

**TOWNSHIP OF WARREN  
RESOLUTION NO. 2020-237**

**AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF A PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee desires to improve the methods for providing information to residents through the use of social media, email blasts, press releases, live broadcasting of meetings, and the expansion of the use of the Township website; and

**WHEREAS**, during the course of 2020, the Township implemented the live broadcasting of Township Committee meetings and has expended the use of social media in order to provide residents with important information regarding COVID 19 and other Township matters; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to ensure a cohesive message and a clear plan for distributing that message, the Township Administrator has prepared a Public Information Plan dated August 4, 2020 and revised September 9, 2020, which has been reviewed by the Township Committee at the meetings of August 13, 2020 and September 17, 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan details types of social media, the types of content, and establishes the rules, regulations, and guidelines required in order to meet Township policy and state law; and

**WHEREAS**, the NJ Division of Local Government, in their annual Best Practices Inventory is requiring that the Township have a social media plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Warren, County of Somerset and State of New Jersey hereby adopts the Public Information Plan dated September 9, 2020.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis and amended as required.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this policy shall be distributed to all Township Departments.

INTRODUCED	SECONDED	COMMITTEE	AYE	NAY	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
	X	MAZIARZ	X			
X		SORDILLO	X			
		DINARDO				X
		LAZO	X			
		MARION	X			

CERTIFICATION

I, Cathy Reese, Township Clerk of the Township of Warren, in the County of Somerset, New Jersey, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Township Committee held on October 15, 2020.

Cathy Reese, RMC  
Township Clerk

## Public Information Plan

- I. **Purpose:** To centralize the Township's plan for providing information to Township residents through broadcast media, website, social media, press releases and similar approaches.
- II. **Goal:** To utilize a variety of methods to inform the residents and general public of decisions of the Township Committee and on-going activities within Township departments, including emergency notifications, and community events, with the ultimate objective of facilitating and expanding the distribution of information more efficiently. The Township Committee shall determine the specific goals and approaches to distribute public information for the current year on an annual basis. There shall be a consistent and strategic plan for the distribution of information.
- III. **Definitions:**
  - A. **Media** – The Warren Township public access channel on Altice / Verizon Fios, known as Warren Media TV - Warren Township through the Cable Advisory Committee and in accordance with the policies adopted by the Township Committee.
  - B. **Social Media** - The use of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or similar technology designed to allow the sharing of information of a text or visual platform.
  - C. **Press Release** – A release issued by the Township directly to the press agencies that cover Warren Township.
  - D. **E-Blast** – A document issued to residents or others who sign up to receive information on services such as Constant Contact.
  - E. **Website** – The Township's official website.
- IV. **Operations:**
  - A. Press Releases, E-Blasts, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
    1. The Township Committee and/or the Township Administrator shall determine the necessary information to distribute to Township residents.
    2. The Administrator shall designate one or more individuals to function in the position of Social Media Coordinator (could be an additional assignment or one person hired for the function).
    3. The Social Media Coordinator shall be responsible for the distribution of the information through social media platforms and E-Blast's, but shall not be responsible for preparation of the content.
    4. Press releases and social media content shall detail the information to be presented in a clear and concise manner. Content shall be prepared by the Township Administrator, or designee, except for Law Enforcement releases which will be under the supervision of the Chief of Police. The Recreation Department may prepare and release information regarding their programs consistent with this policy.
    5. The information published shall provide residents with accurate information regarding action approved by the Township Committee, events, and other Township activities. To the extent possible, quotes shall be included referencing comments by the elected officials involved in the event or policy.
    6. The Township Committee shall approve all social media sites utilized for Township purposes prior to their use and reauthorize their use annually.

7. Whenever possible, social media sites shall reference the Township website and link to the applicable website page.
8. Content on social media sites and the website shall be periodically reviewed to ensure that the information released meets the Township Committee's goals.
9. The Township will not post information generated by outside entities on Township social media sites or the website, except as approved by the Township Administrator or Township Committee.
10. Township sites are only for the dissemination of information. The sites will not be monitored nor will the Township reply to comments posted.
11. Residents with complaints or concerns shall direct those to the appropriate Township Department via email or website portal.
12. Content prepared for distribution on Township social media may be made available to non-Township-sponsored social media sites as determined by the Township Committee.

**B. Currently the following are in use:**

1. Township Facebook administered by Evamarie Hode /Amanda Altavilla
2. Township Instagram administered by Katie Price
3. Township Twitter administered by Evamarie Hode / Amanda Altavilla
4. Constant Contact administered by Evamarie Hode / Amanda Altavilla
5. Recreation Constant Contact administered by Amanda Altavilla
6. Recreation Facebook administered by Amanda Altavilla
7. Green Team Facebook – Laura Mandell
8. OEM Facebook administered by Yee Jao
9. OEM Twitter administered by Yee Jao
10. Police Nixle administered by Lt. Herb Hentschel
11. Police Facebook administered by Sgt. Rob Ferreiro

**C. Media Public Access Station or Other Broadcast Media**

1. The Township shall broadcast all Township Committee and meetings of the Boards as determined by the Board live through Cable Access Channel, website, and Facebook Live. All broadcasts will be distributed through equipment located and assigned to Warren Media TV. A camera is mounted in the meeting room to provide for the live broadcast of Township Committee meetings or other meetings of the Township. The meeting will be available live along with being recorded for broadcast for later viewing.
2. At the commencement of the live broadcast, the presiding Officer (Mayor or Board Chairman) shall inform all residents in attendance that the broadcast is live.
3. The policies and procedures of the access channel shall apply to all meetings.
4. The Township Clerk shall be responsible to ensure the taping and broadcast of the meetings and other broadcasts by elected officials with the assistance of the Cable Advisory Committee and/or any staff or contractors so assigned.

5. The Township Committee, Township Departments, Boards, and Committees are encouraged to develop programming for airing on the cable station, website, and/or YouTube. Programs may include; information broadcasts by elected officials, educational videos by Boards, Committees, Township Departments, recreation programming, parades, ceremonies or similar activities.
6. Each department shall be responsible for the development of content production and recording of their own productions. The Station Manager shall provide guidance only. Social Media Coordinator and/or the Webmaster shall only be responsible for posting the final recording.

V. Website

The Township shall have a website that enables residents to obtain information and aid in the transaction of business with the Township, including payment of taxes, utility payments, permits, open public records, and payment of summonses. It shall provide information, including but not limited to, Township departments, contact information, duties of departments, information regarding elected officials, access to ordinances, resolutions, minutes and agendas, Township maps, master plans, and affordable housing, employment and contracting opportunities. The Township website shall be user-friendly and easy to navigate.

The website shall be updated on a weekly basis or more often as required to insure the accuracy of the information. The Township Committee shall annually appoint a subcommittee to review the website to ensure content meets the Township Committee's goals.

VI. Staffing

A. There is hereby created the following positions to implement this policy:

1. Webmaster – to ensure that the website is properly maintained and updated on a daily basis to ensure its accuracy. The Webmaster may utilize the assistance of other Township staff, but shall be solely responsible for the accuracy of the website. The Webmaster shall report to the Township Administrator and/or the Township Committee and shall be chosen based on experience.
2. Social Media Coordinator – the position of Social Media Coordinator shall be responsible for ensuring the distribution of public information through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. The Social Media Coordinator shall report to the Township Administrator and/or the Township Committee and shall be chosen based on experience.
3. The Township Administrator shall assign staff to be responsible for Press releases, Constant Contact, etc.
4. The annual Township budget shall provide sufficient funds to staff these positions, which may be either Township employees or independent contractors.


VII. Regulations

- A. ALL employees and volunteers distributing public information via the website or social media shall conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Township and in accordance with applicable policies, and applicable record retention requirements.
- B. All social media shall have proper backup and be compliant with OPRA. Township IT staff or consultants shall determine the appropriate methodology.
- C. The Township will not monitor or respond to comments or questions provided on social media. Social media platforms will solely utilize distribution.

- D. All Passwords and User ID's for all social media platforms shall be filed with the Township Administrator's office and I.T. professionals within 2 days of the change.
- E. The use of Township social media is for the sole purpose of informing the community. The promotion of a personnel agenda, for non-township advertising, or other purposes not in the best interests of Warren Township is prohibited.
- F. Township Public Information or social media platforms shall not use obscene, defamatory, racist, antic sematic or content that promotes fosters or perpetuates discrimination based upon race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability.
- G. No use of children's images or photographs without consent of parent or legal guardian.
- H. The use of Township social media sites, media, TV, or other methods shall be subject to all applicable Federal and State Laws, and Township ordinances including, but not limited to, copyright records, retention, the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Public Records Act, the Open Public Meetings Act, and technology policies established by the Township.
- I. All Township presence on social media, media, or TV must comply with policies governing the use of Township computers and electronics. Media requirements of Township insurance policies and Section 33 of the personnel policy of the Township of Warren entitled Electronic communication / internet social media are incorporated herein by reference.

**\*This policy and applicable guidelines shall be available to all employees and the public.**

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*Prepared by Mark M. Krane, Township Administrator *  
*Amended September 9, 2020*  
*Approved by Township Committee on October 15, 2020 by Resolution 2020-237*