

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND EQUIPMENT POLICY

This policy applies to computers, phones, tablets, and any other devices provided by the Town used to access the Internet. This policy exists to provide guidelines for use of town electronic communication equipment, the Town's network, and use of Social Media. The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of these pages include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requires may lead to sites with highly offensive content. Additionally, having an email address on the Internet may lead to receipt of unsolicited email containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk and the Town is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet. To minimize these risks, your use of the Internet at the Town is governed by the following policy

Computer Network Use Limitations

Prohibited Activities – The Town's network may not be used to disseminate, view or store commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, promotions, destructive code (e.g., viruses, Trojan horse programs, etc.), view pornographic material, or any other unauthorized materials. Users may not download any software without written approval of the Town's IT Consultant and the Town Manager. Occasional limited appropriate personal use of the computer is permitted if such use does not a) interfere with the User's, or any other employees, job performance; b) have an undue effect on the computer or Town network's performance; c) or violate any other policies, provisions, guidelines or standards of the agreement or any other policies of the Town. Further, at all times Users are responsible for the professional, ethical, and lawful use of the computer system. Personal use of the computer is a privilege that may be revoked at any time.

Illegal Copying – Users may not illegally copy material protected under copyright law or make that material available to other for copying. Users are responsible for complying with copyright law and applicable licenses that may apply to software, files, graphics, documents, messages, and other material they wish to download or copy. Users may not agree to a license or download any material for which a registration fee is charged without first obtaining the express written permission of the Town Manager.

Communication of Sensitive Information – Unless expressly authorized to do so, User is prohibited from sending, transmitting, or otherwise distributing proprietary information, data, utility account information or other confidential information belonging to the Town. Unauthorized dissemination of such material may result in severe disciplinary action, as well as substantial civil and criminal penalties under applicable state and federal laws.

Computer Resources

Accessing the Internet – To ensure security and avoid the spread of viruses, Users accessing the Internet through a computer attached to the Town's network must do so through an approved Internet firewall or other security device. Bypassing the Town's network security by accessing the Internet directly through a personal computer or other means is strictly prohibited unless the computer you are using is not connected to the Town's network (i.e. use of laptops while traveling).

Frivolous Use – Computer resources are not unlimited. Network bandwidth and storage capacity are finite, and all Users connected to the network have a responsibility to conserve these resources. Users must not deliberately perform acts that waste computer resources or unfairly limit the resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to; sending spam, playing chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the Internet, playing games, etc.

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groups, uploading or downloading large files, accessing streaming audio and/or video files, or otherwise creating unnecessary loads on network traffic associated with non-business related uses of the Internet.

Virus Detection – Files obtained from sources outside the Town, including portable storage devices (i.e., disks, flash drives, etc.) brought from home; files downloaded from the Internet, newsgroups, bulletin boards, or other online services; files attached to email; and files provided by customers or vendors may contain dangerous computer viruses that may damage the Town's computer network. Users should never download files from the Internet, accept email attachments from outsiders, or use portable storage devices without first scanning the material with Town-approved virus checking software. If you suspect that a virus has been introduced into the Town's network notify the Town Manager immediately

No Expectation of Privacy

Employees are given computers, phones, and/or tablets and Internet access to assist them in the performance of their jobs. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive using the Town's equipment. The network is the property of the Town and may be used only for Town purposes.

Waiver of Privacy Rights – User expressly waives any right of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive using the Town's equipment or Internet access. User consents to allow Town personnel access to and review of all materials created, stored, sent, or received by User through any Town device, Town network, or Internet connection. Failure to provide immediate access to supervisory personnel may result in disciplinary action, or legal action should personnel no longer be employed by the Town.

Monitoring of Computer and Internet Usage – The Town has the right to monitor and log any and all aspects of its equipment/system including, but not limited to, monitoring Internet sites visiting by Users, monitoring chat and newsgroups, monitoring file downloads, and all communications sent and received by Users.

Town Social Media Accounts

Purpose

The Town of Biscoe will employ the use of social media websites to reach citizens it might not otherwise reach. The Town, through the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel, may operate Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts as deemed necessary by the approval of the Town Manager.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Information posted to any Town of Biscoe social media site must be approved by the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel and must be consistent with the mission and community activities of the Town of Biscoe government. For the Town's primary social networking sites, such as its official Facebook page, Twitter and YouTube pages, content will be posted by the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel in accordance with its practices for disseminating other forms of public information. Typically, that involves securing approval from affected departments (department heads or their designees) and appropriate management in the Town Manager's Office. Content posted to social media sites may include news releases, approved photos and videos, agendas, announcements, promotional tools, and similar material.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITE BENEFITS

- Provide an excellent resource for communicating the Town's various messages and promoting Town services, programs and initiatives.
- Allow real-time interaction with citizens, thus enabling us to better serve citizens' needs.
- Increased efficiency as it pertains to the posting of information, news, events and high-level materials.
- Providing a nontraditional support device to internal departments and divisions for promoting events, partnerships and other Town-driven initiatives and opportunities.
- Additional advertising tool for increasing traffic -

GUIDELINES

- The Town Manager or Authorized Personnel will create and maintain the Town's official Social Media accounts. All account activity will be reviewed and uploaded to the account.
- Under certain circumstances, a Town Department may want to create and maintain social media applications that are separate from those maintained by the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel. Departments are required to get approval from the Town before implementing departmental specific social media applications.
- Departments must provide specific justification and reasons for maintaining separate social media applications. If approved, the Department Head, and Town Manager will periodically review each application. Those that do not meet the Town's intended goals and objectives may be removed at any time.
- Some avenues to allow user comments may be turned off, including discussion boards, "walls" and comment sections.
- Unless a social media site has been authorized to accept comments, unofficial or public comments may not be posted.
- If the public is allowed to post comments to a social media account or page, the following posts are inconsistent with the Town's policies and will not be allowed:
 - Obscene content
 - Offensive language or images
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - Potentially libelous statements
 - Plagiarized material
 - Private, personal information published without consent
 - Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum
 - Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
 - Commercial promotions or spam o Fundraising activities not sponsored by the Town of Biscoe
 - Organized political activity
- Anyone may become a "fan" of the site. However, individuals who displaying objectionable profile pictures on the Town's social media sites will not be accepted as "fans."
- The Town of Biscoe has the right to post, remove, delete or choose not to post any materials on any social media sites that officially represent the Town of Biscoe and/or its departments.

Employee Personal Social Media

Use of social media presents certain risks and carries responsibilities. To assist employees in making responsible decisions about their use of social media, the following guidelines have been established for appropriate use of social media. This policy applies to all employees.

Social media can mean many things, and includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board or chat room; whether or not associated or affiliated with the Town, as well as any other form of electronic communication; including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Google+, etc.

Employees are entirely responsible for what they post online. Before creating online content consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any conduct that adversely affects an employee's job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects citizens, vendors, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of the Town's legitimate business interests,

may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected. Personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by supervisors at any time without prior notice.

Know and Follow the Rules – Carefully read the Town’s other policies and ensure postings are consistent with these policies and procedures. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and will subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Appropriate and Respectful – Employees should always be courteous to fellow employees, citizens, vendors, and suppliers. Work problems are more likely to be resolved by speaking directly with co-workers or supervisor(s) than by posting complaints on social media. Posts that are malicious; obscene; threatening or intimidating; that disparage employees, clients, customers, citizens, vendors, suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying will not be tolerated. Examples of such conduct include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone’s reputation, or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment based on race, gender, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or Town policy and/or procedure.

Accuracy and Honesty – Care should be taken to always be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if a mistake is made, correct it quickly. Employees should never post any information or rumors that they know to be false about the Town, fellow employees, consultants, customers, citizens, vendors, or suppliers.

Confidentiality of Town Information – Maintain the confidentiality of sensitive, confidential information. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications. Employees shall not create a link from their personal blog, website, or other social networking site to the Town website, or social media accounts.

Personal Opinions Only – Employees have the right to personal social media accounts. These accounts should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. Employees are not to represent themselves as a spokesperson for the Town. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Public Conduct – Employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not performing their job duties as Town employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their personal use of social media as they are for any other public conduct. Employees should not publish any personal information about themselves, another employee, the organization, a citizen, or a customer in any public medium that:

- Has the potential effect of involving the employee, their co-workers, or the Town in any kind of dispute or conflict with other employees or their parties.
- Negatively impacts their ability to perform their jobs, or violates policy, administrative procedures, local, state, or federal law.
- Interferes with the work of any employee.
- Creates a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any employee, or anyone associated with or doing business with the Town.
- Disrupts the smooth and orderly flow of work or the delivery of services to the Town’s citizens.
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of the Town among its citizens or in the community at large.
- Erodes the public’s confidence in the Town organization.
- Tends to place in doubt the reliability, trustworthiness, or sound judgment of the person who is the originator or subject of the information.
- Illegal activities

- gambling
- sexually explicit materials
- Illegal weapons
- Illegal Drugs
- Violence
- Materials that include inappropriate language, profanity, obscenity, racial, ethnic or discriminatory comments
- defamatory statements or otherwise inappropriate content
- partisan political positions
- religious positions and other statements that may subject the Town, its mission, or its employees to be viewed in a light that is not in the best interest of Town of Biscoe

Records Retention

Should electronic information that is made available by any Town employee be subject to retention according to NC General Statutes, it shall be governed by the Town's Record Retention Policy to protect all records including those that are permanent. The records covered are in the custody of employees of the Town of Biscoe and are maintained for the benefit of agency use in delivering services and in documenting agency operations. The electronic records policy reflects guidelines established in the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources publication Guidelines for Managing Trustworthy Digital Public Records.

Approved this 14th Day of December 2020.



Laura B. Morton
Laura B. Morton, CMC, NCCMC
Biscoe Town Clerk

W. Eddie Reynolds
William E. Reynolds, Mayor