

Email Communications Policy for all

Members of all Committees of the Town of Holliston

Email is an expedient and easy means of communication, but must be used carefully, both to avoid conflicts with the Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Law and to insure that the public and members of committees can rely on the fact that deliberative discussions will always be held at public meetings. Email communications deprive the public of the chance contemporaneously to monitor a Committee's discussion. Therefore, the Select Board has established the following policy, which is meant to augment and emphasize the importance of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

GENERAL POLICY

- All Email use by any member of any committee, board or commission of the Town of Holliston will comply with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. A copy of this statute is given to all committee members by the Town Clerk when they take the oath of office.
- Email communications by, between, or among Committee members will not address substantive policy issues, decisions, or deliberations. Email may not be used to discuss policy issues on an item coming before the Committee for discussion, to make decisions, or carry on deliberations.
- Email communication by, between or among Committee members may only be used to schedule meetings, send informative messages, request information or similar administrative type communications.
- The Town will establish an email address for any Committee member requesting one for sending and receiving all Committee related email if said member requests it. The Town will be responsible for retaining copies of these emails in accordance with the Public Records Law. The Town cannot be responsible for retaining or producing any Committee member email which is sent or received through any other means other than the Town issued email address, and members of a Committee should be prepared to allow access to their own personal computers if they choose to bypass the Town issued email address for email correspondence.
- To facilitate compliance with public records requests, the Town encourages committee members to use a Town email address for all committee related correspondence. Town email should ONLY be used for Committee work and should NOT be used for personal communications.

PUBLIC RECORDS APPLICABILITY

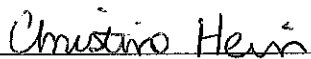
The term “public records” is defined by statute to include all documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an officer or employee of any agency or municipality of the Commonwealth, unless falling within a statutory exemption (M.G.L. C.4, S.7). Therefore, the Secretary of the Commonwealth advises that the Public Records Law clearly applies to government records generated or received electronically. All electronic mail sent, and all electronic mail received by principal addressees (not received as a “cc”) at a Town-issued address, or any address when in an official capacity, should be considered a public record subject to inspection and disclosure and scheduled retention and disposition. *Employees and committee members acting in their official capacity should have no expectation of privacy in their use of electronic mail.*


Adopted: June 25, 2018

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Select Board



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