

# Selectboard Communication Plan

## Goals:

- Regular communication with/updates to residents/taxpayers/voters/businesses from the Selectboard (SB)
- Multiple channels to capture maximum # of eyes
- Minimal expense by using electronic means and existing mailing opportunities such as Census, Excise Bills, and Tax Bills.

## Content:

- Project updates
- Upcoming issues
- Agendas and minutes (via town-wide news and town website at this point)
- Grants received by the town
- Employment opportunities
- Links to and physical locations of more information

## Out-Bound Channels (from SB):

- Town-wide news => use always

We have it and we use it. It is integrated with our website. Efforts should continue to be made to increase subscribership.

- Nextdoor => use always

See below for further discussion of the use of social media in general and Nextdoor specifically.

- Council on Aging (COA) Newsletter => use always

In the past, the COA sent 600-800 newsletters out via US Post Office to townspeople over 60. The SB should provide either a short message or a longer insert for each newsletter.

- Facebook => not at this time

A Town of Princeton Facebook page might be considered in the future. One reason for that might be to have a presence outside of the town.

- If a member of the SB posts on a personal Facebook page and the topic is a matter that might be perceived to be under the jurisdiction of the SB, the Selectperson will clearly state that he/she is posting as a private citizen and is not speaking for the SB.

Twitter => not at this time

A Town of Princeton Twitter feed might be considered in the future. One reason for doing so might be that it is a one-way (outbound only) social media channel.

- Printed media => use always. How it is used will vary.

In general, if the SB sends out a communication electronically, it will also print and post/leave the communication at the Town Hall, Library, and COA. On occasion, a communication may be deemed important enough that the SB decides to mail it using the US Postal Service.

### In-Bound Channels (to SB):

For now, residents can address the SB directly by calling a SB member or the Town Administrator, emailing the same, speaking at the beginning of a SB meeting during the public comment period, or requesting time on a SB agenda.

### Social Media: (taken from MMA)

Unlike the average social media user, municipalities, as government entities, must make sure that their online conduct is consistent with a wide range of state and federal laws. These include the public records law and its records retention requirements, the open meeting law, the First Amendment, conflict of interest laws, and laws regarding confidentiality.

### Identification:

All municipal social media accounts should state clearly and visibly that they are operated by the municipality. This can be accomplished with an appropriate username or handle and a link to an official municipal website.

For Princeton SB's use of Nextdoor, the name "Princeton Selectboard" will be used. An email address that goes to the SB will be associated with the account. The Nextdoor Profile will state clearly that this user is the SB and a link to the Town's website and the SB's page will be included.

### Control:

The SB and Town Administrator (TA) will designate one person from the SB to post on Nextdoor on the SB's behalf (call this the designated poster). The TA and all Selectpersons will have the

Nextdoor user id and password. When a new Selectperson or TA takes office, the Nextdoor password will be changed.

The Designated Poster will login to Nextdoor using the SB's user id and password before posting on the SB's behalf.

If something has been posted on Town-wide News, the Designated Poster has the right to and should post the same thing on Nextdoor.

New content can only be posted on Nextdoor by the Designated Poster if a majority of the Selectboard agrees in a vote during a public session.

### Record Retention:

The secretary of the Commonwealth has recommended that any public entities using social media should (1) review all social media service providers' terms of service for its records retention practices, and (2) develop a procedure for retaining copies of all social media content, such as by taking periodic screenshots. [The secretary's Electronic Records Management Guidelines is available at [www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcpdf/Electronic\\_Records\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcpdf/Electronic_Records_Guidelines.pdf).]

For Nextdoor, the Designated Poster shall save a screenshot of each post he or she creates in an electronic file and shall submit that file to the TA twice a year for retention.

### Open Meeting Law Compliance:

The Attorney General's Office has warned that communications on social media may constitute improper deliberations if viewed by a quorum of other members of the same public body [Open Meeting Law Determination 2013-27, available at [www.oml.ago.state.ma.us](http://www.oml.ago.state.ma.us)]. Public boards and committees should remember that posting on social media does not satisfy the "notice" requirements in the open meeting law. [See M.G.L. Ch. 30A, Section 20(c).]

To avoid any appearance of or actual deliberation on Nextdoor, the SB will:

- Post New Topics as specified earlier (not respond to other people's posts)
- Deliberate in open meeting before deciding to post a response or clarification. The SB will not respond to individual posts.
- If posting personally on any matter that might be perceived to be under the jurisdiction of the SB, the Selectperson will clearly state that he/she is posting as a private citizen and is not speaking for the SB. In other words, Selectman John Doe can post that he is posting as a private citizen and is not speaking for the Selectboard and then can state that the town of ABC built a pre-fab senior center for \$1M. John Doe can post that turkeys have babies on Mountain Rd without any preamble because it can't reasonably be perceived to be a SB matter.