

TOWN OF BELLEAIR
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (DRAFT)

Revised July, 2017

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This plan was created in order to clearly-define internal and external communications tools and guidelines for the Town of Belleair. In doing this, the Town hopes to increase efficiency and effectiveness in how it presents itself to residents, staff, elected officials, and the greater community. As a result, this plan has four specific goals:

1. To define and establish the Town’s Communications Team and the requirements and responsibilities of the group
2. To define the communications tools currently available to the Town
3. To introduce and define the four tiers of Town events that require communications
4. To unify communications processes by linking communications tools to event tiers

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Belleair’s Town-wide Communications Team serves on an annual basis (January through December of each year) and is responsible for updating communications procedures, tracking communications success, and serving as a leadership group regarding the Town’s communications tasks.

The Communications Team is also responsible for the annual upkeep of this document, any procedures related to communications tools identified in this document, and the Town’s Style Guide.

Hence, members of the Communications Team are expected to be Belleair’s “experts” in communications, marketing, social media, and public relations, and are thus required to complete specialized training in order to serve in the group. This training includes, but is not limited to those listed below.

- A “Content Marketing Certification” from Hubspot Academy (TENTATIVE)
- “Social Marketing” training from Hootsuite Academy (TENTATIVE)
- “High Impact Business Writing” training from Coursera (TENTATIVE)

Additionally, the Communications Team is responsible for submitting an annual Communications Summary Report to the Town Manager (due by March 1 of each year) that discusses details regarding communications frequency, platform concentration, content quality and effectiveness, and that outlines goals and areas for improvement for the coming year. The Town Manager, or designee, shall later present the report to the Town Commission.

This year’s Communication’s Team, as designated by the Town Manager, is listed below (TENTATIVE).

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Cathy DeKarz | Management Analyst | Administration Department |
| 2. Ricky Allison | Public Services Manager | Parks and Recreation Department |
| 3. Ashley Bernal | Special Projects Coordinator | Administration Department |
| 4. DP Perry | Admin. Services Coordinator | Support Services Department |
| 5. Tena Khachab | Administrative Assistant | Public Works Department |
| 6. Brian Beery | Detective | Police Department |

EVENT CLASSIFICATION

This plan (in accordance with the Town's Communications Policy, # ---) identifies four tiers of communications priorities, as outlined below. The resulting hierarchy demonstrates a tiered structure for the four levels of communications importance (indicating that emergencies are first priority, informational events second, etc.). Additionally, each tier has a "communications strategy" that outlines the intent of each of the four types. Lastly, the sections below identify which tools should be used in each of the four scenarios.

TIER 1: EMERGENCY EVENT

"An event or situation that endangers (or may soon endanger) the public or the staff"

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: **ALERT**

- Example: An active shooter situation within or near Belleair
- Example: An unanticipated water main break that results in a water shutoff

Appropriate tools:

- Internal: Code Red / email
- External: Code Red / e-blasts / press releases (Media Alert) / social media / website

TIER 2: INFORMATIONAL EVENT

"A situation that requires a time-sensitive release of factual information, but that is not an immediate danger to public life or safety"

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: **INFORM**

- Example: Construction on a major road that results in a temporary detour
- Example: Fire hydrant testing that causes a short-term water shutoff
- Example: Weather conditions that result in a cancelled outdoor event
- Example: Issues submitted via SeeClickFix

Appropriate tools:

- Internal: Belleair News Network (BNN) / email
- External: SeeClickFix / e-blasts / notices / print advertising / press releases (Media Alert) / social media / website

TIER 2A: LEGALLY-REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS

"Legally-required or regulated communications such shall be considered and treated with great importance. Timelines and structure associated with such communications are always a priority"

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: **LEGALLY INFORM**

- Example: Legal noticing in a newspaper for a request for a dock variance
- Example: Soliciting bids for an upcoming capital project

Appropriate tools:

- Internal: n/a
- External: Notices / press releases (Media Alert) / website

TIER 3: CAUTIONARY EVENT

"An anticipated and/or ongoing event that the public should be made aware of due to safety or security concerns, but that is not an immediate danger to public life or safety"

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: CAUTION

- Example: The approaching hurricane season triggers the need to communicating safety tips
- Example: Vehicle robberies in the area require communicating the importance of the locking vehicles at night

Appropriate tools:

- Internal: Belleair News Network (BNN) / email
- External: Code Red / e-blasts, out-of-home (OOH) marketing / print advertising / social media / website

TIER 4: PROMOTIONAL EVENT

"An event, program, or other circumstance that engages the public or staff and that incites participation, community building, and/or discussion"

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: ENGAGE

- Example: Recreation programs, camps, sports leagues, or special events
- Example: The completion of a capital improvements project

Appropriate tools:

- Internal: Belleair News Network (BNN) / email
- External: E-blasts / memos / out-of-home (OOH) marketing / paid advertising / press releases (Media Alert) / print advertising / social media / website

SCOPE AND TOOLS

The Town has access to a wide variety of communications tools, which are briefly outlined below. Regarding the use of these tools, the Town operates using two different tones of voice: business casual (using more informal prose and terms) and business professional (using more formal prose and terms).

Additionally, there are certain tools that speak to department-specific communications, and which operate separately from general Town communications. Communications tools and accounts shall hence be considered town-wide unless otherwise mentioned to be department-specific.

BELLEAIR NEWS NETWORK (BNN): A weekly internal communications newsletter by and for employees

Primary points-of-contact: BNN Team and the BNN Lead

Tone: Business casual

E-BLASTS: Any mass-emailing service for emergency or non-emergency communications

TOWN OF BELLEAIR E-BLASTS

Vendor: Mail Chimp

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business casual

RECREATION E-BLASTS

Vendor: Constant Contact

Primary point-of-contact: Recreation Supervisor

Tone: Business casual

EMAIL: General communications for emergency or non-emergency use

Vendor: Gmail

Primary point-of-contact: Town Manager (or designee)

Tone: Business casual or business formal

EVERBRIDGE NOTIFICATION SYSTEM: A robotic, automated alerting system for mass phone calls, texts, and emails (previously Code Red)

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team or Town Manager

Tone: Business casual

NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES: Legally-required notices or advertisements for public meetings or variances that must comply with the Town's Code of Ordinances and/or any Florida State Statutes that have been set forth and that may or may not include fees paid to vendors

Primary point-of-contact: Town Clerk

Tone: Business formal (strict adherence to legal wording requirements)

PUBLIC NOTICES: Notices or letters sent to the public regarding infrastructure projects, survey work, or other construction events

Primary points-of-contact: Communications Team or Construction Projects Supervisor

Tone: Business formal

MEMOS: Formal internal updates to employees regarding specific and high-level topics

Primary point-of-contact: Town Manager (or designee)

Tone: Business formal

OUT-OF-HOME (OOH) MARKETING: Any media that consumers see outside of their homes for branding or promotional purposes (ex: Town signs, street banners, etc.)

TOWN OF BELLEAIR OOH MARKETING

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business casual

RECREATION OOH MARKETING

Primary point-of-contact for recreation communications: Recreation Supervisor

Tone: Business casual

PAID ADVERTISING: Promotional communications or ads that require payment to an outside vendor for placement and/or distribution

TOWN OF BELLEAIR PAID ADVERTISING

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business formal

RECREATION PAID ADVERTISING

Primary point-of-contact: Recreation Supervisor

Tone: Business casual

PRESS AND MEDIA RELATIONS: Collaborative and knowledgeable information sharing with various media institutions

Primary point-of-contact: Town Manager (or designee)

Tone: Business formal

MEDIA ALERT: An internet portal for releasing information to the press regarding emergency events

TOWN OF BELLEAIR MEDIA ALERT

Primary points-of-contact: Communications Team and Town Manager

Tone: Business formal

POLICE MEDIA ALERT

Primary point-of-contact: Chief of Police

Tone: Business formal

PRINT ADVERTISING: Communications that may include flyers, posters, pamphlets, brochures, letters, and/or mailers that are distributed via a postal service or picked up in-person from a Town event or facility

TOWN OF BELLEAIR PRINT ADVERTISING

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business casual

RECREATION PRINT MARKETING

Primary point-of-contact: Recreation Supervisor

Tone: Business casual

SEELICKFIX: An interactive application that allows residents to request assistance or report non-emergency issues with the Town via website or mobile app

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business casual

SOCIAL MEDIA: General communications, updates, or promotional messages that encourage two-way communications between the Town and its residents and visitors. Current social media channels are listed below; however, more may be added to the discretion of the Town Manger (or designee) alongside the changing digital market.

TOWN OF BELLEAIR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tobmain

Twitter: @TownofBelleair

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business casual

RECREATION SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BelleairRec

Twitter: @BelleairRec

Instagram: @belleair_rec

Primary point-of-contact: Recreation Supervisor

Tone: Business casual

WEBSITE: A central, one-stop hub for communications that other tools refer back to

Website URL: www.townofbelleair.com

Vendor: Civic Plus

Primary point-of-contact: Communications Team

Tone: Business formal

COMMUNICATIONS POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES

All Town communications shall comply with the rules, regulations, and procedures set forth within Belleair's Communications Policy (#---), Social Media Use Policy (#---), and Style Guide. Some of the main points from those documents are listed below for reference.

GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications shall be treated with great care and importance. Town employees shall make effective and timely communications (both internally and externally) a priority.
- Under no circumstance shall any written or verbal communications or actions be vulgar, profane, derogatory, discriminative, disrespectful or distasteful in any way.
- When communicating, employees shall use Commission-approved logos and departmental variants. No other logo shall be acceptable.
- Official Town letterhead shall only be used for official purposes, or as approved by the Town Manager, or designee. These purposes typically include the emergency and informational communications tiers. Only letterhead whose design is explicitly approved by the Town Manager shall be used for Town purposes.
- The Town shall stay away from endorsing any politicians, laws, ordinances, or policies, or political views in any way. Regarding these issues, employees may present facts and information, but shall not aim to influence the public's voting or opinion.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- When creating written communications of any kind on behalf of the Town, employees shall be courteous, professional, and thorough. This thoroughness includes using proper grammar and syntax and always proofreading communications to ensure clear and error-free communications. It is recommended that all external communications are reviewed by at least three (3) employees before being sent out to the public.
- When referring to Belleair, the municipality shall always be referred to as a town (not a city).
- When referring to individuals publicly, formal titles shall always be used (Mr./Ms./Mrs./Commissioner/Mayor + last name).

WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIO

- Each department shall require at least one (1) employee to receive relevant website training in order to serve as their department's website liaison. These liaisons shall review and update their department's web content on a quarterly basis.
- Only social media representatives designated by the Town Manager (or designee) may operate social media handles. Such individuals shall be held responsible by their department head and/or the Town Manager to regularly and responsibly post social media content, as outlined by this policy.

- The Town Manager (or designee) shall review all departmental requests to create social media pages/handles and shall be the final authority opinion on all social media communications. The Town Manager (or designee) may, at their discretion, post and moderate any and all communications. If such editing occurs, the affected department shall be notified of such editing via email.
- Individual Town employees may have their own personal pages, but shall not link them to any official town pages. Employees shall not use their personal web presence for any official Town communications.
- When operating Belleair's social media accounts, employees shall respond to and engage with the public via these portals in a responsible and respectful manner. Any question or request submitted via social media shall be acknowledged by the employee(s) responsible within one (1) business day and addressed/closed as soon as possible.
- When at all possible, information from social media and/or e-blast posts shall be reinforced by information on the Town website.
- If the Town wishes to source content from another entity, written consent or licensing shall first be required from the original owner unless that owner's content is public domain. When sourcing content, the Town shall always give credit to the original entity.
- The Town may not delete negative or inappropriate comments on social media posts; however, comments which are vulgar, profane, derogatory, discriminative, disrespectful or distasteful (or otherwise unsuitable for wide audiences) may be hidden from public view if deemed necessary.

APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES IN REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS

Certain events constitute strict adherence to specific communication tools, as mandated by the Executive Leadership Team. These events are listed below along with the required communications for each. However, the tools that correspond with each of the following events are by no means exhaustive and often should be paired with additional communications, as necessary.

| EVENT | COMMUNICATION TOOL(S) | AUDIENCE |
|---|---|---|
| Life-threatening emergencies (i.e. an active shooter situation) | Everbridge Notification System alert, press release, website update, and social media posts | All residents / all staff |
| Water main break | Everbridge Notification System alert, website update, and social media posts | All residents effected / all staff |
| Capital project(s) update | Public notice(s) and website update(s) | All residents effected |
| Park noticing or update(s) | Public notice(s) and website update(s) | All residents effected via the Parks Planning Policy (#---) |
| Solid waste holiday pickup schedule | Code Red alert and website update | All residents |