

**Town of Bedford
Official Media Policy**

Adopted: December 7, 2005

Town Council Amended: April 30, 2008

Town Council Re-affirmed: March 25, 2009

Town Council Re-affirmed: March 24, 2010

Town Council Amended: April 13, 2011

Section 1: Town Employees

Policy Statement

Only the Town Manager is authorized to provide an official statement on behalf of the Town of Bedford in relation to any incident or issue that may arise from time to time. Department Managers must receive confirmation from the Town Manager before making any public statement on behalf of the Town. Confirmation to discuss one issue or incident does not imply that the Department Manager may discuss on behalf of the Town other current or future issues that may arise, without further confirmation.

Points for Consideration

Comments to the media regarding a police or fire investigation shall be directed to the Police or Fire Chief or their designee.

No employee shall allow himself or herself to be interviewed or make statements on behalf of the Town about any Town issue to any media representative without the consent of the Town Manager. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.

If a member of the media is requesting statement of the Town's position from an employee, then that employee must politely direct the media representative to the designated Department Manager and decline further requests to provide information.

Where special circumstances exist, employees should be aware that all comments regarding those circumstances are to be referred to the Department Manager or Town Manager. Under no circumstances are employees permitted to comment as an official position of the Town.

If you become aware of any newsworthy events or activities that may be developing in your area of responsibility, you should promptly inform the Town Manager.

The Town recognizes that individuals have the right to make public comment and publicly debate political and social issues. However, employees must make it clear that other than in the course of Town business or when giving evidence in court, they are not making an official comment nor representing an official position of the Town.

Employees with the authority to do so may only release contents of official documents or privileged knowledge, and personal opinions should not be offered in place of facts.

If permission has been granted for you to communicate with the media on behalf of the Town, you should be precise in your answers. Avoid speculation and conjecture, and deal only with topics in your jurisdiction. Refer the media to appropriate other sources if questions relate to topics beyond your area of knowledge or responsibility.

This section shall not apply to employees who are elected to their position.

Section 2: Members of Boards and Commissions

The Chairperson of a Town Board or Commission, along with the Town Manager, shall be the primary interface to provide all information to the public on behalf of the Board or Commission, i.e. represent the Board or Commission in stating Board or Commission positions . Each Board or Commission member shall recognize that it is the responsibility of the Town Manager and/or the Board or Commission Chairperson to speak for and on behalf of the Board or Commission. Any Board or Commission member may speak on behalf of the Board or Commission on a specific subject as long as he/she receives permission from the Board or Commission Chairperson. That being said, each Board or Commission member has the right to speak for/on his/her own behalf as long as s/he clearly identifies that is the case in any communications that are intended to be released to the public.

Section 3: Town Council

The Town Council Chairperson, along with the Town Manager, shall be the primary interface to provide all information to the public on behalf of the Town, i.e. represent the Town in stating Town positions to the press, etc. Each Town Council member shall recognize that it is the responsibility of the Town Manager and/or the Council Chairperson to speak for and on behalf of the Town. Any Council member may speak on behalf of the Town on a specific subject as long as he/she receives permission from the Town Council Chairperson. That being said, each Council member has the right to speak for/on his/her own behalf as long as s/he clearly identifies that is the case in any communications that are intended to be released to the public.

This section incorporates by reference the media policies contained in the Town Council Rules of Procedure and any amendments thereto; and in the event of any inconsistencies with this section, the Town Council Rules of Procedure shall control.