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**Town of Rockingham and Village of Bellows Falls
Policy Regarding the Use of Town Computer System**

The Town computer system is to be used by employees for the purpose of conducting Town business. Occasional, brief, and appropriate personal use of the Town computer system is permitted, provided it is consistent with this policy and does not interfere with an employee's job duties and responsibilities.

Employees shall make every effort to maintain the integrity of the hardware and software by not exposing equipment to damage through liquids, food, excessive dust, rough handling, etc. and by promptly reporting problems with maintenance to their supervisor or IT personnel.

Employees may not introduce software from any outside source on the Town's computer system without explicit prior authorization from their supervisor and/or in consultation with municipal IT personnel. This is particularly relevant to software downloaded from the Internet. Employees may be held responsible for any damages caused by using unauthorized software including malware or viruses they introduce into the Town computer system.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding anything created, sent or received on the Town computer system. The Town may monitor any and all computer transactions, communications and transmissions to ensure compliance with this policy and to evaluate the use of its computer system. All files, documents, data and other electronic messages created, received or stored on the Town computer system are open to review and regulation by the Town and may be subject to the provisions of Vermont's Public Records Law.

Employees who have a confidential password to access the Town's operating system should be aware that this does not mean the computer system is for personal confidential communication, nor does it suggest that the computer system is the property of that person.

Employees shall maintain the confidentiality and security of Town-provided usernames and passwords, and shall not disclose these to unauthorized individuals, or leaving them visible or easily accessible.

Transmission of electronic messages on the Town computer system shall be treated with the same degree of propriety, professionalism, and confidentiality as written correspondence. The following are examples of uses of the Town computer system which are prohibited:

- Communications that in any way may be construed by others as disruptive, offensive, abusive, discriminatory, harassing, or threatening;
- Communications of sexually explicit images or messages;
- Transmission of chain letters or solicitations for personal gain, commercial or investment ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non job-related solicitations during or after work hours;
- Access to Internet resources, including web sites and news groups, that are inappropriate in a business setting;

- Any other use that may compromise the integrity of the Town and its business in any way.

Email messages that are intended to be temporary, non-substantive communications may be routinely discarded. However employees must recognize that emails sent, received, or stored on the Town computer system are subject to Vermont's Public Records Law and may be covered by the State of Vermont's retention schedule for municipal records.

Employees shall practice safe Internet browsing by:

- Keeping operating system and software up to date in coordination with IT staff
- Navigating to trusted websites
- Not updating private or confidential information through web links in email
- Not opening unknown email attachments
- Not running unknown ActiveX controls, Javascript, or Java applets when browsing.

For purposes of this policy, computer system means all computer-related components and equipment including, but not limited to, host computers, file servers, workstation terminals, laptops, software, internal or external communication networks, the world wide web (www), the Internet, commercial online services, bulletin board systems, back up systems and the internal and external e-mail systems accessed via the Town's computer equipment.