

# **Town of Berne Social Media Policy**

## **Purpose**

This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use of social media sites by the Town of Berne as a means of conveying Town of Berne (“Town”) information to its citizens. These guidelines include, but are not limited to, the Town web site and any social media websites.

The intended purpose for establishing Town of Berne social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens and visitors, and as an alternate and additional means of communication during emergency situations.

Utilization of Town approved social media sites must adhere to this policy. The guidelines may be supplemented by administrative rules and regulations issued by the Berne Town Board. This policy may be amended at the direction of the Town Board.

The Town of Berne has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the Town on Town social media sites.

For purposes of this policy, “social media” is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Flickr. For purposes of this policy, “comment/postings” include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on a Town of Berne social media site.

## **General Policy**

1. The establishment and use by any Town department of a Town social media site is subject to approval by the Town Board. All Town of Berne social media sites shall be administered by the Town Board’s designated “Administrator”. The Administrator shall be appointed or reauthorized yearly at the Town’s organizational meeting held in January.
2. Town social media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the Town of Berne and that they follow the Town’s Social Media Policy. Postings on the Town’s Facebook sites may only be written by Town personnel and approved by the Town’s Administrator.
3. Comments by the general public on Town approved social media sites shall not be considered, for regulatory purposes, as official correspondence with the Town. All official correspondence with the Town shall be made by written communication to the Town’s mailing address or through electronic e-mail to the Town electronic address.
4. Wherever possible, Town social media sites should link back to the official Town of Berne website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town of Berne.

5. The Administrator will monitor content on Town's social media sites to ensure adherence to both the Town's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town of Berne.
6. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the Administrator for a reasonable period of time, and include the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
7. These guidelines shall be on display to users or made available by hyperlink whenever possible.
8. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
9. Employees representing the Town government via Town social media sites must express themselves using language and content that reflects the highest standards of decorum and in accordance with all Town policies.
10. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by the Town board.
11. Social media sites are subject to the records retention rules and regulations of the State of New York.
12. The Town's Social Media Policy shall be reauthorized yearly at the Town's organizational meeting held in January.

## **Comment/Postings Policy**

1. The Town and its representatives are expected to serve all constituents in a civil, respectful and unbiased manner.
2. The following forms of content shall not be permitted on Town of Berne social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the administrator or his/her designees:
  - a. Comments/postings not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comment/postings;
  - b. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin;
  - d. Defamatory or personal attacks;
  - e. Threats to any person or organization;
  - f. Comment/postings in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;

g. Solicitation of, or for commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;

h. Conduct or communications in violation of any federal, state or local law;

i. Encouragement of illegal activity;

j. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;

k. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

3. Comments posted by members of the public on any Town of Berne social media site reflects the opinions of the individuals posting the comments. Publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town of Berne, nor do such comments/postings reflect the opinions or policies of the Town of Berne.

4. The Town of Berne reserves the right to deny access to Town of Berne social media sites, at any time and without prior notice, to individuals who violate the Town's Social Media Policy.

5. Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comment/postings requesting responses from the Town, and for comments/postings in violation of this policy.

7. Employees must include their name and title when responding to a comment or question on Town social media sites. Employees shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees.

8. Postings to Town of Berne Facebook sites, as wells any other media sites, are bound by the respective Statement of Rights and Responsibilities associated by each individual website. The Town shall report any violation of any Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to the respective website.

## **Data Collection**

In order to improve the content and usability of this website, the Town of Berne may automatically collect several categories of information from users. This information includes the following:

1. The Internet Protocol ("IP") address of your Internet Service Provider ("ISP") and/or your computer, if your computer has an IP address assigned directly to it.
2. The Domain Name ("Domain Name") of your Internet Service Provider ("ISP") and/or your computer, if your computer has a domain name assigned directly to it.
3. The type of browser (such as, for example Internet Explorer, Opera, Firefox, Chrome, etc.) used and the operating system resident on your computer.
4. The date and time a user visited the site.
5. The web pages accessed at the site, as well as any applications used and forms data.
6. The Uniform Resource Locator ("URL") of the site which a user visited prior to The Town of Berne Web Site.

The Town of Berne uses this information to identify site performance needs; to ensure compatibility with the technology used by the web sites visitors, and to generally add and improve services offered on The Town of Berne's web site. In order to accomplish these goals, from time to time, the Town may conduct statistical analysis of the data it collects.

7. The Town of Berne does not collect data for commercial or marketing purposes, and does not sell, exchange, or otherwise distribute the data collected by The Town of Berne's web site for commercial or marketing purposes.

## **Information Submitted to The Town of Berne**

During a session on The Town of Berne web site, a user may affirmatively submit information to the town by, among other means, electronic mail ("e-mail"), filling in and submitting an on-line form, or screening for benefits and services. Such affirmatively submitted information is stored in a secure environment and will be used by the Town in the furtherance of its duties and/or obligations to its citizenry (i.e., "governmental purposes").

The governmental purposes to which your affirmatively submitted information may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Helping the Town respond to a request for information not readily available from The Town of Berne's website
2. Investigating a problem reported to the Town.
3. Keeping lists of parties interested in some particular issue or facet of the Town of Berne about which the Town anticipates issuing further information in the future.

4. Sending informational updates and conducting outreach on topics such as, but not limited to, public benefits and services and upcoming City events.

5. Sharing information with other Town Departments or other government agencies for the limited purpose of facilitating services and benefits, in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

6. Disclosure of such information pursuant to a request made under Freedom of Information Law ("FOIL") or court order, if such information is not protected by federal, or state, or local law.

If the Town of Berne sends electronic mail ("e-mail") to a user, such e-mail is NOT confidential, and is identical in nature to that information generally available to the public and news media.

## Security and Monitoring

1. In certain instances, a user may have the opportunity to receive or create a password to access or submit personally identifiable information. One should not divulge a password to anyone, and the Town will never ask a user for a password in a telephone call, fax, e-mail or other form of unsolicited communication. When a user is finished with an application or applications that are password protected, such user should exit the relevant page(s). If the browser used to access said password protected pages is a publicly-accessible browser, users should close down the entire session and, if applicable or possible, flush any temporary caches or other areas where such a password might be stored subsequent to use, and log out of all applications.

2. The Town has integrated industry standard or better security measures and systems into the design, implementation and day to day operation of The Town of Berne web site and its underlying servers and networks. Furthermore, the Town maintains ongoing efforts to identify and/or block unauthorized intrusions into or onto the web site and to upload to or change information on or otherwise cause damage.

3. The act of using The Town of Berne's web site constitutes the User's express consent to the Town's monitoring of all uses of the system. If such monitoring reveals possible evidence of criminal activity or any other unauthorized use, system administration personnel may provide your information to law enforcement or other officials, as authorized or required by law.

## Cookies

Cookies are text files, or entries in larger files, utilized to distinguish between visitors to a website, and to track information during multiple visits to a website. The Town may use "temporary cookies" on some parts or all parts of the Town of Berne's website.

The use of cookies is a standard practice among Internet websites. Most Internet web browsers may be customized to reject cookies, to only accept or reject cookies by user intervention, or to delete cookies. Rejecting and/or removing cookies, however, may lead to loss of functionality on those pages requiring cookies to function fully.

## Children

No applications on the Town of Berne's web site specifically solicit information from minors or seek to determine whether the visitor is a minor. Consequently, because such information will not be specifically identified as being from minors, users should be aware that personally identifiable information submitted to the website by minors will be subject to being treated in the same manner as information given by an adult and may become subject to FOIL.

## Third Party Links

The Town of Bern's website may provide links to, and may be linked from, local, State and federal government agencies, and from, or to, other websites. The existence and/or provision of those links neither constitutes nor implies endorsement of the destination or departure website(s) or of the content, viewpoint, accuracy, opinions, policy(ies), product(s), accessibility or privacy policy of said destination or departure website(s). Nor does any link between the Town of Berne website and a third-party website imply sponsorship of such website, or the creator of such website

Some content on portions of the Town of Berne website resides on servers run by third parties. Each agency providing content for is bound by the Town of Berne Privacy Policy. Any agency using a third-party host, ISP, ASP or other combination of third-party transport, storage, content or application provision services shall require such third party to comply with the Town of Berne's Privacy Policy.

## Intellectual Property

The content of the Town of Berne website is copyrighted and may contain some third-party images/graphics that are used with permission. Users are notified, therefore, that one should presume the need to obtain permission from the copyright holder before reproducing or otherwise using images/graphics from this website.

## Changes to this Policy

The Town of Berne may change this policy from time to time and reserves the right to do so without notice.

