

**Background:** The Town of Arrowsic has principally relied on the U.S. Mail and the bulletin board at the Town Hall to communicate with its residents and property owners. The cost of U.S. postage has continued to rise and the time required by volunteers to prepare labels and mailings is a burden that restricts our ability to communicate with people. By contrast, the cost of electronic communications has dropped considerably and most people currently have access to computers, the internet and email services. Nevertheless, we also recognize that many people lack internet access or are not comfortable with computers. A listserv for Town residents has been established on *googlegroups* but it is not appropriate as an official channel for communications since it only represents a subset of residents who have voluntarily subscribed.

**The purpose of this policy** is to assure that we have effective and low-cost ways of communicating important news, announcements and information related to Town governance and community events to residents and property owners.

**Policy**

The Select Board will offer Town residents and property owners the opportunity to provide contact information for a range of communications. This information will be maintained in a confidential database for use only by Town officials and only for Town business.

The Town will establish four categories for communications as follows:

The Annual Report is a document of record that contains the Town’s financial reports, annual audit, committee reports and letters from the Town’s representatives. The Annual Report is prepared annually by the Select Board and will be delivered to each residence in Arrowsic prior to the Annual Town Meeting.

Property Taxes and Notices are communications which either require a response from the recipient or are documents which the Town is legally obligated to communicate to individuals or households. These communications are prepared by Town Officials and will be mailed by U.S. Postal Service to the individuals or households affected or by whatever means is established by applicable laws.

Official Announcements are communications which the Select Board has determined are of sufficient importance to merit wide dissemination. These communications are prepared by

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Town Officials but approved by the Select Board. They will be emailed to all residents and property owners who have provided an email address and mailed by U.S. Postal Service to those who have provided only a physical mailing address. *The Arrow* will be distributed in this fashion.

Town Messages are communications which are of substantial interest to Arrowsic residents and property owners but which are not important enough to justify physical mailing costs. These communications are prepared by Town Officials and will be emailed to all residents and property owners who have provided an email address. They will also be posted in a visible location outside the Town Hall.

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**Notes:** For the purposes of this policy, “Town Officials” include Select Board Members, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, Code Enforcement Officer, Registrar, Fire Chief, and heads of standing committees.

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