

DRAFT

Communications Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 5, 2023, 6:30 pm
Wheelwright Room
Exeter, NH 03833

MINUTES

Present: Martha McEntee (Chairperson), Chris Zigmont, Lindsay Sonnett, Herb Moyer, Nina Braun, Andy Swanson, and Molly Cowan (Select Board Rep), and Melissa Roy (Assistant Town Manager), Bob Glowacky arrived at 6:45pm.

The meeting convened at 6:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes. On a motion by Lindsay, seconded by Herb, the November 3, 2022 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Social Media Policy Update. Martha briefed the Committee on the work she and Bob had done since the last meeting. She reported that she and Bob met with Russ Dean in December to review the draft social media policy in detail and discuss the practicalities involved in implementing the policy across town departments. Russ was pleased with the draft, and, with minor revisions, the policy will be presented to the Select Board for approval at an upcoming meeting.

Bob Glowacky arrived at this point in the meeting.

As some of the members may have to leave early, Martha suggested that the Committee address a question raised by the Select Board at its January 3 meeting concerning whether the Town should spend \$8,000 to contract with Jason Schreiber for 2-3 social media posts per week for the Town generally, building on his existing relationship with the police and fire departments. Before the meeting, the Committee members had had an opportunity to watch the segment of the January 3, 2023 Select Board meeting where this proposal was discussed.

The Committee engaged in an extensive discussion of this issue. Bob noted that Jason writes content which is published on the Police and Fire's social media accounts but not on the website. Nina suggested that it would be valuable to have Jason work with Bob as Communications Coordinator and a Town employee. Martha stressed the importance of distributing content through a variety of communications channels, rather than restricting ourselves to one means of communication such as Facebook. Different segments of our audience have an appetite for the same content.

Melissa drew a distinction between the person who creates the content and the person who gets it out and said that content creation is what the contractor would focus on and town staff would be making sure the content was getting out.

Chris said that at some point we needed to establish what our metrics are for successful communication. As an example, he noted that for a product launch, he asks what are the three areas of communications priorities? We need to be able to measure the results of our efforts. He also suggested annual media/marketing training for department staff, and perhaps having a PR agency of record for crisis management for important time-sensitive issues. This led to the members discussing the possible

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benefits of spending on broader communications generally rather than focusing narrowly on social media. Bob noted that newsletters reach another demographic and asked how we determine what our priorities are: social media users or a town-wide newsletter? This segued into a discussion of the practicalities involved in setting up email newsletters.

Melissa had questions about email newsletter auto-setup and Bob agreed to look into Municode's functionality for newsletters and agenda and minutes auto emails.

Nina raised the question of whether the Committee should write a letter to the Select Board about our views on the proposal to contract for social media posts for the Town. Molly said this sort of letter or formal feedback would be helpful. After discussion, Chris made the following motion, which was seconded by Lindsay:

That the Communications Advisory Committee:

- (1) recommends that the Select Board approve the funding for a communications consultant for the purpose of content creation that was already approved by the Budget Recommendations Committee (BRC), namely \$5,000 for the Police Department and \$2,500 for the Fire Department;
- (2) does not recommend additional funding, to expand the communications consultant's contract services, specifically \$8,000 for the Town generally and an additional \$2,500 for the Fire Department, without first developing an implementation plan for the consultant to work with the Town's Communications Coordinator.

The motion was unanimously approved and Martha would provide documentation to for Molly to pass this on to the Select Board.

Canva + MailChimp. Bob reported that he is looking into Mail Chimp and using that as a model to create some sort of regular general Town news with the possibility of doing some sort of print newsletter mailed out or distributed to various places.

Both Nina and Chris expressed sustainability concerns and suggested people be given an opportunity to opt out or receive an online-only copy, which Bob agreed was a good idea and possible. Chris suggests starting on some consistent frequency such as quarterly and then building more frequently from there.

Bob talked about the concerns of Town staff of merging into one shared MailChimp account. Bob also stressed that we could do a Google Form for the public to fill out which would be a single page to sign up for various lists. Once a month this data could be forwarded to the respective departments for their staff to import into their system manually. This would be more work on an ongoing basis but wouldn't require us to merge MailChimp accounts. It would also avoid more expensive paid accounts versus our current use of free accounts.

Martha suggested tabling the remaining two agenda items and addressing them at the next meeting, Exeter TV Status Update and 2023 CAC Goal Setting, and all members agreed.

She noted that she was preparing the Annual Report of the Committee's work as requested by Pam McElroy for inclusion in the Town Annual Report. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.
