TOWN OF BLACKSTONE
Web Site Policy

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this website policy for the Town of Blackstone (Town) is to effectively utilize the Internet in delivering services and information to employees, board/committee members, residents, businesses, and visitors. The goals of the Town of Blackstone website are to:

- Encourage increased citizen participation in town government by making public information available.
- Provide electronic access to town information through a logical single point of entry at www.townofblackstone.org
- Keep the public informed of community events, municipal meetings, and Town programs.

POLICY:

All content contributors are expected to regularly update and curate links and content that align with the Town's objectives to ensure that the website quality is consistently maintained while streamlining content submission for a cohesive online presence. The establishment of website governance safeguards against potential copyright claims and the preservation of public records.

APPLICABILITY:

Any elected official or appointed official of a Board/Committee/Commission, employee, and members of any community organization of the Town of Blackstone are subject to the provisions of this policy.

PUBLICATION CRITERIA:

All content and information submissions, regardless of the source or submitter, are subject to the following **publication criteria** to determine if they are appropriate for the Town website:

1. **Meeting Information and Calendar:** The Town website is the official posting location of record for scheduled Town Board/Committee/Commission meeting and agenda notices. All approved public meeting agendas, public meeting minutes, and approved executive session minutes that will no longer defeat the purpose of the executive session shall be submitted by the respective Board/Committee/Commission Chair or other designee to the Office of the Town Clerk.

   The Office of the Town Clerk will upload and otherwise make available the submitted meeting notices, agendas, and approved minutes on the Town website.

   Department heads, Board/Committee/Commission Chairs, or other designees are otherwise responsible for maintaining their web pages before their posted meetings to allow for publishing approval and ensure timely notice is given to the public.

2. **Community Calendar:** The Town website provides event details for Town events and volunteer opportunities submitted by local volunteer and non-profit organizations. Eligible local organization event submissions must provide recreation/enrichment programs or community events for residents of the Town of Blackstone. All community calendar event submissions are subject to review and approval by the Office of the Town Administrator.

3. **Alerts and News Items:** News and information related to the duties, obligations, and goals of various Town Departments and Boards/Committees/Commissions may be submitted to the Office

of the Town Administrator for electronic distribution. News and/or event content that otherwise meets the website publication criteria may also be submitted.

Suggested content may include, for example:

a. Current Town Department, Board, and Committee activities, initiatives, and information of interest to the community
b. Requests for community input, involvement, or assistance with activities of a particular Board/Committee/Commission
c. Volunteer opportunities for Board/Committee/Commission vacancies and town employment postings.
d. Citizen surveys
e. Feature Stories highlighting the accomplishments and outcomes of specific Town Department or Board/Committee/Commission initiatives and projects.
f. Forms that can be completed online and submitted through the website to eliminate paper forms and visits to the Municipal Center

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE:

1. **Content Submission:** Limited to local community organizations, Town of Blackstone department heads, Board/Committee/Commission Chairs, or their designee with prior approval by the Town Administrator.

2. **Allowed Content Types:** Every effort should be made, within the staffing resources of each department, to regularly post/upload new content and information to the website as soon as it is available. Outdated material must be reviewed periodically and unpublished/archived and/or deleted as soon as it is no longer relevant or applicable in accordance with record retention policies and for public records request purposes.

Excluded Content: The following is a non-exhaustive list of content which would violate this policy:

- Opinions or endorsements regarding candidates, political issues, or initiatives
- Promotion or advertisement of businesses or special interest groups
- Links to campaign websites for candidates.
- Promotion of political organizations or organizations advocating a candidate, position, or legislation.
- Solicitations of commerce, links to corporate or for-profit organizations unless meeting specific criteria.. Examples of approved content are Town supported events.
- Individual or personal social media sites
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, gender, religion, marital status, military service, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws;
- Sexually explicit content or links to sexually explicit content;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

3. **Approval and Editing:** All website content submitted must be approved by the Town Administrator prior to publishing. Those users listed under the aforementioned ***Content Submission*** section will make edits, and as part of the publishing process, the Town Administrator will approve the publication going live.

4. **Front Page Approval:** All postings on the website's main home page, including *News & Notices*, require approval from the Town Administrator.

5. **Time Sensitivity:** Time-sensitive submissions should be forwarded well before the requested posting date to allow for necessary changes and approvals.

6. **File Formats and Accuracy:** Preferred Formats: .rtf, .pdf, .doc, .ppt, and .jpg are preferred for posting. Submitters must check spelling, grammar, and factual accuracy before submission.