

Electronic Media Protocol Town of Cabot

5AUG2005

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of the town web site is to provide information about the town government and its services and provide a method of electronic communication between the public and town officials.

To accomplish this goal the website should regularly:

- a) publish the agendas, meeting times and places, approved minutes and reports and other such public records of town boards;
- b) archive in a commonly downloadable format permits, notices, requests and applications that are not of a unique nature (e.g. serial numbered, multi-copy) for completion and return by mail;
- c) provide a method of e-mail to the town boards, commissions and officials;
- d) provide a method of submitting public comment on any matter before a public hearing or on any matter that the selectboard wishes to solicit public comment;
- e) provide and archive, in a downloadable format, public records of general interest created after the implementation of the website;
- f) provide such other services as directed by the selectboard that are consistent with this purpose and are able to be accomplished consistent with the restraints of a volunteer effort.

ADMINISTRATION

The selectboard should appoint to a term of one year an administrator and one or more assistant administrators as needed at its organizational meeting. Such appointments should be at the pleasure of the selectboard.

The website shall at all times be administered and managed:

- a) in compliance with 1 VSA 317 and any other applicable state law;
- b) in compliance with any and all directives of the selectboard;
- c) in compliance with any procedure, practice or policy on website or public records management published by the State Archives office of the Vermont Secretary of State's office when noted that such policy, practice or procedure is required by state law.

The website should be administered and managed on a best practices policy and may use the following for guidance:

- a) any policy, practice or policy recommended by the State Archives office for web management or public

records management that is recommended but not necessarily required by state law;

b) the recommendations published on web management by any governmental unit referred to by the State Archives office;

c) the recommendations of any other recognized organization referred to by the State Archives office for recommendations on web site management.

MAILING LIST

The town website should maintain a subscription list of interested parties who wish to receive notices from the town. Such list should be generated from a page on the website where interested parties can request to be added to the list. Parties should be added only by voluntary request and a method to be removed at the parties request should be included on the same page.

A confirmation email should be sent to verify the intention of the subscriber to be added to the list.

The selectboard will determine which notices should be e-mailed but may determine a class of notices to be sent on a recurring basis without further need for approval.

PUBLIC RECORDS

The website should improve access to public records of the town by archiving in a downloadable format public records of general interest.

Currently created public records should be archived.

Historical records should be archived as the constraints of a volunteer website allow.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The Web development committee should meet twice a year to recommend changes, additions, deletions, improvements and other adaptations for overall improvement in style, content and format. Committee members should regularly review the site throughout the year and circulate memoranda as needed with interim suggestions.

The committee should act in a general oversight capacity of the management of the website in such matters not requiring the approval of the selectboard.

A report should be presented to the selectboard semi-annually on the performance on the website and proposed recommendations requiring their action.

The committee should meet in February and submit to the selectboard recommendations for an administrator and one or more assistant administrators, to be appointed by the selectboard at its organizational meeting for a one year term, such appointments to be at the pleasure of the selectboard.

FORMAT

The administrator should manage the website in a format that portrays a responsible and favorable representation of the town. The style and graphics of the various Vermont state and town websites should

be used for guidance.

Scenic pictures as well as architecture and objects within the town are authorized to be used. Pictures of individuals that are readily identifiable will not be used except by authorization of the selectboard on a case by case basis.

Pictures of community events where crowd scenes do not allow the ready recognition of any individual may be used on an occasional basis.

PAGES

Separate pages on the website should be developed for the individual departments, boards, commissions and offices of the town that wish to have a presence on the website. Each division should control the content and format of its page subject to paragraph 3 below.

The administrator may develop general interest pages.

The actual development and publishing shall be under the control of the administrator to guarantee the integrity of the site and the administrator should not publish the page until its final form is approved by the appropriate division. No page shall be published until approved by the selectboard.

The selectboard shall have supervision over format, style and content of each webpage as well as the site in general.

E-MAIL

[Reserved for future definition.]

RECORDS RETENTION AND ARCHIVING

The importance of retaining public records cannot be overstated. The administrator should take appropriate steps to preserve and store any records that arrive through the website in a secure and complete manner.

The destruction of any “non-record material” in conformity with Public Records Bulletin v1.0 should not be considered a violation of this policy.

A secure and reliable method of records retention may consist of the following:

- a) the practice of leaving on the server all records received, *plus*
- b) the periodic backing up of records on CD-ROM storage and the depositing of the CD-ROM's with the town clerk for safekeeping; *plus*
- c) the use of separate CD-ROM's for storage of public and non-public records.

LINKS

The purpose of the town website is to provide information about the town government, services and attractions. The town website may provide links to websites that also serve this purpose.

The town website will provide links to websites for:

- a) governmental and educational institutions;
- b) Organizations providing information about art, cultural, historical and sporting activities in the town's area;
- c) organizations providing information about tourist attractions in the town's area.

The town website will not provide links to:

- a) candidates for local, state or federal offices;
- b) Political organizations or other organizations advocating a position on a local, state or federal issue;
- c) Individual or personal home pages.

If a particular site does not fit any of the above criteria, the selectboard will decide whether to approve a link.

DISCLAIMER

A notice that "The information on this site is not an official copy of any town record. The Town Clerk will provide an official copy of any record upon request" shall be displayed on the site in an appropriate manner.

[Information on this site is unofficial. Certified copies of recorded documents are available from the town clerk as applicable.] Alternate.

SITE ESTABLISHMENT:

The selectboard adopts the website WWW.CABOTVT.US as the official website of the town of Cabot which shall be administered in compliance with this policy. Any representation of www.cabotvt.us as to being the official website of the town of Cabot is at the pleasure of the selectboard and shall be removed immediately at the board's direction.

APPENDICES

Incorporated by reference are the following reference materials on website management which are attached to the copy deposited with the town clerk.

- a) 1 VSA 317
- b) Sample policy on city website links
- c) Model privacy statement
- d) Model information disclaimer, model copyright statement, sample policy on city website links, draft model website links policy
- e) Vermont state archives advisements:
 - 1) Policy statement and records--e-mail
 - 2) E-government definition
 - 3) Recordkeeping systems
 - 4) Legal issues
 - 5) E-Mail
 - 6) Digital imaging
 - 7) Website management
 - 8) Managing electronic record
 - 9) Municipal electronic records
- f) "Limiting Liability in the Digital Age: Electronic Records Guidelines for Business and Government" by the Vermont Secretary of State.
- g) Records Management Bulletin v1.0 by Department of Buildings & General Services

-

SCHEDULE A

The mailing list may be regularly sent the following:

- a) Agendas, meeting times and places and approved minutes of the various boards and commissions;
- b) Warnings of elections;
- c) Any matter required to be published prior to a public hearing on the matter;
- d) Any notice ordered by the selectboard to be e-mailed;
- e) Any change in the hours of service of the town library or any town office;
- f) [reserved];
- g) the meeting date(s) when the selectboard will discuss the budget to be proposed for the succeeding year;
- h) any notice of an emergency or urgent nature from the fire warden, fire chief or health officer.

Whenever any notice shall by its nature be too large to e-mail effectively, a notice should be mailed to the subscription list indicating the nature of the notice and how it may be obtained, including how to obtain a downloadable format if one is available.

SCHEDULE B

The public records to be archived and published on the website shall be:

- a) The adopted minutes and reports of the various boards and commissions;
- b) the town report;
- c) the town plan;
- d) the zoning by-laws and the sewage ordinance;
- e) blank building and sewage permit forms;
- f) ordinances adopted after the adoption of a website;
- g) ordinances in effect as time and effort allows;
- h) any record ordered archived by the selectboard;
- i) the certified vote of any election;
- j) the parking ordinance.
- k) the wastewater ordinance.

SCHEDULE C

Approved link to other websites are:

Cabot School	www.cabotschool.org
Vermont Government	www.vermont.gov
Secretary of State	www.sec.state.vt.us
Dept of Libraries	http://dol.state.vt.us
Central Vermont Solid Waste	www.cvswwmd.com
Central Vermont Regional Planning	www.centralvtplanning.org
Cabot Historical Society	www.cabothistory.org
Vermont League of Cities and Towns	www.vlct.org



Approved by the selectboard on 8/17/2005.

Superceeded on _____.