

DRAFT 6 DEC 2021

**Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 10th, 2021, 6:30 pm
Wheelwright Room, Town Offices
10 Front Street, Exeter, NH 03833**

MINUTES

Attending: Nina Braun, Lindsay Sonnett, Martha McEntee, Herbert Moyer, Bob Glowacky, Daryl Browne

The Committee convened at 6:30 pm and welcomed Herb Moyer as a new member.

Martha reported that on October 6, she wrote to the Select Board and Town Manager to follow up on our presentation at the August 23, 2021 Select Board meeting and August 12, 2021 report with recommendations to improve Town communications (the "CAC Report"). At the August 23 meeting, the Board had asked Russ Dean to review the report with various department heads to get their input. Martha's email asked for feedback and guidance as to what priorities the Board would like us to pursue going forward. She has not received a formal response, but Bob Glowacky, but Bob Glowacky reported that at a recent Department Head meeting it was announced that Bob would likely become the Communications Coordinator and begin to work with departments. This would probably start off with a meeting of the communication designees for each department meeting with Bob to start to take a look at the website content and go from there.

Bob gave an update on the status of his initiatives and reported that to town would save about \$6,500 by cancelling the MyExeterNH app contract and it would be good if those funds could be redirected to support a "refresh" of the website (est. \$4,000), and any expenses associated with broadening/rebranding the use of the Rave texting service currently used by the Police and Fire Departments. The website "refresh" would improve the home page by widening it and allowing a more attractive presentation of information. He pointed to the home page of Corvallis, Oregon as an example.

Martha made a motion, seconded by Lindsay, that the Committee recommend to the Select Board and Town Manager that the unused funds from the cancellation of the MyExeterNH app contract be applied towards a website "refresh" and costs associated with the broadening/rebranding of the use of the Rave texting service. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Bob agreed to follow up with Andy Swanson about the availability of these funds and report back to the Committee.

Martha suggested that in the absence of specific guidance from the Select Board, the Committee should determine what aspect of the town communications it would focus on next. After discussion, the members agreed that the Committee should focus on completing the following work outlined in the CAC Report:

Website Enhancement. Nina volunteered to give feedback on website design and presentation matters as needed to assist Bob when he approaches town departments about their website pages.

Texting. Bob will continue to check on the feasibility of using Rave for general town texts and report back to the Committee. We need a Committee member to take on the task of supporting Bob's work on texting.

Social Media. The existing Social Media Policy, which is an Exhibit to the CAC Report, needs review and updating. Selectman Browne reported that he and Selectwoman Gilman have been asked to look into social media. Bob said he has been looking into other town's social media policies and practices and will continue to do so and report back to the Committee.

The Committee needs a new member or another volunteer with experience in social media to assist with the social media aspect of the Committee's work.

Communications Best Practices and Policies. Bob and Martha will coordinate and refine the draft communications best practices and policies which were attached as exhibits to the CAC Report. This includes: (1) identifying the various means of communications used by town departments and other town entities (*e.g.*, website materials, Facebook and other social media pages, newsletters, and email distribution lists); (2) identifying existing communications policies that may need updating; (3) completing a chart of the town personnel responsible for producing and distributing various types of communications. (4) drafting a suggested job description for the Communications Coordinator.

The discussion turned to topics the CAC Report did not cover:

TV and Video. Bob noted that ExeterTV faces financing challenges. The Committee discussed ways to see who is watching the TV programming, possibly with a mailer. Herb, who has substantial experience working with TV and video communications, agreed to work with Bob on a review of Exeter TV and other video communications.

Newsletters, Seniors and the Disabled. The Committee briefly noted newsletters from other towns, addressing seniors and the disabled, and expects to continue this discussion at a later date

The discussion turned to the Committee's practice of summarizing warrant articles in plain English. Martha will ask Russ if it would be possible for the us to get involved with the warrant article report that Russ prepares for the Deliberative Session so that the plain English summaries could be available with that report. Lindsay said she would be willing to work with Russ to give feedback.

Nina suggested that Martha serve as Chair going forward, the members agreed, and she accepted. It was agreed that the Committee would establish a regular meeting date and time on the third Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm, provided that the December meeting would be on Wednesday, December 8 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.