

Agenda Summary **August 13, 2025**

Agenda Item No. B-5 **Municipal Communications**

Summary: The Selectboard indicated during the goal setting meeting a desire to discuss municipal communications. The Town uses several forms of communication with the public.

Staff post legal notices in accordance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law of our meeting agendas on our municipal website and in two public places in town, which includes the Akeley Memorial Building. In addition, the Town post agendas in the Stowe Reporter. Written meeting minutes are also available on the municipal website as well as videos for the Selectboard and Planning Commission. Another legal document the Town produces each year is the Annual Town Report.

The Town uses VT-Alert as our primary method of communication to the community during active emergencies or unplanned road closures that affect the general public. Approximately 3,500 people are subscribed to VT-Alert for Stowe-specific text alerts. In addition, we may use other mediums to communicate to the public when the Emergency Operations Center is open such as Front Porch Forum, the municipal website, Stowe Public Safety Agency Facebook pages, and personal outreach such as going door-to-door as may be warranted. We also have a number of emails in our database where we can push out information. Approximately 2,900 people are subscribed to these emails for various topics. There is a popup prompting people to sign up when they visit the website for the first time, which has increased sign-ups.

For road closures and other planned disruptions in municipal services, staff send out emails via our listserv, and post notices on our municipal website and Stowe Front Page Forum.

Various departments use a variety of mediums to distribute information about programming and other matters that are particular to their departments, such as the municipal website, posters, Stowe Front Page Forum, and we use our database emails to push out information. These involve apolitical factual information. The Town has a limited social media presence, primarily Facebook pages specifically dedicated to Parks & Recreation, Library, and Public Safety.

The Town Manager writes municipal corners for the Stowe Reporter during budget season and to recognize significant employee retirements. An excellent source of information regarding current topics being discussed by the Selectboard is the agenda summaries that are posted on the Town's website.

Department Heads and the Manager's office have the capacity to continue our current efforts, but if the Selectboard desires to substantively increase our capacity in this area, then it may require additional staff such as an Administrative Assistant in the Town Manager's Office.

Town Plan and Policy Impact: N/A

Fiscal and HR Impact: A full-time Administrative Assistant, including full benefits, is estimated to cost \$90,000 - \$100,000 +/- . The Town currently doesn't have any money budgeted for this position, so it is something that would need to be considered for a future budget while considering other requests for employees. For FY'27 there are likely to be other positions and other financial demands if the Selectboard desires to maintain the budget increase within the COLA and Grand List Growth.

Recommendation: Discuss and advise.