

TOWN OF NEW LISBON

Electronic Communications Policy

PURPOSE AND GOALS

E-mail is one of the Town of New Lisbon's core internal and external communication methods. Increasingly, other forms of electronic communications, such as but not limited to instant messaging (IM), SMS/text messaging, online chat, social media messaging, and video conferencing. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ~~e-mail systems~~ electronic communications of all types ("EC") used by Town officials support Town business functions to their fullest capacity. This policy advises staff and management of their responsibilities and provides guidance in managing information communicated by EC ~~e-mail~~. **This policy is effective when using software or equipment belonging to the Town or in any event when acting in his or her capacity as an employee, official or agent of the Town.**

USE OF ~~E-MAIL~~ EC

~~E-mail~~ EC services, which include the electronic transmission of mail, documents, files, data and other information, like other means of communications are to be used to support Town business. Officials may use ~~e-mail~~ EC to communicate informally with other officials as long as the communication meets professional standards of conduct. Officials may use ~~e-mail~~ EC to communicate outside of the Town when such communications are related to legitimate business activities and are within their job assignments or responsibilities. Officials will not use ~~e-mail~~ EC for illegal, disruptive, unethical or unprofessional activities, or for personal gain, or for any purpose that would jeopardize the legitimate interests of the Town. Circulating chain letters or "jokes of the day" and other types of non-work related material is prohibited. Caution must be exercised when using electronic mail for official Town business since mail traveling the internet can be intercepted. If the impact of public disclosure would be adverse another means of communication should be employed.

PRIVACY AND ACCESS

~~E-mail~~ EC messages are not personal and private. ~~E-mail~~ EC messages sent or received in conjunction with Town business may be releasable to the public under the Freedom of Information Law and may require special measures to comply with the Personal Privacy Protection Law. All ~~e-mail~~ EC messages, including personal

communications may be subject to discovery proceedings in legal actions. Since e-mailECs on home computers are subject to FOIL, it is suggested that all Town officials utilize a separate account for Town business.

MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION OF E-MAIL EC COMMUNICATIONS

E-mailEC created in the normal course of official business and retained as evidence of official policies, actions, decisions or transactions are considered records which are subject to records management requirements under the Arts and Cultural Affairs Law. Examples of messages sent by e-mailEC that typically are records include: policies and directives, correspondence or memoranda related to official business, work schedules and assignments, agenda and minutes of meetings, drafts of documents that are circulated for comment or approval, any document that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction, and final reports or recommendations. E-mailEC messages that typically do not constitute records are: personal messages and announcements, copies of documents sent for convenience (such as copies of minutes), phone message slips, announcements of social events and agency newsletters. If anyone is unsure if an e-mailEC is an official record or not they should contact the Records Management Officer (Town Clerk).

RECORDS RETENTION

Records communicated using e-mailEC need to be identified, managed, protected, and retained as long as they are needed to meet operational, legal, audit, research or other requirements. In order for e-mailEC records to be identified, all Town officials will have to provide a copy of the e-mailEC, either by e-mailEC, or by submitting a paper copy of the e-mailEC to the Records Management Officer (Town Clerk). Records transmitted through e-mailEC have the same retention periods as records in other formats. The Records Management Officer (Town Clerk) will be responsible to dispose of e-mailEC records once they have met the retention limit as specified in the State Archives and Records Administration (SARA) Record Retention and Disposition Schedule. Any e-mailEC considered a record may be disposed of after the user has filed a copy with the Records Management Officer (Town Clerk) and the user no longer needs the information contained therein. Any non-record e-mailECs should be disposed of in a timely fashion, or when no longer needed for personal reference.

POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATE

The New Lisbon Town Board will periodically review and update this policy as new technologies and organizational changes are planned and implemented.