

# Town of Sidney, Maine

## Website Policy

**Effective: August 4, 2014 – Board of Selectmen**

The Town of Sidney will use its official municipal website to serve long-term, seasonal, new and potential residents and other visitors: connecting them to town government, community information, events and important factual information.

The website may include:

- Easy to find and retrieve municipal information such as meeting schedules, official announcements, minutes, policies, plans, bylaws, emergency contact information, etc.
- Access to complete and clear answers to frequently asked questions.
- Contact information for town officials
- Printable PDF's for basic town forms and transactions.
- Access to a municipal calendar.
- Contact information for various municipal organizations.
- Links to important regional and state websites.

### Goals and Objectives

The Town of Sidney has identified the following strategic goals and objectives for the website:

**Goal 1** – Ensure the quality and ease-of-use of the municipal website.

- Objective 1a — Make it easy to find the most used or requested information.
- Objective 1b — Establish a governance process for posting of content in a timely and accurate manner.

**Goal 2** – Make it easy for users to get municipal information.

- Objective 2a — Online calendar listing all public meetings & Town Office hours.
- Objective 2b — All meeting minutes online in a timely manner.
- Objective 2c — Online access to official municipal documents such as, but not limited to, Annual Town Reports, Assessing and land records, etc.
- Objective 2d — Make it easy to contact municipal officials & emergency personnel.

**Goal 3** – Provide 24 hour access to important municipal information.

- Objective 3a — Provide online forms where possible and information needed for various licenses and registrations.

**Goal 4** – Make it clear that the Town of Sidney’s municipal website is the official website for the Town of Sidney, Maine.

- Objective 4a — Use [www.sidneymaine.org](http://www.sidneymaine.org) as the official website domain name.
- Objective 4b — The Town of Sidney’s official municipal website will be separate from the school district’s and other town organizations’ websites to ensure clear governance structures.

**Goal 5** – To utilize the website for community development and connections.

- Objective 5a – The Town of Sidney’s website will foster community development by making connections between people, local business, organizations and town government.

## **Website Management and Governance**

- No advertising will be allowed on the Town of Sidney’s website to avoid any conflict of interest issues.
- Ensure continuity of operations during emergencies; develop emergency procedures.
- Avoid redundant content on the site.
- Create operating procedures to manage the site and all the functions that support it: everyone in the governance structure knows and understands the policies and procedures.
- Establish responsibilities for each person that is involved with the website: everyone should know and understand their roles and be accountable for their content areas.
- Establish a policy for content approval with roles for staff that will approve and manage content.
- Management controls identified to ensure the town’s website and web operations are protected from fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement, and the controls are reviewed regularly.
- The town website will not host pages for community organizations, but can link to them.
- Establish a linking policy. Add a disclaimer stating that the Town of Sidney is not responsible for another website’s content.
- Establish a privacy policy that states what information is collected when a user visits the site.
- Website will be fully-accessible/handicap accessible.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Website Administrator – Determines high-level technical tasks such as website configuration changes, programming, and working with contractors on website enhancements. (Selectboard)

Town Website Management Committee – made up of Selectboard member, a committee chair, and members at large.

Website Content Manager – Review and approve website content. Ensure compliance with website content guidelines. (Selectboard/Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk)

Town Clerk

Content Editors – Edit web pages and submit content changes and additions to the Content Managers for review/approval and posting to the website. (Selectboard/Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk)

Town Officials (Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector, Administrative Assistant, Executive Secretary)

Selectboard Chair or Selectman

Chair or designee from various town organizations, commissions and committees

## **Content Management Guidelines**

- Content must be approved by Content Manager before posting.
- Ensure content is current and accurate.
- Organize content based on audience needs.
- Follow handicapped accessibility guidelines for text and images.
- Write for the Web in plain language.
- Documents posted as PDFs
- Use appropriate image resolutions and format for the web.
- Avoid clutter on the home page.
- Use basic common content, terminology and placement, such as:
  - Contact Us page (contact information)
  - About Us page (organization information)
  - Site map or A to Z index
  - Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

## Proposed Content for the Town of Sidney's Website

[in no particular order]

- Town committees [Road Planning, Planning Board, Planning Board of Appeals, Assessment Board of Appeals, Budget Committee, Scholarship Fund Committee, Sidney Athletic Association, Sidney Historical Society, Cemetery Committee, Welfare Fair Hearing Committee, etc.]
- Town officers [Clerk, Treasurer, Tax Collector, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector, Selectboard members, Administrative Assistant, Executive Secretary, Road Foreman, and other elected town officials]
- Select Board information [Members, Agenda, Minutes, Info, etc.]
- Ordinances and Policies
- Emergency information
- Reports
- Forms
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Announcements
- Events calendar
- Assessing and Land records
- Links to other community sites (School)
- Town history
- Paying license fees with printable forms
- Town Organizations [list & links]
- Recreation [Sidney Athletic Association]
- Solid Waste Management / Transfer Station information and schedules
- Town Meeting / Election Information
- Property Tax information
- Maps [parcel, flood plain, etc.]
- Listing of Job & Committee Openings
- Listing of Bid Notices
- Listing of Tax Relief Programs
- Directory with phone and email lists

## Web Site Policy Statements

The following statements have been developed to educate our users and to demonstrate our continued commitment to the accessibility, privacy, and security of the Town of Sidney's Website.

### General Statements

**Usability.** The Town of Sidney's website is provided as a service by the Town of Sidney. With the primary objective of providing a simple and friendly web experience, the Town of Sidney Website has been designed to accommodate most web browsers. To take advantage of the advanced functionality and/or styling characteristics that have been incorporated into the Town's website, it is recommended that you browse the Web site using the most current version of your web browser of choice.

**Content.** It is the purpose of the official Town of Sidney website to provide accurate, non-editorial content that will inform, educate and enlighten citizens about the functions, services, activities, issues, operations, and projects of Sidney's municipal government. In addition, the website is used to facilitate, where appropriate, the delivery of direct services as provided by Sidney's municipal government to its citizens and other customers.

The Town of Sidney's municipal government offices, departments, agencies, and governing bodies are eligible to request the posting of content (appropriate information relating to and/or supporting their mission or service initiatives) to the Town of Sidney's website. Only those eligible parties may request that their content be hosted by the Town of Sidney, and thereby appear on the Town of Sidney's website under the sidneymaine.org domain.

The information provided via the Town of Sidney website is considered public and may be downloaded, printed, or distributed freely by and amongst the general public. (PLEASE NOTE: website/page design, HTML coding, interactive web applications, scripts, and/or custom website graphics and certain photographs are NOT public domain and require expressed permission from the author/creator for use and/or implementation on any website that is not maintained by the Town of Sidney. For more detailed copyright information, please contact the Selectboard for the Town of Sidney.

Supplemental information and/or hyperlinks may be included on the Town of Sidney's website in an effort to provide or direct visitors to additional resources; however, the Town of Sidney does not have editorial control over such information nor external website content.

The Town of Sidney intends to maintain current and accurate information on the website; however, there may be occasions where information becomes temporarily outdated pending the receipt and posting of available updates. Consequently, the Town of Sidney cannot expressly warrant the accuracy of web content on a 24/7 basis.

While the Town of Sidney invites comments, suggestions, and or visitor input regarding the content of the municipal website, any unauthorized attempts to alter and/or upload information on this website/server are strictly prohibited and may be punishable under the Computer Abuse and Fraud Act of 1986 and the National Information Infrastructure Protection Act.

**Hyperlinks.** The Town of Sidney's municipal government offices, departments, agencies, and governing bodies are eligible to request the posting of hyperlinks from the Town of Sidney website to alternate resources and/or external websites containing appropriate information relative to their service initiatives and/or mission. Other individuals or groups are not eligible to request the posting of such hyperlinks unless they are sponsored by an eligible party. All requests for the posting of hyperlinks on the Town of Sidney's website must come from an eligible party.

The appearance of any hyperlink to an external website and/or server does not constitute endorsement by the Town of Sidney of the opinions, ideas, or content therein, nor guarantee the validity of the information provided.

Although, the Town of Sidney website contains links to other websites, we encourage visitors to be aware when they are leaving the Town of Sidney website to access external websites, as the Town of Sidney is not responsible for the privacy practices, services, or information residing on such websites.

Additionally, when you access an external website, even one that may contain information relating to the Town of Sidney, please understand that it is independent from the Town of Sidney, and that the Town of Sidney does not accept or assume responsibility or liability for the content contained on such websites, as Town of Sidney Officials do not have access to nor control over the content contained on that website.

## **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY STATEMENT**

The accessibility of our website, to all users, is very important to the Town of Sidney. Therefore, we have adopted the State of Maine Government's Guiding Principles of Universal Access to Information. This commitment is currently reflected in the existing Computer Applications Program Accessibility Standard, adopted in 1998. In view of enacted legislation, Title 5 MRSA-54, requiring forms to be available on the Internet; this document sets forth additional standards to insure the accessibility of Sidney's website.

# INTERNET PRIVACY POLICY STATEMENT

The following information explains the Internet Privacy Policy, which the Town of Sidney, Maine has adopted for its website (web pages at addresses beginning with "http://www.sidneymaine.org"). The following is intended to explain our current Internet privacy practices, but shall not be construed as a contractual promise. We reserve the right to amend our Internet Privacy Policy Statement at any time without notice.

**Maine law.** We protect our records in accordance with our obligations as defined by applicable Maine statutes, including, but not limited to, MRSA 1 Chapter 14-A § 541-542, the "Maine Freedom of Information Act", and by any applicable U.S. federal laws.

**Links to other Websites.** Our website may contain links to other public or private entities' websites, whose privacy practices we do not control.

**Information we collect.** We do not capture personal information about our visitors without their permission. We endeavor to collect only the minimum amount of information needed to meet the purposes for which the website was created.

**Public Disclosure.** All information collected will be treated the same as any written communication and is subject to the confidentiality and public disclosure provisions of 1 M.R.S.A. Chapter 14-A.

**Privacy Statement.** We may collect some or all of the following information about visitors who view information from our website:

<b>Information</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Date	Date the visit occurred.
Time	Time the visit occurred.
Client IP	Unique Internet Protocol (IP) address of the website visitor. The IP address recorded is normally that of the visitor's Internet service provider, e.g., aol.com if the visitor connects from an America Online account.
Server IP	Unique Internet Protocol (IP) address of the State of Maine web server accessed.
HTTP Status	Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) error code. E.g., "404 Requested Page Not Found."
HTTP Request URL	Identifies the web page or file requested by the website visitor.
Bytes Sent	Amount of data sent from the web server to website visitor during that connection.
Bytes Received	Amount of data sent from website visitor to the web server.
User Agent	Type of web browser or other client software that made request to the web server.
Referrer	Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that referred to the requested file.
Protocol Version	Version of HTTP used by the visitor's web browser software.

The information we collect is used to improve the content of our web services and help us understand how people are using our services. The website management company the Town hires may analyze our website logs to continually improve the value of the materials available on our site. The information in our website logs is not personally identifiable, and we make no attempt to link it with the individuals that browse our website.

Some of this statistical information, such as a running count of the number of visitors, may be displayed on the website or shared with other city agencies to aid in the provision of better service to the public.

**Personally Identifiable Information.** "Personally identifiable information" is information about a person that is readily identifiable to that specific individual. It includes, for example, an individual's name, street address, e-mail address, or phone number.

Personally identifiable information will not be collected unless you voluntarily send an e-mail message, fill out and send an online form, or fill out personal information and send in a survey. Your choice not to participate in these activities will not impair your ability to access certain information or obtain a service online.

Unless specifically protected under state law, any information provided may be inspected by the public or disclosed in a legal proceeding.

**E-mail Addresses.** E-mail messages, sent to the Town of Sidney will be treated the same as any other written communication. They may be subject to public inspection or legal disclosure and may be saved for a period of time before they are destroyed. E-mail or other information requests sent to this website may be maintained in order to respond to the request, forward that request to the appropriate individual, or to provide the web designer with valuable customer feedback to assist in improving the site. E-mail addresses obtained through the website will not be sold or given to private companies for marketing purposes.

**Surveys.** Surveys will be used from time to time for the purpose stated. If personally identifiable information is collected it may be subject to public inspection and legal disclosure and may be saved for a period of time before it is destroyed.

**Cookies.** The Town of Sidney's website uses a cookie file for demographics and that no personally identifiable information is collected or shared with anyone.

**Disclaimer.** Neither the Town of Sidney, nor any agency, officer, or employee of the Town of Sidney warrants the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of any information published on the Sidney website, nor endorses any products or services linked from this system, and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. Portions of the information may be incorrect or not current. Any person or entity that relies on any information obtained from this system does so at his or her own risk.

**Choice to provide information.** There is no legal requirement for you to provide any information at our website. However, our website will not work without routing information and the essential technical information. Failure of your browser to provide nonessential technical information will not prevent your use of our website, but may prevent certain features from working. Failure to provide optional information will mean that the particular feature or service associated with that part of the web page will not be available to you.

**Customer comments or review.** If you have questions about this privacy statement or the practices of this website, or if you choose to review or correct any information you previously submitted, please contact us at [townoffice@sidneymaine.org](mailto:townoffice@sidneymaine.org).

## **TERMS OF USE**

The Town of Sidney makes available for your use on the municipal website ("this website") information and documents subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this document (the "Terms of Use"). By accessing this website, you agree to the Terms of Use. The Town of Sidney reserves the right to change the Terms of Use at its sole discretion. Your use of the website will be subject to the most current version of the Terms of Use posted on the website at the time of such use. In addition, when using particular services or materials on this website, you are subject to any posted guidelines or rules applicable to such services or materials that contain terms and conditions in addition to those in the Terms of Use. All such guidelines or rules are hereby incorporated by reference into the Terms of Use.

You may use this website only if you agree to these terms:

1. You agree that you will not violate (or attempt to violate) the security of this website by hacking, sending viruses, or any other similar malicious or careless conduct.
2. You agree that you will not utilize the communication methods found within this website for the communication of any material that may reasonably be considered scurrilous or offensive. Offensive materials are defined as sexual content or images, slurs against race, religious or political beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or physical attributes.
3. You agree not to upload (or attempt to upload) content of any type to this website.
4. You acknowledge that you have no right to the intellectual property associated with this website and that you have only a limited right to use this website.
5. You acknowledge that the Town of Sidney does not warrant the accuracy or availability of this website.
6. You acknowledge that the Town of Sidney is not responsible for any loss, damage, or injury that you may have as a result of your use of this website.
7. You agree to be bound by the laws applicable in the Town of Sidney with respect to your use of this website and you agree that any court proceedings relating to your use of this website will take place in the Judicial District assigned to the Town of Sidney.
8. You agree to grant the Town of Sidney all intellectual property rights in the content of any e-mail that you send to the Town.

If you DO NOT agree to ALL of these terms, please log off of this website immediately.