness: relevance to current events or issues or relatedness to an important event that has just taken place; (2) magnitude: the degree to which the story or issue has an effect on people; (3) impact: the effect the story could have on the public, at large; (4) human interest: an appeal to readers' emotions; (5) celebrity: the involvement of a well-known person, or of someone in the public eye, in the story; (6) proximity: when a story hits close to the local coverage area and has relevance for people in a specific community or industry; and (7) novelty: an interesting angle that makes a story significant or unique.

This is a Boilerplate. Here, the reporter/editor can contact you for more information if need be. It should also supply the necessary background about "who" the organization is, its mission, and other relevant information that the Town may wish to convey, such as: The Town of Wendell was established in 1903 as an agricultural center named in recognition of the poet...

Commented [MH8]: This is known as a page slug and is only used if a news release runs more than a single page. It always appears at the top, flush left. You will also notice that we do not continue the header with the address and logo on subsequent pages of a news release.

Commented [MH9]: At the end of a news release, insert a footer that has three number symbols ### to indicate that this is the end of the news release.

###