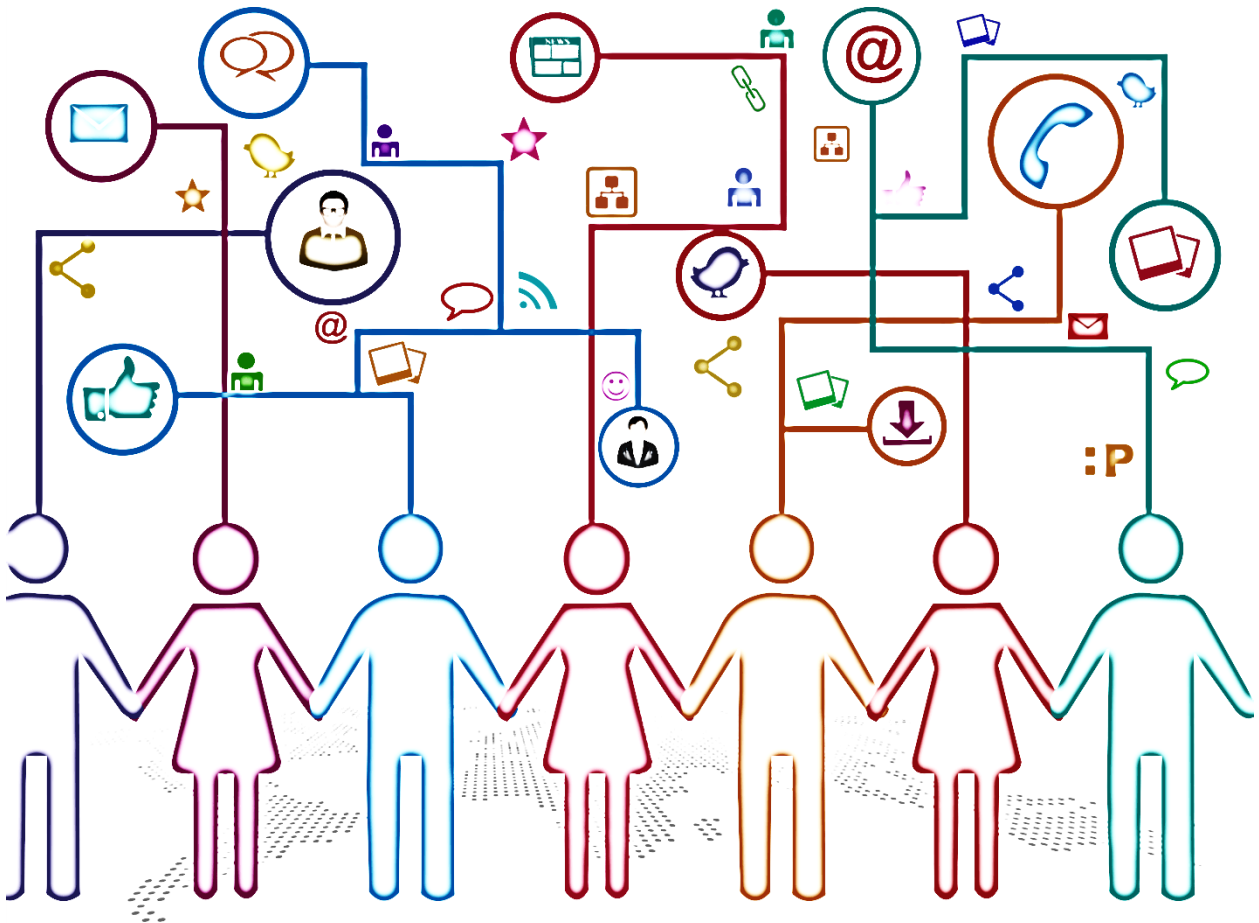




COMMUNICATIONS PLAN | Village of Mount Prospect

Updated: March 2021



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Purpose of the Plan

As a suburb of Chicago, the Village of Mount Prospect has significant communications responsibilities and demands. With a population of over 54,000 and a personnel staff of 318 full and part time employees, the Village must consider communications from both the view of the sender and the receiver. Operating under an annual budget in excess of \$115 million, the Village's communication responsibilities are similar to that of a mid-sized corporate entity.

The purpose of this document is to identify the primary communications needs of the Village, establish best practices and outline policies that Village staff must follow in developing the specific elements of the overall communications plan. This document is not designed to serve as a marketing or branding document, but rather establishes the guidelines under which those policies should be developed. This document should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by appropriate Village staff to keep it current with the needs of the Village and accepted best practices for relevant tools.

The role of communications has evolved at an extraordinary pace in recent years. The significant changes are the vast expansion of the ways in which people communicate as well as the frequency with which they do so. As of February 2019, over 81% of Americans have a smart-phone, a percentage that is likely higher in the Mount Prospect demographic. Research indicates that those individuals now rely on that device more so than a computer or laptop to access information. Further, those users are sharing that information with others, often including people they do not know. This most significant sea change in communications is the overwhelming appetite for immediacy. No longer do consumers wait to read the paper or watch the evening news. The demand for immediate dissemination of news is a concern for those who had always favored accuracy and integrity.

In addition to smartphones, the advent of social media has also dramatically altered communications protocols. This not just a phenomenon among younger demographics, though their ability to adapt and exploit the platforms occurs at a much faster rate than those who are older. Social media puts information at the fingertips of every user in seconds, and coupled with the features of most smartphones, that information will likely include photos and videos.

It should be made clear that the while the influx of social media platforms are now critical elements of a communications strategy that in no way diminishes the importance of long-established tools such as newsletters, public access channels, direct mail and open forums. What is essential, however, is that there be an overriding plan that develops sound messages and then re-purposes them across all relevant platforms. This provides not only reach to all constituencies, but also ensures consistency of the messaging.

The Village of Mount Prospect's mission is to advance our community's collective quality of life and potential through adaptive leadership and leading edge service delivery.

The guiding principles behind this mission rely on accurate, timely, and honest communication. This plan provides an overview of various types of communication tools used within the organization. Each form of communication is vital in supporting the mission of the Village and our Strategic Planning goals.

All communication practices included in this document are cognizant of the Village's Core Values: Respect, Listen, Ethical, Positive and Optimistic, Commitment to Service, Sound Analysis and Decision Making, and Consensus.

Executive Summary

Mount Prospect's Communications Plan contains three basic components and supplemental appendices.

Section One, Identify, serves as an inventory of current policies and procedures, which support the Village's overall communications strategy. Communication objectives are noted and specifically tie back to the Village's mission statement. The Village website [www.mountprospect.org] is identified as the focus of communication, meaning this platform will serve as a central point of collaboration and house the most complete information for the public. Information shared on other platforms, such as social media, paper newsletters, etc., should ultimately tie back to the Village website.

Also included in Section One is the identification of target audiences, which helps answer the question: Who is the Village trying to reach with a particular message? There are a variety of communication methods utilized by the Village. These communication tools can be classified as either proactive or responsive, and are used to a varying degree by all Village staff. Messaging priority levels are also discussed in this section (and supported with information found in Appendix II), which gives organizational structure to communication that must occur in emergency situations.

Section Two, Establish, includes recommendations to strengthen and support an overall communications strategy. These future accomplishments include:

- The creation of a Village branding strategy and key messaging statements, which will create consistency throughout communication platforms and enrich the Village's identity.
- Recommendations to solidify internal processes for communication, such as preparing messages in advance and the coordination which should take place with internal staff and the Village Board.
- Establishment of a Crisis Communications Team, allowing the Village to be prepared should a significant emergency event, natural disaster or other crisis occur.
- Protocols to address negative messages seen in the press or online social media.

Section Three, Improve, discusses which communication tools to monitor and analyze, the software currently used to track results, and lists sample goals to implement. A discussion of future trends in technology and industry best practices are also included.

Although the Communications Plan is a Village policy document, it is also important that it serve as a practical guide for Village staff to understand detailed communication policies and procedures. The appendices are designed to be a “how-to guide” to be easily referenced by employees as the need arises. Appendix I outlines some of the most common communication tools currently used by the Village, providing information on the target audience, identifying staff and content procedures, and highlighting best practices. Appendix II focuses on message priorities and crisis communication, while Appendix III addresses staff communication guidelines such as use of letterhead, creation of agendas, and standardization of email and voicemail signatures.



Section One: IDENTIFY

This section serves as an inventory of policies/procedures currently in place which support the overall communications strategy. Specifically:

- Communication objectives and responsibilities for the Village, which are in-line with the Village's Core Values
- A communication focus for the Village
- Village staff who have ownership of executing the communications plan
- Target audiences at the receiving end of Village messages
- Tools used by the Village for external communication
- Messaging priority levels

A clear understanding of the Village's current state of communications will help to identify areas in need of improvement.

Identify | Communication Objectives

Village of Mount Prospect's Mission is to *advance our community's collective quality of life and potential through adaptive leadership and leading edge service delivery*. It possible to identify several communication objectives which tie back to the Village's mission statement. The specific elements within the communication plan and its supporting documents should serve each of these objectives:

- I. Use clear, transparent messaging to provide leading edge customer service to Village residents and stakeholders.
- II. Use innovative communication tools to encourage public engagement and involvement.
- III. Efficiently and effectively use crisis communication tools to inform the public in the event of a natural disaster or other major incident, in a timely manner.
- IV. Monitor, assess and adjust communication goals in response to changing trends and customer demands.

By ensuring Village communications contribute to these objectives, the Village's quality of life will improve in the following ways:

- Residents, businesses, Village Board and staff, as well as other key stakeholders will remained informed on Village goals, accomplishments, and challenges. Transparent communication will help to create an environment of trust and partnership between groups.
- The Village's brand and unique identity as a place to live, work and play will be strengthened, resulting in a true "sense of place" which will set Mount Prospect apart from other municipalities.

Identify | Communication Focus

Village Website

The primary focus on Village communications is the Village website: www.mountprospect.org. The website serves as the central point of collaboration and houses the most complete and timely set of data for all prospective audiences. As such, the Communications Plan begins with proper utilization of the website. Nearly all messaging, regardless of format, should circle back to the Village website. Viewing the website as the Village's primary communication tool while the web design was being determined was essential in supporting the communication plan.

By maintaining documents, videos and other news on the website, and then using all other media to point to those items, the Village can better track performance and evaluate consumers' appetite for various types of content. The utilization of analytics associated with the website and with primary social media platforms should be critical to the on-going improvement of Village communications.

Supporting Roles

Although the website is the Village's primary focus of communication, it is clear through the 2020 Village Community Survey that print communication remains essential. The popularity of the print newsletter is clear: 69% of surveyed residents considered it in their "top three" methods of communication with the Village, followed by the Village website at 49%. When asked to identify their primary source of Village information, reliance of the newsletter and website increased to 79% and 57%, respectively. Based upon this information, it is important that the communication plan address written forms of communication while tying items like the Village newsletter back to the website for consistent messaging and branding.

Identify | Ownership of Village Communications

Every department that has direct communication with residents and other stakeholders should be an active contributor to the execution of the Village's communications plan. A primary communications lead should be identified in each department along with a back-up or support member.

Responsible Village Entities

An inventory of those individuals currently producing outbound/external communication on behalf of the Village is included in the Communications Existing Conditions Report. Village entities responsible for the majority of outbound communication include:

- Community Development
- Finance Department
- Fire Department
- Human Services
- Mayor, Trustees and Village Commissioners
- Police Department
- Public Works Department
- Village Administration

Other Organizations and Entities

Because they are separate organizations or distinct taxing bodies, this plan does not include the following entities, though it is acknowledged that shared communications may periodically occur. In those instances, every effort should be made to adhere to the processes set out in this plan.

- Mount Prospect Public Library
- Mount Prospect Chamber of Commerce
- Mount Prospect Historical Society
- School Districts
- Park Districts
- Local service organizations such as the Mount Prospect Downtown Merchants Association, Lions Club, Rotary, etc.
- Cook County
- State or regional elected officials

Structure of Responsibilities

The development and execution of a comprehensive communications strategy requires the daily focus of more than one individual. As reflected in the current organizational structure, the Communications Director is responsible for overseeing most external communications. However, other individuals will contribute to, and be tasked with, executing parts of the communications plan. The “Communications Team” will have representatives from each department, with individual responsibilities in the utilization of key communication tools.

TITLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Village Manager (with support from the Assistant Village Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership of Village brand • Development direction and approval of key messaging statements • Primary accountability, final approval, oversight for plan development, execution and evolution, executive review of all metrics and analysis • Development and distribution of emergency messages • Approval of video content on regulatory or controversial topics
Director of Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution and monitoring adherence to branding policies, key messaging statements and overall message execution including graphic design • Development of annual and quarterly communications plan updates • Oversees content management of the Village website • Management of Village cable and YouTube channels • Analysis and reporting on metrics and performance data
Community Producer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of video assets that comply with the communications strategy
Third Party Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of specific messages for social media, working with department recommendations • Development and distribution of electronic mail newsletters [E-newsletters]
Communication Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops department-specific content for the Village website or other key communication tools • Share ideas for communications content through department channels/established policy

The Director of Communications daily activities will be supported by the Community Producer and hired third-party consultants. The Director of Communications will also work closely with department directors and the Assistant Village Manager to ensure the goals of the communication plan are met. Various methods of communication may require specific individual responsibilities not identified in the chart above. These responsibilities are noted separately in the plan, based on the communication type.

The Village Manager should determine instances in which the Village Attorney should be asked to review content before it is released and build appropriate lead times into the development process.

Identify | Target Audiences

Outbound communications will touch a variety of audiences, each with a unique perspective. These audiences may use different tools to receive messages and have different desires for level of content. As schedules and tactics are being prepared, the target audience should be considered when choosing the best way to reach them, and how the content is written. Some of the key audiences include:

- Residents
 - Senior citizens
 - Teens
- Existing business community
- Press
- Visitors
- Village employees, Village Board and Commission members
- Community partners
- Volunteers and community ambassadors
- Prospective businesses and residents

Specific target audiences are also identified via communication method, as noted in the Appendices.

Residents of the Village

The most common target audience for Village communication will be Village residents. The majority of departments interact with residents on a daily basis, including Community Development, Human Services, Finance, Police and Fire Departments, and Public Works. Depending of the circumstance, this target audience may be broken down into subcategories such as families, senior citizens, or teens. Although the specific form of communication may vary, the overall goal of providing a high level of customer service will remain consistent. In addition, it is important for the Village to be proactive with outbound communication in order to increase resident engagement. Informed residents- whether they are applying for a permit, paying a water bill, looking for senior services, or attending a Village event- will increase the overall quality of life within Mount Prospect. Engaging, service-oriented communication with residents supports the Village motto: *where friendliness is a way of life*.

Business Community

The Village understands the importance of a strong, diverse business community. Business owners are looking for efficiency, value, respect, and support from their Village. This can be accomplished by focusing on the customer service component of communication, as well as consistent messaging and community engagement.

Visitors

Mount Prospect is home to both unique businesses and special events which draw visitors from outside of Village. Communication which holds an engaging, consistent message will reinforce the Village's brand, and hopefully encourage visitors to *Experience Mount Prospect*.

Employees, Board, Commission Members and Partners

Strong communication within this target audience, which includes paid employees, volunteers, elected officials, and organizational partners, is not to be discounted. These groups have the unique role of being both the target audience as well as a messenger. Consistency is essential – the use of key messaging statements and branding helps to reinforce the Village’s image. Equally important are the understanding of communication policies and procedures, which are in place to ensure accuracy and support efficiency.

Prospective Businesses and Residents

It is important to use communication tools to target this audience of future employers and neighbors. Showcasing Mount Prospect’s assets, from economic development incentives to strong schools and safe neighborhoods, will not only strengthen the Village’s identity but helps create a path to future growth and prosperity.

Identify | Tools for Communication

The following tools, tactics and events are forms of communication currently being used by the Village. Throughout the Communication Plan process, evaluation on these tools will be conducted and recommendations made for improvements/modifications to better achieve the goals of the plan. Additional detail on many of these communication forms are included in the appendices.

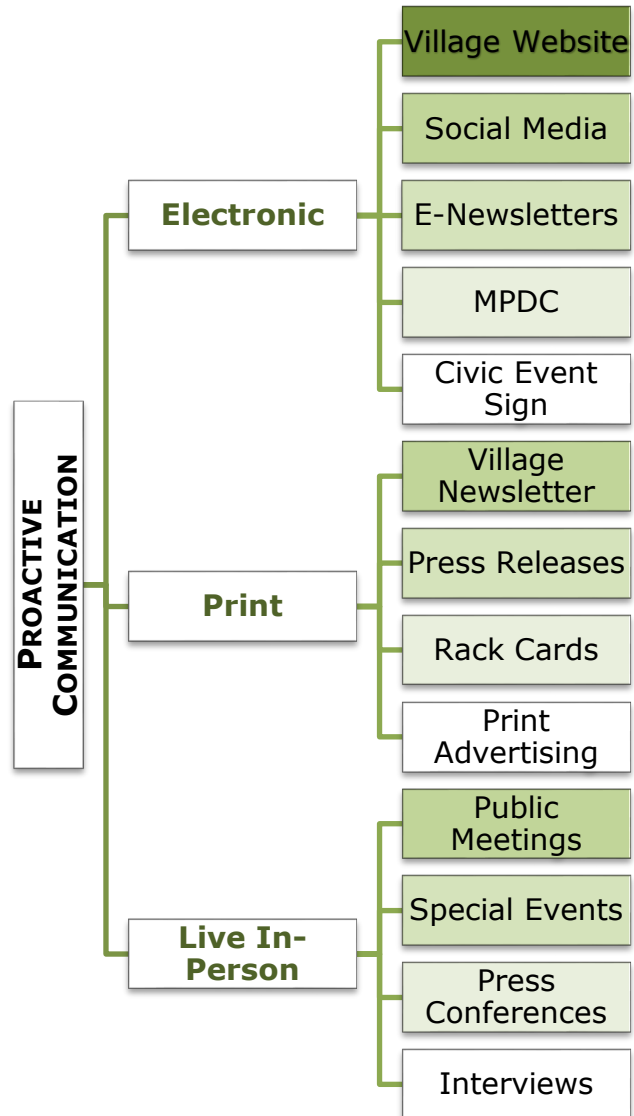
Proactive Communication

Proactive communication is characterized by external messages initiated or developed by the Village with the target audience generally identified as the “public”. The most commonly utilized forms of communication are identified in the chart to the right. Each tool has its own specific target audience, policies, and procedures associated with them. Further details on each is included in the appendices.

Proactive communication tools enable the Village to engage with the community at large at various levels, with the Village Website serving as the key focal point for communication. The information shared through all the other tools should also be found on the Village’s website, or in certain cases, through the Experience Mount Prospect sub site.

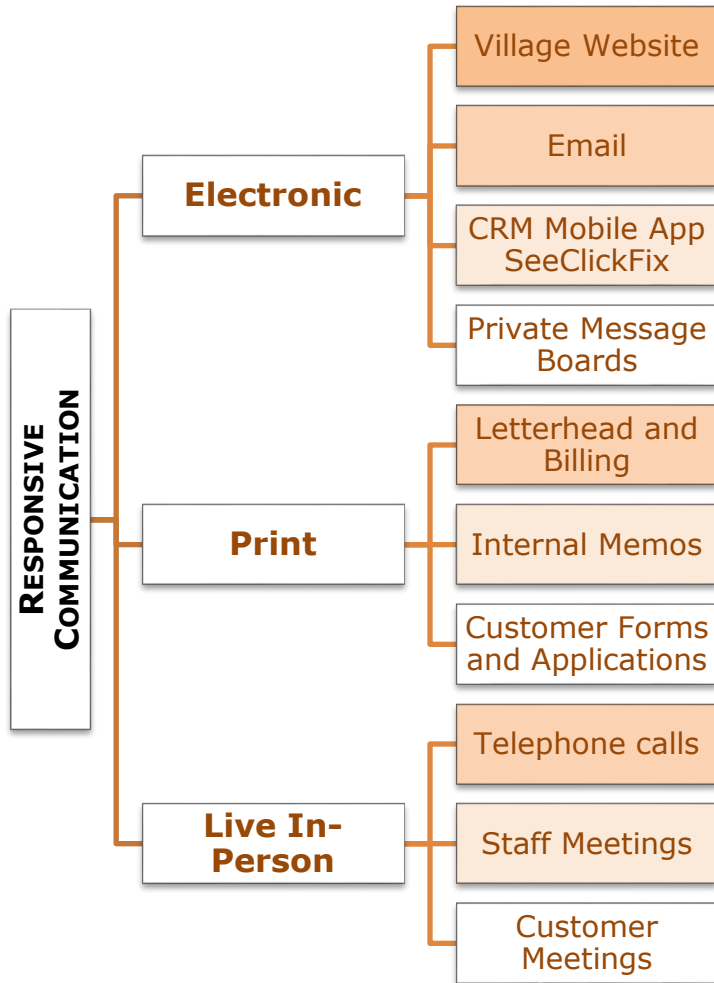
Although the communication plan stresses consistency of messaging, this does not equate to a simple “copy and paste” across all platforms. Each communication tool has industry best practices that must be followed to achieve maximum impact. For example:

- The format used in a press release does not work for a social media post, which may include hashtags or hyperlinks.
- Content for a web page must follow certain ADA guidelines for readability that would not carry over to print advertising.
- The formalities required by the Open Meetings Act for a Village Board Meeting are not applicable to a Fridays on the Green concert event.



Responsive Communication

Responsive communication relates to day-to-day business of the Village, much of which may be internal or between a staff member and customer. For these communication tools, the target audience is much smaller, such as a specific department included on a memorandum or a resident that is applying for a permit.



As with proactive communication, the Village website continues to be the key communications tool. There are several examples of responsive communication that currently incorporates the use of the Village website:

- An individual can learn about a property’s zoning, garbage pick-up, police beat and more by clicking on “Property Lookup” on the Village’s homepage
- A customer can pay a water bill online.
- Applicants will soon be able to check the status of a permit, or even apply for certain licenses, through the Village website.
- A customer can submit a Service Request through our CRM system, accessible through the main website or through the Village’s SeeClickFix mobile app. Through this application, customers are informed of the status of the service request by staff in a timely fashion.

These examples, at one time, required one-on-one interaction between a staff member and a customer. The move toward “instant response” is a trend that is likely to continue, as the Village incorporates technologies and software improvements to existing processes.

As a close second, email is also extremely important to the day-to-day operations of the Village. The use of email is often duplicative or replaces other tools:

- Staff memos are emailed instead of printed and routed.
- Customers can email staff to ask questions or address mailed correspondence.
- Employees can receive and listen to telephone voicemails through email messaging.

As with proactive communication, it is essential to have consistency in messaging. This can be as simple as standardized email signatures for employees, to incorporating key messaging

statements in customer meetings. It is also important to examine technological trends and improve processes as necessary, to ensure that the Village is providing leading edge service in a manner expected by customers.

This plan will provide policy and guidelines for several forms of communication listed in the charts above. Policies which currently exist today, both within the Village Employee Handbook or as a supplement to, will be assessed and modified accordingly as necessary.

Identify | Messaging Priority Levels

Should an event arise that is of great importance to public safety and welfare, the Village must reach out across all media as quickly as possible. In such cases, there should be a plan that allows key staff members to act immediately. A hierarchy of responsibility should be established including various priority levels. The decision to alert the community should always be approved by the Village Manager. Should the Village Manager not be available the responsibility should fall to the Director of Communications or Assistant Village Manager to approve messages. In those emergency situations, the Police and Fire Chiefs should have responsibility to send messages directly to the public provided they are in contact with the Village Manager and Director of Communications.

Based on the severity of the situation, there should be a hierarchy established for which media are utilized first. In the most extreme situations, the order should be:

1. Public alert via sirens and Everbridge Citizen Alert notifications (in partnership with Northwest Central Dispatch)
2. Village Website
3. Social media
4. Press/media including Village channel

When dealing with emergencies, the response should be dictated by the severity of the situations. In most cases these messages can be sent by the respective department heads, but also repurposed by the Director of Communications on Village social sites, the Village website and perhaps supported by press releases and video alerts. When the latter are required, the Director of Communications will coordinate activity but most likely rely of the department head to represent the Village.

After any emergency event, once the situation has been resolved, within 48 hours the appropriate Village staff should hold a post-mortem to review how the situation was handled, evaluate metrics from tools used and refine plan for future occurrences.

Refer to Appendix II for more information on Message Priority Levels and the protocols associated with each level.

Section Two: ESTABLISH

Topics covered in the “Establish” section are recommendations, each of which represent a list of future accomplishments that will strengthen and support an overall communications strategy. These items include:

- The development of a Village branding strategy - Completed in February 2020.
- Creation and utilization of key messaging statements
- Processes for approvals throughout the communications flow
- Formal guidelines, boundaries, and scheduling for outbound messages
- Processes for addressing incoming or other public-facing communications, such as social media

Establish | Logo Guidelines

The Village adopted Logo Design Guidelines in May 2004 [see Appendix]. This document identifies the logo design, as well as the Village’s brand identity colors. It also denotes proper usage, including spacing and fonts to be used in conjunction with the logo. Over time, adherence to this guide has drifted astray. An assessment of the viability of this document should be conducted, and a policy created to ensure the Village’s logo and colors are used consistently and only where appropriate.

Branding is more than a logo and a color scheme. Other items that are important to creating a cohesive branding strategy are:

- The Village slogan, “Where friendliness is a way of life”
- Website, newsletter and e-newsletter design and formatting
- Template formatting for public facing documents, such as press releases, applications and forms
- Use of key messaging statements
- Email signature standardization, complete with appropriate web links
- Consistent messaging for video, such as opening and closing credits and title sequence

An evaluation of the strength of the Village’s brand should be included as part of the Communication’s Team annual reporting. Goals should include ways to strengthen the brand, including any modifications necessary as communication tools adapt over time. The development of a Branding Strategy is recommended as a supplement to the communications plan to ensure these goals are met.



Establish | Branding Strategy



In February 2020, the Village Board Adopted a Village Branding Plan. The plan was created through the work of MECO Consultants and Village staff, as well as input from a variety of stakeholders. The plan helps identify the Village Brand and summarizes community input and influencing factors such as local demographics. The plan also provides a description of target audiences and brand strategy recommendations that help bring the Village's brand to life.

Staff and the Village Board recognize a need to undertake a comprehensive marketing effort to promote the Village externally, while at the same time generating a sense of pride internally. Identifying the Village's brand is the first step, with implementations initiatives working to support and strengthen this brand.

The goal of the Village's Branding Plan is to capture the qualities of Mount Prospect that produce positive emotional reactions; it should capture the essence of what the Village represents and is the foundation upon which future marketing and outreach efforts will be based.

While the implementation of the Branding Plan's recommendations was delayed due to the Village's COVID-19 pandemic response, staff is re-instituting a focus on this implementation in 2021-2022. A copy of the plan is attached in the Appendix.

Establish | Key Messaging Statements

Key messaging statements should be developed to provide consistency and accuracy in Village messaging. A document outlining these statements should be created as an addendum to the communications plan. Once established it should be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.

A key messaging statement document will identify key words, phrases and sentences that are to be used in Village communications. This can include everything from the branding statement (or Village motto) to proper terminology for elected official titles, department names and departments and facilities. (For example, does Mount Prospect have a Police Station, a Police Headquarters or a Public Safety Building?). The document should identify key areas in which the Village regularly communicates and then create standardized words and phrases to always be used when communicating about those areas. They general areas may include:

- Annual budget
- Business community
- Codes and ordinances
- Emergency management
- Financial records
- Health and safety
- Legal disputes
- Property values

- Quality of life
- Social services
- Taxes
- Transportation
- Village government

Once established, the Director of Communications should routinely check messaging from all internal groups to validate that key messaging statements are being used, and used appropriately. The messaging statements themselves should be reviewed and updated annually by the Director of Communications and Village Manager, with support and approval by the Village Board and Mayor.

Since the adoption of the first edition of the Communications Plan in February 2018, the Village Manager's Office has worked toward the use of basic key messaging statements particularly concerned with labeling of titles, municipal buildings, and development projects.

Establish | Communication Processes

The Communication Team members are allowed to develop and distribute their own content within certain guidelines, as outlined in Appendix I. These guidelines must be followed by all applicable Village staff. Once properly trained on the various tools, branding strategy, and key messaging statements, they should regularly participate in quarterly calendar building sessions, contribute to the development of goals, and be informed of results from analysis of metrics. Ultimately, the Director of Communications and Village Manager (and, on occasion, elected officials) may review and edit material as advised by members of the entire Communications Team before messages are released.

Guidelines and processes for each communication tool are found in the Appendix I

The Communication Processes should be evaluated on a regular basis with regard to the following:

- The review of content, based on which tool is utilized and the priority level of the message, to be sure messaging is consistent;
- Evaluation of departmental social media accounts, web pages, and other tools, along with their target audiences and communication impact;
- Any new forms of communication introduced should have policies and processes in place and incorporated into to the overall Communication Plan.

Annual Calendar

Central to a successful communications plan is the quality and clarity of messaging being sent. This includes developing a standard voice by which the Village speaks through all media. Naturally there will be some differences across tactics, such as the tone of the annual budget report will be different than that of messaging associated with the annual summer festival, but nonetheless, it is important to develop consistency in how messaging is worded and presented.

The starting point for developing messaging should be the creation of an annual calendar of key events across all departments. This can be done in chart format showing the event or topic of the message, the audience and the preferred tools for sending the message (there

may be multiple audiences and tools for each message). The calendar can be used to create a working timeline to indicate when materials are needed, including approval and production timelines where appropriate. In addition, benefit is also gained with a calendar approach as it will indicate collisions or periods in which perhaps too much messaging is being sent, allowing a better distribution or combination so recipients do not tune out inbound content because they perceive it to be too intrusive. In developing the calendar, an evaluation should take place regarding the frequency of each tactic based on relevancy of content, repetition with other tactics deployed and budget.

The calendar should be developed on a rolling-year basis, meaning that as each quarter ends, a new quarter is added on at the end. A review should take place every three months to most closely evaluate and adjust the upcoming period. A review of recent metrics should be included at this quarterly review, to improve the performance of upcoming activity.

Messaging Creation

Once the calendar is in place, the Director of Communications should work with other Communication Team members to craft the messaging for each tactic. In most cases, this begins with creating content for the website, as it is the most comprehensive location and allows for the greatest detail to be presented. From there, messaging for additional tactics such as social media, mail, electronic mail and others can be developed. Creating messages for various communication platforms at one time helps maintain consistency across messaging, ensures that schedules are established, develops targets for all media types and allows for a more holistic view of upcoming activity. In addition, is important to utilize key message statements during the creation process [as noted in the previous section], to ensure messaging is consistent.

With regard to standard messaging, it can and should all be written for the coming month at one time. This again creates consistency in voice, and in many cases improves staff efficiency by using automated tools to schedule upcoming releases and posts so as not to get lost in day to day routines.

Coordination and Message Approval

When any message is communicated – be that through the website, social media, or newsletter – there will be one person with the final “authority” to release the message to the public. There is more than one person that will fill this role, depending on timing, circumstance, and content of the message.

General, Non-Emergency Messages

There are several staff members that should contribute to the release of messages related everyday Village business. Non-controversial topics such as updates to the website calendar, postings on leaf or garbage pick-up, social media posts regarding a department event, etc. may be completed by the following:

- Director of Communications
- Department Members of the Communications Team
- Village Manager and Assistant Village Manager
- Village Clerk and other authorized website editors

Messages for Unique Circumstances or Sensitive Subjects

The Village Manager should work closely with the Mayor and Village Board concerning messages on issues that are, or could be, of a political nature. Topics that could be of an interest to the general public, but have the potential to be controversial in some way, should also be included in this category. Some general examples may be:

- The passing of an ordinance related to local taxes
- The hiring of a senior staff member which warrants a press release
- Large-scale redevelopment of a piece of land in the Village
- Local controversial topic that has trended highly on social media

It is essential that messages regarding sensitive topics be cleared through the Village board and the Mayor by way of the Village Manager. The Village Manager and elected officials should be in agreement on the message style, tools used to promote the message, and who would be responsible for release to the public. In this instance, staff plays a supporting role to the Village manager in providing specific details used to craft the message.

Naturally, there will be some events and messages which are more immediate and arise without notice. Having a structure in place which includes message prioritization allows for these events to be handled more efficiently. For extreme events, it may be necessary to employ the Crisis Communication Team.

Establish | Crisis Communications Team

A crisis is any situation that threatens the integrity or reputation of the Village of Mount Prospect, usually brought on by adverse or negative media attention. These situations can be any kind of legal dispute, social media attack, accident, fire, flood or manmade disaster that could be attributed to the Village. It can also be a situation where, in the eyes of the media or general public, the Village did not react to one of the above situations in an appropriate manner. This definition is not all encompassing but rather is designed to give an idea for the types of situations where this plan may need to be followed.

If handled correctly, damage to the Village's integrity can be minimized. During a crisis, it is crucial that the communications team follow these basic rules: *tell it all, tell it fast* and *tell the truth*.

When a situation arises that may be a crisis, immediately contact the Village Manager and the Director of Communications. The sooner this is done, the sooner a plan can be implemented.

The Crisis Communication Team

The job of the Crisis Communications Team is to devise a plan of action, which includes determining a spokesperson for the Village. The team should be made up of members from the group below.

- Village Manager
- Mayor and Trustees

- Assistant Village Manager
- Director of Communications
- Legal Representation
- Third Party Consultants, as necessary
- Police Chief & Deputies
- Fire Chief & Deputy
- Director of Public Works & Deputy
- Director of Human Services & Deputy

A copy of the names and cell phone numbers of the complete management team should be kept in the contact lists of all cell phones of the members. A complete management contact list is recommended, it is impossible to predict who may be needed during a crisis.

Once the Crisis Communication Team is selected, a list should be made of the people on the team and the responsibilities of each team member.

In addition to the Crisis Communication Team, the Communications Division should be supplemented with staff members who can answer phones and escort media. Having calls from the media answered promptly is essential; a prepared statement should be given to staff as soon as possible. This statement can be basic, such as "Facts are still being gathered but there will be a press conference before 4:00, give me your name and number and I will call you back to let you know when."

One of the first responsibilities of the Crisis Communication Team should be to determine the appropriate positioning or message to address the emergency. Refer to Appendix II for detailed recommendations on how to determine an official position, designate a Village spokesperson, and establishing a crisis media center.

Establish | Negative Message Response Protocols

The Village must have a plan in place for handling negative messages in social media and the press.

Only high-level members of the Communications team, such as the Director of Communications, Village Manager, Mayor and Village Trustees should have the ability to interject or respond to negative messages. It can be good practice, and often beneficial, to publically respond to some negative messages. It is important to always be pleasant, direct, factual and forthcoming in an effort to resolve any issue.

Responses to Social Media Posts

Below are some example social media posts that may be directed to the Village. A course of action, include sample responses, are included.

- A social media post which includes threats.
 - Response: Any post which can be perceived as threatening in anyway should be blocked or removed if possible and immediately turned over to the Police. No further action should occur.

- A social media post that lists incorrect information about the Village.
 - Sample response: “[User name or handle], it appears that you have some outdated or incorrect information. We’d like to resolve the issue, so reach out at [social media address or phone number]; OR “[User name or handle], it appears that you have some outdated or incorrect information. Check out [link to web or YouTube video]. Let us know if that helps [social media name or phone]”.
- A social media complaint about an unresolved or potentially mishandled issue.
 - Sample response: “[User name or handle], our apologies for your experience. Can we discuss to learn more and perhaps find a better solution? [social media name or phone number]”
- A social media post with mentions or complements. Example: “Thanks to MP Police officer who helped me with flat tire today.”
 - Sample response: “We’re here to help! Thanks for the recognition.”
- A social media post asking general questions. Example: “Where can we park for Block Party festival?”
 - Sample response [User name or handle] “Here’s the info you need [link]. Thanks for reaching out.”

If responding, the first response should be on the feed in which it first appeared, but should be followed up with a private message to the individual when possible (if necessary). All further communication should remain private. If a satisfactory resolution is reached, provide a final public message: “[User name or handle], thanks for working with us to find a resolution. We love happy residents!”

Negative Press

- A story appears in the press which reflects negatively on the Village.
 - Response: The Village Manager and/or Director of Communications should meet with relevant stakeholders, including the Mayor/Village Board, and develop response based on the facts of the situation. The Director of Communications should then reach out to the originator of the story and arrange an interview with the appropriate Village staff to address the concern. While it is best not to react via social media in this instance, key channels should be monitored for comments, references and links to gauge public perception.
- A story appears in the press which is misleading or incorrect.
 - Response: The Village Manager and/or Director of Communications should meet with relevant stakeholders, including the Mayor/Village Board, and develop response based on the facts of the situation. The Director of Communications or designated representative should then reach out to the originator of the story and provide in writing corrections or clarifications. While it may be best to avoid any social media comments in this case, key channels should be monitored and a response may be warranted if the misinformation is of a nature that could cause harm, create a worse situation (such as creating traffic jams, public safety issues or divert resources that would negatively impact budgets) or damage government or business relationships based on the misinformation.

Section Three: IMPROVE

Items covered in the following section address metrics, goals and considerations for future additions to the overall communications strategy.

- Develop a framework under which metrics and analysis will be used to evaluate the success of current communications tools
- Establishment and review of annual communication goals
- Future considerations for improvement, based upon industry best practices

Improve | Metrics & Analysis

To be effective in using resources and in measuring the effectiveness of the communications strategy, a consistent plan to track and evaluate metrics should be put in place. All measurable tactics should be tracked monthly with a quarterly report assembled for analysis and review with the Village Manager, which can then be shared to the Village Board.

Metrics

Some of the metrics to be monitored include:

Analytics for the Village website

- Visitors
- Unique visitors
- Pages per visit
- Average duration of visit
- Top landing pages
- Bounce rate
- Files downloaded
- Videos watched

- Engagement
- Retweets
- Mentions
- Favorites
- Most viewed links

YouTube

- Views per title
- Number of channel subscribers

CRM (SeeClickFix)

- Total number of requests
- Number of App downloads
- Most common requests
- Time to complete the request

Electronic messages (E-newsletters)

- Total sent
- Opt outs
- Open rate
- Click-through rate on links

Facebook

- Friends
- Likes
- Responses/shares
- Posts about

Press releases

- Maintain a clip file on all stories
- Online archive

Twitter

- New followers
- Net followers

Instagram

- Followers
- Engagement
- Click-through rate on links

Current Monitoring/Tracking Systems

The Village already has a few software monitoring systems in place for various communication tools.

SiteImprove: The Village uses SiteImprove, a contract-based software platform which “crawls” both the Village website (www.mountprospect.org) and Experience Mount Prospect (www.experiencemountprospect.org) for errors such as broken links or misspellings. SiteImprove also provides the Village with analytical reports on site visits, bounce rates, most commonly visited pages, and more. These reports should be used to track website performance and help highlight ways to improve the site.

SeeClickFix CRM (Customer Service Requests): The CRM software application is available via the Village website and through a mobile app (mpDelivers, powered by SeeClickFix). The public can submit common requests, such as property maintenance concerns or requesting a new refuse cart, and they are automatically sent to the responsible department. Once requests are received, staff can communicate directly with the customer to follow up on the status. Internally, CRM allows staff to track the status of submitted requests and run reports via the dashboard that is included in the software.

Meltwater: For both Twitter and Facebook analytics, the Villages uses Meltwater. This web-based platform allows staff to monitor the number of posts, likes, and shares for all of the active accounts for the Village. This tool can also be used to schedule posts in advance, and allows for one person (Director of Communications) to serve as an administrator for all accounts, regardless of department. The Village moved from Hootsuite to Meltwater for this type of tracking, as Meltwater also scans the internet, television and radio for mentions of Mount Prospect within news stories. Each morning, the Director of Communications receives a report from Meltwater listing all stories in the past 24 hours which reference Mount Prospect.

These tools were utilized to help establish a baseline that is included in the Existing Conditions Report, and will be helpful in establishing annual goals.

Annual Goals

On an annual basis, the Director of Communications should convene a meeting of all appropriate department heads to establish a list of communications goals for the year. Those contributing to the process should include the Mayor and Village Trustees, the Village Manager, Assistant Village Manager, Police and Fire Chiefs, Video Production Coordinator, Public Works Director, Finance Director, Human Services Director, Community Development Director and others as appropriate. The goals should be specific, relevant, measureable, and within the capability of the Village (though a goal of expanding capability is certainly one to be considered). Goals should focus on using communications to improve Village performance in specific areas of service.

Some sample goals:

- Increase use of website and other communications tools to reduce phone calls related to a specific topic by x%

- Increase online payment of water bills by x%
- Reduce printing costs by \$xx through opt-out programs
- Increase YouTube views by x%
- Improve traffic flow during emergency road closings
- Improve Neighborhood Watch participation by x%
- Shorten time frame for permit issuance through online forms

While these are just sample suggestions, the Village should encourage input into developing a manageable list of goals each year. No goal should be added to the list if a sound and reasonable execution plan that includes tracking and measurement cannot be implemented. Progress should be reported each quarter and perhaps recognition given at the end of each year to the most successful initiatives.

Improve | Future Considerations & Best Practices

Handling of Special Events or Topics

Certain events may require the creation of unique websites or webpages such as a annual summer festival or a project such as a milestone anniversary. The Village Manager and Director of Communications should work with the Mayor and Village Board to approve such sites before any commitments are made. The sites must be overseen by the Director of Communications and must adhere to this document including adherence to the Branding strategy and Key Messaging Statements.

It would be preferable that separate social media accounts not be created but instead activity be distributed through existing Village platforms. This may include the development of hashtags or keywords and images to be included to identify the event or group.

Social Media and Internet Trends

Procedures for accessing and posting visual elements should be developed for all platforms, including social media accounts and the Village website. It would be wise to adapt social media trends which are relying more on photos and videos than text. Research clearly indicates that Tweets that feature videos are more heavily accessed; Facebook traffic is driven by pictures and videos; websites with video on the Village's home page rank much higher in search engine optimization (SEO).

The Village should also remain open to exploring additional social media platforms. The demographics of users of social media shift over time; it is important to examine the target audiences of each social media platform to ensure specific groups are not neglected.

See also, Appendix: Social Media

Master List Creation

The Director of Communications should maintain master lists for all communication needs. These lists provide for immediate access when needed and establish a knowledge base to be used in the absence or succession of the Director of Communications. Lists can include:

- Employees responsible for all sites, tools and tactics as described in the final Communications Strategy
- Press contacts
- Individuals and organizations that need to be informed during emergencies
- Master lists for Village e-blasts to residents
- Government contacts such as state and federal representatives who should be kept informed of activities in the Village

Planning for Technological Advances

As the Village develops plans and budgets for the next 1-3 years, consideration should be given to adding a chat option on the website. There is a rapidly growing approach in customer service to rely on live chat rather than phone or e-mail to address customer concerns. Identifying a person to manage the chat mechanism and establishing processes and training should be given serious consideration.

Increasing resident engagement is a main objective of Village communication, and more residents are looking to the web to learn about Village issues. Village Board, Committee of the Whole, and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings are streamed live on the web and are also available on demand. Consideration could be given to expanding the video recording of other committee meetings, as well as options to provide feedback on the meetings via the website. There are options available today which allow viewers to provide input in real time, as the meeting is being conducted. This platform has the ability to increase public participation in government processes in a more formal manner, as opposed to posting comments online after the meeting has concluded.

Social Media Usage by Employees

Village employees should be encouraged to view, share, or like Village posts and pages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Allowing employees to interact with the Village via social media not only increases the reach of the Village's posts, it informs the employee of events and news in a timely fashion.

While not part of this document, the Village employees shall abide by the social media policy included as an attachment to the Employee Handbook. At no time may an employee start a website, social media account or page on behalf of the Village or that represents Village ownership without approval from the Village Manager and Director of Communications.

Legal and Regulatory

All employees who use any Village platforms including the website, social media channels, Village television channels and electronic messages are required to adhere to all federal, state, county and City laws, ordinances, regulations, and policies including copyright laws, privacy laws, and laws related to information security.

Security

It is recommended that every 1-2 years the Village use an outside vendor to evaluate the website and social channels for security issues. Members of the Communication Team shall keep usernames and passwords for their social media, website, and analytical software confidential. Passwords shall be updated regularly and changed when there are changes to members of the Communications Team.



APPENDIX I | Communication Tools

The following pages are a quick reference guide to the Village’s most popular communication tools.

These pages include a general description of the tool, its overall communication goal and target audience. Contributing team members and implementation procedures/policies are also identified.

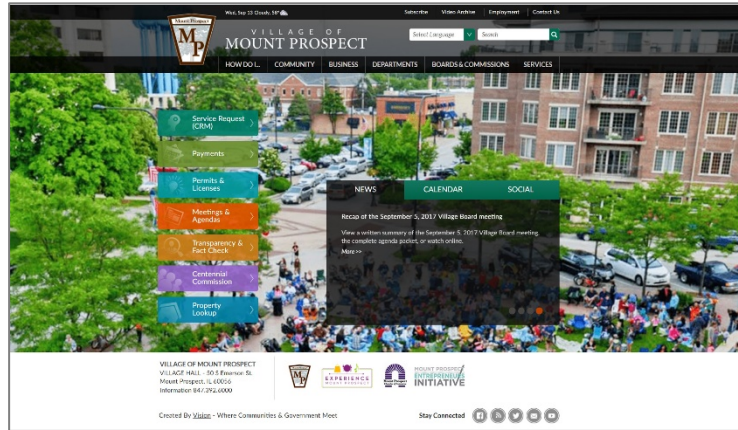
Industry best practices are listed to help users draft content that consistent and suitable for that particular communication tool.

Appendix I | Village Website: www.mountprospect.org

DESCRIPTION:

The Village Website, is the primary focus of external proactive communication. Other forms, such as the newsletter, E-newsletters, social media or advertising, should tie back to the Village's website.

The Village also manages a sub site: www.experiencemountprospect.org; these policies are applicable to this sub site as well.



COMMUNICATION GOALS:

To be the primary source of Village information by offering transparent access to related news, public meetings, and services such as bill pay and permitting.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Residents, customers, any stakeholder looking to do business with, or learn about, the Village of Mount Prospect.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Website Manager. Director of Communications. Oversight and overall management of the Village's website is the Director of Communications. This position is responsible for ensuring Department Contributors (other "super users") are managing their respective pages in accordance with the communications plan. Any difference of opinion in the posting of website content between a Department Contributor and Website Manager will be determined by the Village Manager.

Department Contributor. Each Village Department has a representative that serves as the primary contributor for their respective pages. The Department Contributor manages the daily content for each department, including the creation of content, pages, uploading of documents, and other relevant information.

Master Calendar Creator. The Village Clerk will manage and input content on the Village's main website calendar. For regular meetings, this is completed at the end of the calendar year for the upcoming year's postings. Department Contributors may input calendar items for non-regular meetings or events as long as the Village Clerk is notified of the posting.

CONTENT PROCEDURES:

Training. All members of the Website's Content Management Team will be provided training on the use of the Vision Internet website software program. All postings shall follow guidelines and instructions as provided or recommended by Vision Internet. *Supporting training and guidelines should be provided to all employees with access to the CMS.*

Content. Department Contributors must follow the guidelines and best practices detailed below when posting to the web to ensure that the entire website is consistent, accurate and informative. The use of consistent branding and key messaging statements is essential. The Director of Communications may correct any postings to align with the policies in the communications plan.

New Webpages. New pages may be created by Department Contributors, but must meet the guidelines for posting. The Director of Communications and the Village Manager have the authority add or delete pages.

Reports and Maintenance. Regular maintenance reports shall be run at least quarterly by the Director of Communications, which include the detection and correction of the following items:

- Broken links
- Outdated or incorrect information (contact information, "old news")
- Information that is no longer necessary to be posted to the web at this time (completed construction projects, seasonal information)

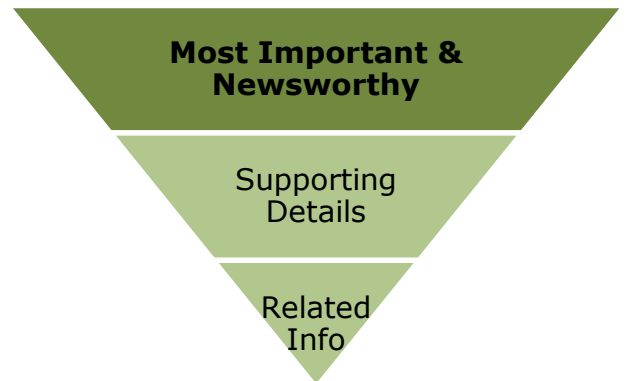
The use of SiteImprove and other analytical tools will assist in the overall maintenance of the site.

GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES – WEBSITE CONTENT CREATION

Website content should be written specifically for the web. Do not copy/paste from other documents (memos, press releases) onto a web page without editing. The following best practices will help create a website that is informative, accurate and easy to use.

- Post Skimmable Content. Most content on the web is not read in its entirety. Avoid long paragraphs.
- Use simple language, common words and phrases when possible.
- Be Concise. Cut out unnecessary information; get to the point as quickly as possible.
- Use headings to break up long postings, or use a bulleted list instead of sentences. Use the integrated formatting in Vision’s CMS to ensure consistency in formatting.
- Explain Acronyms: Departments and organizations must be fully stated at least once on the page prior to the use of an acronym. Example: Department of Housing and Urban Development, also known as HUD.
- Be Accurate: Pages must have correct spelling and use of consistent and clear language, both throughout the page and throughout the site.
- Use Key Messaging Statements and formatting throughout the site. Refer to the *IT Policies and Guidelines* for Key Message Statements and Website formatting.

Use the inverted pyramid for webpage layouts



Appendix I | Social Media



DESCRIPTION:

The Village manages social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Facebook [www.facebook.com]

- Village of Mount Prospect (main)
- Experience Mount Prospect
- Mount Prospect Fire Department
- Mount Prospect Human Services Department (Community Connections Center)
- Mount Prospect Public Works Department
- Mount Prospect Police Department
 - Mount Prospect Crime Free Housing
 - Mount Prospect Dogs In Need of Rescue
 - Join MPPD
- Mount Prospect Entrepreneurs Initiative (MPEI)
- Sister Cities Commission
- Centennial Commission

Instagram

- Village of Mount Prospect @villageofmountprospect

Twitter [www.twitter.com]

- Village of Mount Prospect (main) @MountProspect
- Experience Mount Prospect @exmp60056
- Mount Prospect Fire Department @MountProspectFD
- Mount Prospect Public Works Department @MountProspectPW
- Mount Prospect Police Department @MountProspectPD
 - Mount Prospect Crime Free Housing @MPPDCrimeFree
 - Officer Friendly @OfcrFriendlyMP
- Mount Prospect Entrepreneurs Initiative @MPEntrepreneurs

YouTube [www.youtube.com]

- Village of Mount Prospect (MPDC)
- Mount Prospect Police Department

COMMUNICATION GOALS:

Share current news with a wide variety of audiences, including the posting of Village events and sharing of emergency messages.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Residents of Mount Prospect, Mount Prospect business owners, residents of neighboring municipalities, potential residents and potential business owners.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Social Media Content Manager: Director of Communications

Social Media Content Contributors: Third party consultants and various members of the Communications Team, including the Video Production Specialist, Assistant Village Manager, Police Crime Prevention Officer, Fire, Public Works, Human Services and Community Development Personnel

CONTENT POSTING PROCEDURES:

Authority. Social media management should be closely controlled. No Village-related social media accounts shall be created without the approval from the Director of Communications. The Director of Communications will monitor the postings of all accounts via Meltwater; the director will have the ability and authority to post, edit, delete, or respond to any social media postings for all Village accounts.

Procedures for Scheduling Posts. Most departments should be able to produce social media messages one month in advance; regular Communication Team Meetings and the implementation of an annual calendar will help plan postings.

The Village may utilize a third party consultant to assist in the management of social media accounts. Village staff will work with any consultants related to content for future postings, with the Director of Communications serving as the management of any consultants.

For immediate postings, contributing team members shall follow parameters for posting such as:

- If there is a significant vote taking place at a Village Board meeting, the post should simply communicate the results without commentary such as 2017 budget approved unanimously tonight or Village board votes 5-3 to allow new business park development
- Photos of events that focus solely on certain individuals should never be posted without permission

Content posted on social media should always point a user to the Village website for additional detail or information.

Negative Messages. Content contributors should never interject themselves into negative conversations and threads. The Director of Communications should review and determine of what, if any, response is warranted. The director should then manage the communications going forward. In certain cases, the Village Manager should be informed of ongoing or particularly notable negative message posts.

BEST PRACTICES - SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS

Be Relevant. Even the most ardent social media users can be overwhelmed by the volume of messages. Users know there is value in social media but they want value, not quantity.

As a general rule, all Village social media posts should contribute some sort of valuable information to the public.

Invite Participation. The purpose of social media is to be social and build relationships. Try to minimize “push” communications and instead try to use messages to promote responses, interaction and discussion. The more dialogue, the more likely it is that the user base will grow, and to a greater extent, the more value the public will place on the Village’s site. That is to the Village’s benefit as social platforms then become good listening and learning tools.

Use Video. The evidence is overwhelming in support of using video links in social platforms. Response rates will generally be five to ten times higher for a message with a video link when compared to plain text. These do not need to be high end productions but even a basic message delivered as a talking head video will get more attention.

Be Social. It is important for users to learn that the Village is interested in more than just promoting of specific, narrow topics. Be sure to do these three things:

1. Send periodic messages that don’t sell or promote anything. As examples, wish people safe and happy holiday weekends, wish kids well when school breaks begin, or celebrate opening day of the baseball season.
2. Promote other individuals and groups. The Village’s audience is expanded when other groups are mentioned in a post. If another community is recognized for something, if one of the other entities in town has an event, or when some local organization has an important story or achievement, offer some recognition via an originated post.
3. Interact. Don’t just send messages and then walk away. Monitor the feed and when a message arrives from another entity that has value, react to it. Sharing on Facebook or retweeting on Twitter gets the post displayed in front of other audiences. On Facebook be sure to use appropriate names or headings so links are added to posts, and on Twitter use handles and hashtags to get the message distributed more widely.

Avoid Conflict. See the appropriate guidelines in the Communications Plan on handling negative messages. Beyond that, avoid any controversial topics.

Track Results. A monthly review of analytics is essential. Use Facebook Insights, Twitter analytics or other software to see which posts are getting the most mileage and interaction. Shape future posts accordingly.

Save Time. It can be difficult to remember to deal with social media every day, so it is best to create calendar of postings to help plan. The majority of what is communicated will be related to scheduled events; these related posts can be created at monthly Communication Team meetings with support from third party consultants.

Be Direct. When writing for social media, keep messages on point. Don’t try to be too cute or clever. Despite the brevity of space, particularly with Twitter’s 280 character limit, avoid the urge to navigate around the limit with abbreviations and jargon. This just leads to badly written content. A few words along with a link to a full-length message on the website is sufficient.

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Appendix I | E-Newsletters

DESCRIPTION:

The Village produces four regular E-newsletters, using the email marketing provider Campaign Monitor:

- Village E-news
- Experience Mount Prospect Events
- Experience Mount Prospect Business Deals
- Village Agenda Email Notifications



In addition, there may be topic-based emails to select subscribers, such as the Isabella Sewer Reconstruction Project, which have an end date. Mount Prospect Entrepreneurs Initiative also produces an E-newsletter under a separate Campaign Monitor account.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

Provide current Village news in a pleasing, easy-to-read format directly to subscribers via email. To market and promote Village and community events, and highlight monthly specials from local businesses directly to subscribers via email. E-newsletters are also viewable to non-subscribers through the Village's website and Experience Mount Prospect sub site.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Subscribers to the E-newsletters primarily include residents interested in finding out about Village news, events, and business deals in a regular, timely fashion.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Experience Mount Prospect E-newsletter Creator. Director of Communications with Third Party Consultants. The Director of Communication solicits and collects news stories and event listings from various sources, such as village staff, organization partners such as the Chamber of Commerce or Park Districts, and from the business community for posting in the E-newsletters. Third-party consultants will assist in the assembly and distribution of the E-newsletters.

Village Agenda E-Newsletter Creator. The Village Clerk will send out the E-newsletters related to the Village Board and Committee of the Whole agendas and meetings.

MPEI E-newsletter Creator. Assistant to the Village Manager. Content and management of the MPEI E-newsletters will be handled by the Assistant to the Village Manager. Supporting partners for content and subscribers include the Mount Prospect Chamber of Commerce and the Mount Prospect Public Library.

CONTENT PROCEDURES:

- Members of the contributing team shall be educated in and utilize the Campaign Monitor email marketing program to prepare and send newsletters.
- E-newsletters shall be posted on a regular basis, dependent on the E-newsletter type and amount of content available.

- Regular reports shall be run at least quarterly by the Director of Communications, in which include the following benchmarks:
 - Number of Subscribers
 - Frequency of campaigns sent
 - Number of opens
 - Number of click-throughs
 - Number of shares on social media

BEST PRACTICES - E-NEWSLETTERS

Provide Valuable Content. While the temptation to provide a wealth of content may be hard to resist, suitable editing practices must be upheld. Provide readers with key stories focusing on information that is critical to them and provides a link to more detailed versions including website pages, videos, maps, forms and other interactive media. People will be loyal to the newsletter if it serves them well. If it is too long, or does not carry sufficiently valuable news, it will soon be disregarded.

Headlines Matter. Just like a newspaper or magazine, a compelling headline will entice readers to dive into an article. Catch their attention with a solid headline and lead with the most important information.

Imagery Is Important. Utilize photos and video thumbnails prominently. Users are much more likely to click on a good photo or a video link than even a very compelling headline.

Track Results. Track data from every e-newsletter sent in a spreadsheet or similar reporting. Evaluate overall open rate, total click-through rate, and particularly click-through rates for each link. Through this process, determine the type of content that performs the best and shape future releases accordingly. Refer to industry standards for open rates online to judge newsletter effectiveness.

Follow and Enforce Submission Guidelines. The Experience Mount Prospect E-newsletters are contributor-driven. There are submission guidelines in place related to the relevancy of the submission, the length and number of images permitted per submission. The Director of Communications has the authority to regulate or edit contributor content included in each E-newsletter.

Be Accurate. E-newsletters must have correct spelling and use of consistent and clear language. Use of Key Messaging Statements should carry through to the E-newsletters.

Link Back To Website. Wherever appropriate, hyperlinks should be used to tie back E-newsletter content to either the Village website, as may be the case for news stories, or the business/organization, as may be the case for the Experience Mount Prospect Events or Business Deals E-newsletters.

Appendix I | Village Newsletter

DESCRIPTION:

The Village Newsletter is a 16 page printed publication that is mailed to all Village residents and businesses (all addresses), six times per year. The newsletter contains timely news articles and promotion of events taking place throughout the Village.

The Village Newsletter is our residents #1 source for Village information, according to the 2016 and 2020 Community Surveys.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

Provide general overview of current topics (seasonal), schedule of events, most important items to share. Direct the reader to the website for more information.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Mount Prospect Residents

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Newsletter Content Manager. The Director of Communications solicits or collects content for newsletter articles from Village staff, reviews the content and shares with the Newsletter Designer. Also makes recommendations for feature articles and for content for the event calendar.

Newsletter Contributors. Various department heads and supporting staff will create and contribute to the Director of Communications timely articles of interest to the average resident.

Newsletter Designer. Lisa Eckert, Lisa Eckert Design. Lisa Eckert Design edits the newsletter content supplied by the Village’s Director of Communications to reflect in a similar voice and format.

CONTENT PROCEDURES

- Staff members and leaders from local organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce or Special Events Commission, submit content to the Director of Communications via email.
- The content is edited and compiled into the Newsletter format by the consultant.
- All submissions must follow the strict deadline



BEST PRACTICES - VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

Speak with One Voice. The newsletter should be written by one person. All content should be submitted for one person to evaluate, edit and ultimately re-write as needed so all content has a consistent style.

Be Informative. Research has shown that the newsletter is highly regarded as a source of information to residents in the community. Having this level of acceptance provides an outstanding opportunity to reach key audiences. Submit articles that are brief, topical and contain as much relevant information as possible. Keep articles short but meaningful. It is acceptable to add links, e-mail addresses and phone numbers that readers can use to follow up provided the article contains enough information for readers to learn about the topic. The need to follow-up should be for those who want to take some action or who are highly involved and want as much detail as possible. People should get the basic facts through the article and follow up to the Village website for more information.

Consider Lead Times. With the newsletter now moving to being published 6 times per year submitters need to determine the appropriate time frame when topics should be submitted. Even though a topic may be off-season, if it is something that people want to consider in advance and perhaps block their calendar for, don't wait too long to publicize it. For a large event, such as the Village's Celestial Celebration, give several months' notice to allow for people to purchase tickets and mark their calendars. If an article is seasonal, such as a reminder to alert residents to bundle tree limbs in the spring, publish the article at the start of spring when they will be doing the work.

Prioritize Content. It is possible that not everything submitted will make it into an edition of the newsletter. Submitters should allocate space accordingly and alert the editor/Director of Communications to the items that are most critical for that edition.

Appendix I | Press Releases

DESCRIPTION:

Press releases are used to share Village news with members of the local press, including the Journal and Topics and Daily Herald newspapers. Press releases may contain information of a recent emergency response event, significant business or action by the Village Board, or promotion of Village events.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

Provide facts to inform local press contacts of Village business. Establish a point of contact.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Local press contacts, general public

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Final Approver. The Village Manager is the final reviewer and approver for emergency press releases, with the Director of Communications serving as the final reviewer and approver for non-emergency press releases. This helps ensure the messaging is vetted and consistent.

Press Release Creator, Emergency Situation Press Releases. In emergency situations or those related to emergency events (such as a major automobile accident or house fire), the responsible department head or (designee), usually of Police or Fire Departments, drafts the press release in a timely manner with relevant facts, using a template to keep formatting consistent.

Press Release Creator, Non-Emergency Press Releases. The Director of Communications, in conjunction with third party consultants, will work with any Village staff requesting a press release to ensure that the document contains the pertinent information and it is formatted in the proper manner. The more time given to prep, especially for non-emergency topics, the better. Non-emergency Press Releases should be sent out 2 weeks prior to an event, so sending content to the Director of Communications 3-4 weeks prior would be ideal. This allows the press releases to be developed and distributed in a seamless fashion with proper time given to draft and approve.

CONTENT PROCEDURES

- Press releases categorized as “Emergency” are time sensitive and pertain to an emergency event. Topics such as fires, crimes, and similar situations may be included. These press releases are to be drafted by the department designee, reviewed by the department head, and approved by the Village Manager before distributing to the press. The Village Manager will also share these press releases with the Village Board after approval.
- Press releases that are “Non-Emergency” include those related to the promotion of a community event or other Village news. These press releases are to be drafted by the Communications Team Members, including the department contact from which the release originates and the Director of Communications. Assistance from third party contractors may also be used to draft these releases. The Director of Communications has the authority to review and share these releases, copying the Village Manager to ensure the Village Board is also receiving the document.

BEST PRACTICES - PRESS RELEASES

Format. Press releases should be formatted in a manner that reinforces the Village Brand. Should be placed on Village letterhead or established template, with header of release date and contact person information.

Content. The introductory paragraph should contain the main idea highlighting who, what, where, how, and why for the subject matter. The conclusion paragraph should end with: "For more information, visit (website/page) or contact (name of person) at (email and phone number)". Think of a creative title to spark interest of the reader.

Tie Back to the Web. It is important that any information shared via press release have a related news component on the Village's website.

Length. Best to limit the content to one page, if possible (11 or 12 font size is ideal, but no less than 10).

Include Photos. Each Press Release should be sent to media with a corresponding photo highlighting topic (this can be a generic stock photo if no current photo is available).

Appendix I | Print & Online Advertising

DESCRIPTION:

Print or online advertising refers to advertisements for Village events or other initiatives which are paid for publication in a local newspaper or magazine, or online publishing such as on a newspaper's online edition or social media platform.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

Advertise Village or Village-supported events or other initiatives; support the Shop Dine Enjoy mission of Experience Mount Prospect and support economic development goals.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

The general public. Audience may depend on the content of the advertisement and the type of publication the ad will be displayed.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Director of Communications. Identifies events or initiatives suitable for the wide audience afforded by print or online advertising. Works with consultants to assist in designing and ordering the advertisement.

Other Supporting Staff. Any Village staff or commission member that has a suggestion for an advertisement may share their request with the Director of Communications.

CONTENT PROCEDURES

- Major community events, both Village-initiated or Village supported, are a must for advertising on both traditional and online platforms. (Downtown Block Party, Irish Fest, Lions Club Farmers Market, Tree Lighting/Chriskindlemarket, etc.). Other promotions are assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- The promotion of major community events are included in marketing or event budget. Economic Development initiatives can be charged to the Economic Department Marketing budget.
- Key Village initiatives or programs are also ideal for advertising. For instance, commuter parking options, the launch of a new policy or program, or special recognition may warrant paid advertising.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PRINT MEDIA - ADVERTISING

Maintain Branding. While each ad may be related to different events, departments or topics, it should be recognizable to the reader that they are all from Mount Prospect. Adhere to branding guidelines, logo usage and key messaging statements in all advertising.

Proofread. Make sure that multiple sets of eyes review every ad before approving. First, ensure that there are no typos, grammatical or factual errors. Secondly, make sure that the Director of Communications reviews and approves all ads so that the information presented to the public is aligned with Village policies.

Utilize Interactivity. For online or electronic advertising, include links to webpages or other sites that contain complete information.

Track Results. Online or electronic advertising should be easy to track. The site or publication used should provide impression and click-through data. Use this information to evaluate results against other media.

Consistency. In some cases, multiple tactics will be used for one event or promotion. As an example, the Village may do a mail piece, an e-blast, a promotional card and an online ad for the same topic. In these instances, use one design across all media. The message should have the same look and feel regardless of where people see it.

Grab Attention. Online viewers are bombarded with content every minute. Make sure the ad stands out with a bold headline, crisp design and relevant details front and center. Don't make the reader work to understand the message.

Appendix I | Promotional Rack Cards or Posters

DESCRIPTION:

Promotional Rack Cards or posters are takeaway advertisements, usually printed professionally in color on cardstock and displayed in various locations throughout village municipal buildings and partner locations.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

Advertise Village or Village-supported events; support the Shop Dine Enjoy mission of Experience Mount Prospect.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Mount Prospect Residents, visitors, supporting organizations.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Director of Communications. Identifies events to be promoted, works with third party consultants to assist in designing and printing of the rack cards, helps to distribute finished cards.

Other Supporting Organizations. Events such as Irish Fest or Oktoberfest are not Village-organized, but are promoted through the Village's rack card program. In these instances, information or card design may be supplied by these outside organizations.

CONTENT PROCEDURES:

- Major community events are promoted yearly through the use of rack cards and posters (Downtown Block Party, Irish Fest, Tree Lighting/Chriskindlemarket, etc.). Rack cards and posters could also help explain timely Village services, economic development initiatives, department programs and feedback surveys. These are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Rack cards and posters are distributed to local merchants and organizations with assistance from Public Works. The Director of Communications maintains this distribution list.

PRINT MEDIA BEST PRACTICES – RACK CARDS

Maintain Branding. While each card may be related to different events, departments or topics, it should be recognizable to the reader that they are all from Mount Prospect. Adhere to branding guidelines, logo usage and key messaging statements in all printed material.

Stick to the Facts. Make sure that the most important information a reader needs is easily apparent. Maintain standard design tactics to make key information pop off the page.



Proofread. Make sure that multiple sets of eyes review every piece before printing. First, ensure that there are no typos, grammatical or factual errors. Secondly, make sure that the Director of Communications reviews and approves all pieces so that the information presented to the public is aligned with Village policies.

Volume. Printing can be expensive, so make sure that printed materials are required essential to the message. If so, be judicious in the use of space. Limit the message to essential content and use the piece to direct readers to online videos, webpages or other media where more details can be presented for those who require every detail.

Standardization. Some pieces need to be printed each year (or other period) with minor changes. When designing those pieces, do so in a way that the cost of making the changes can be minimized. Track usage from period to period to ensure rack cards or posters are not over-printed.

Appendix I | MPDC (Mount Prospect Digital Communications)

DESCRIPTION:

Encompasses the video assets of the Village of Mount Prospect.



MPDC encompasses the video assets of the Village of Mount Prospect. Assets include the Mount Prospect Government Access Channel, the live stream of the Government Access Channel, the Video-On-Demand/Indexed Board Meetings, the Village of Mount Prospect YouTube Channel, and any other videos used for internal purposes.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

To use videos on multiple platforms in order to communicate, educate and entertain the residents and employees of Mount Prospect

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Mount Prospect residents and Village employees

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

- Director of Communications
- Video Communications Specialist
- Police Crime Prevention Officer
- Summer Video Interns

CONTENT CREATION AND SCHEDULING PROCEDURES:

- Content shall be created by the TV Services staff of the Communications Division. Staff will determine what shall be produced and where it will be shown. Staff will maintain Mount Prospect's YouTube Channel, On-Demand-Playback, the MPDC Cable Channel, and website video content.
- Content shall be posted and updated upon completion of the video project. Many times the same program will be shown on multiple platforms.
- Analytics will be tracked and are available for YouTube content and Video-On-Demand playbacks. The Director of Communications will be responsible for running analytic data on a quarterly basis.
- The Communications Division will be the central hub for the production of digital video content. Departments or commissions requesting video services for training videos, informational videos, promotional videos, or event videos will contact the Director of Communications. The Director of Communications will evaluate the request and determine the best method for fulfilling said request. Once content is produced, staff will distribute content onto all appropriate VOMP video outlets.
- For those departments or commissions producing their own video content, the producers or staff shall notify the Director of Communications in order for content to be placed appropriately and shared on all appropriate Village outlets.

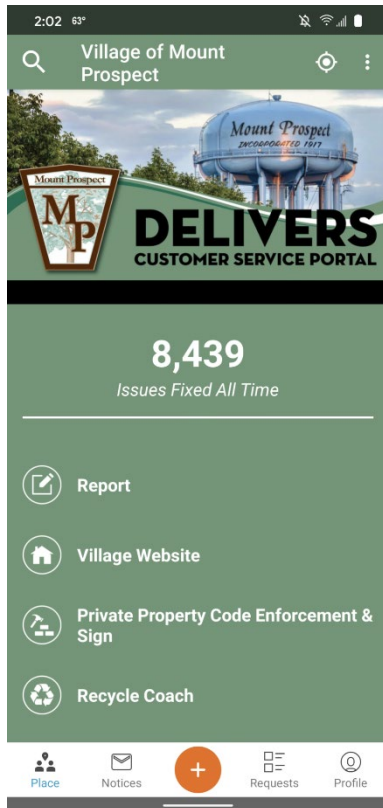
BEST PRACTICES – DIGITAL MEDIA (TV AND STREAMING)

Use the Medium Wisely. When venturing into produced video programs, be careful to not have the message get lost in the medium. While the Village cannot compete with broadcast facilities on a technical level, Mount Prospect’s video production facilities are quite good. It’s best to use them to their fullest potential to create good content that viewers will not only tune in to, but will stay with.

Create Graphics. In order to reinforce key messages, prepare high-quality, informative graphics to use during the program. Don’t squeeze too much content into them – they are just highlights to accentuate key points. The goal is to have viewers engaged in the conversation, so don’t distract. Some well-timed and well-designed graphics will enhance the viewing experience and the content retention.

Brevity Counts. The attention span of viewers is shorter than ever, and the competition for eyes is more expansive than ever. Don’t feel the need to create programs that are longer than the content warrants. An engaging, informative program that is 12 minutes long is fine if that is appropriate for the topic.

Appendix I | CRM (Customer Service Requests): mpDelivers SeeClickFix



DESCRIPTION:

The CRM (or Customer Relationship Management) software handles communication with the public on requests for service. In addition to submission of requests, it is also used to track submitted requests and allows for the creation of reports. A wide range of service requests can be submitted such as potholes, property maintenance, police ride-alongs, and FOIA requests among many others.

The Village’s CRM Programs make it easy to report a concern online, using a smartphone, tablet or computer. Service requests are organized by type and routed to the appropriate Village department for immediate action, allowing the Village to respond quickly and efficiently. In both **mpDelivers (by SeeClickFix)** and **Citizenserve mpPortal**, users are able to check status of submitted requests, receive comments and notification the instant it is resolved.

In the 2018 Communications Plan, the Village utilized Accla for mpDelivers. The Village now uses SeeClickFix software submit a service request for the request types listed below or general requests. SeeClickFix is available as an app for Android or Apple, and can be utilized via the link on the Village Website. mpDelivers can assist with the following reporting:

- Animals – dead animal on public property
- Block Party Request
- Facility Maintenance – municipal buildings
- Forestry (Parkway tree trimming, tree evaluation, tree planting program)
- Freedom of Information Request
- Parking – Commuter parking kiosk
- Public Safety (Car seat installation, CPR class, fire code concern, traffic complaint)
- Sewers (Sewer backup, broken pipes, sewer odor, maintenance of sewer system)
- Street (Leaf collections, pothole, sidewalk maintenance, street light out)
- Solid Waste (Cart repair or replacement, special collection, missed pickup)
- Traffic (On street parking concern, pedestrian/bicycle concern, traffic signal outage or traffic volume)
- Utilities – telephone, electric or natural gas concern or questions
- Utility Billing (Direct debit requests, general inquiry, name/address change, new or terminate account)
- Water (Fire hydrant concern; water pressure, water meter, water quality concerns, water shutoff or restoration)

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

To provide fast, convenient, and accessible Village service to residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. The software’s reporting function allows a summary of completed requests to be quickly compiled and shared with employees and elected officials.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

General public (residents/business owners/non-residents), Village employees, Village Board.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Departments currently using CRM include Public Works, Community Development, Finance, Village Managers Office, Fire and Police. There are currently three administrators of SeeClickFix’s CRM system: Chief Technology and Innovation Officers, the Deputy Director of Public Works, and the Finance Director. Individual requests are handled by many Village employees from the various departments listed above.

PROCEDURES:

All service requests on topics included in either CRM system are tracked, regardless of the original submission method. For example, if a customer reports a tall grass complaint in person, staff will enter the complaint into the CRM system so it is tracked appropriately.

A typical service request is handled as follows:

- Request for service is received via website, mobile app, phone call or walk-in
- Village staff enters (for calls or walk-ins) or receives email notification of request (for online submissions)
- Village staff changes status from submitted to received
- Village staff contacts resident, if needed, within one business day
- Village staff works to address the request
- Village staff completes request and sets status to “completed”. Staff records any comments in the service request which customers can view. Staff may contact resident back directly as well.

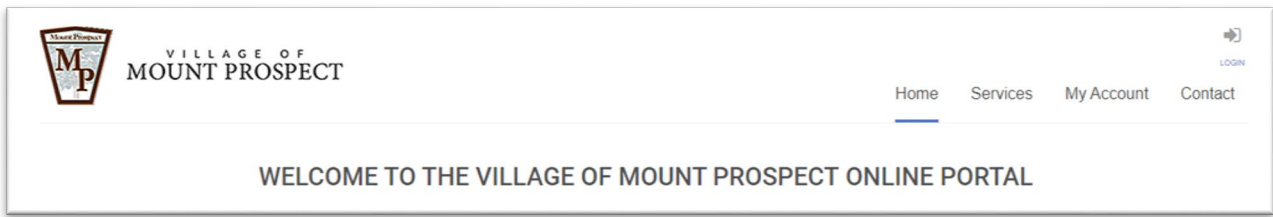
BEST PRACTICES - CRM

Ensure Follow-up. The overall timeframe from entry to completion varies based on type of request. Village staff is to contact the customer back within one business day, if needed (depending on the type of request). CRM is a great tool for communicating, and the customer will appreciate a follow up response on the status of his or her request.

Create and Review Reports. It is good practice for staff to run regular reports from the CRM dashboard. This ensures that service requests are being addressed in a timely manner, and could alert staff to an ongoing issue to be addressed proactively, rather than reactively.

Use Key Message Statements. Key message statements should be drafted and utilized when responding to residents using the CRM system. This would help aide in unified communication across departments. Currently there is an auto-reply message displayed to the customer when they enter a request in via the website or mobile app.

Appendix I | CRM (Customer Service Requests): Citizenseve



DESCRIPTION:

The CRM (or Customer Relationship Management) software handles communication with the public on requests for service. In addition to submission of requests, it is also used to track submitted requests and allows for the creation of reports. A wide range of service requests can be submitted such as potholes, property maintenance, police ride-alongs, and FOIA requests among many others.

Due to software compatibility, there are two portals to submit a CRM request.

The Village's CRM Programs make it easy to report a concern online, using a smartphone, tablet or computer. Service requests are organized by type and routed to the appropriate Village department for immediate action, allowing the Village to respond quickly and efficiently. In both **mpDelivers (by SeeClickFix)** and **Citizenseve mpPortal**, users are able to check status of submitted requests, receive comments and notification the instant it is resolved.

Community Development's **Citizenseve mpPortal** to submit license renewals and report code enforcement concerns. As of March 2020, the Citizenseve mpPortal also accepts building permit applications.

- Building Permit Applications (additions, remodels, new construction) – NEW in 2020
- License Renewals (Business, rental, elevator, and residential alarm)
- Code Enforcement (Graffiti, property maintenance – residential, commercial or vacant land, public property maintenance, signs on private or public property)

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

To provide fast, convenient, and accessible Village service to residents, business owners, and other stakeholders. The software's reporting function allows a summary of completed requests to be quickly compiled and shared with employees and elected officials.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

General public (residents/business owners/non-residents), Village employees, Village Board.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

The Community Development Department is the primary user of the Citizenseve CRM. This software system is also utilized for permit and license routing and approval, allowing for nearly paperless processes.

PROCEDURES:

All service requests on topics included in either CRM system are tracked, regardless of the original submission method. For example, if a customer reports a tall grass complaint in person, staff will enter the complaint into the CRM system so it is tracked appropriately.

A typical service request is handled as follows:

- Request for service is received via website, mobile app, phone call or walk-in
- Village staff enters (for calls or walk-ins) or receives email notification of request (for online submissions)
- Village staff changes status from submitted to received
- Village staff contacts resident, if needed, within one business day
- Village staff works to address the request
- Village staff completes request and sets status to "completed". Staff records any comments in the service request which customers can view. Staff may contact resident back directly as well.

BEST PRACTICES - CRM

Ensure Follow-up. The overall timeframe from entry to completion varies based on type of request. Village staff is to contact the customer back within one business day, if needed (depending on the type of request). CRM is a great tool for communicating, and the customer will appreciate a follow up response on the status of his or her request.

Create and Review Reports. It is good practice for staff to run regular reports from the CRM dashboard. This ensures that service requests are being addressed in a timely manner, and could alert staff to an ongoing issue to be addressed proactively, rather than reactively.

Use Key Message Statements. Key message statements should be drafted and utilized when responding to residents using the CRM system. This would help aide in unified communication across departments. Currently there is an auto-reply message displayed to the customer when they enter a request in via the website or mobile app.

Appendix I | GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar

DESCRIPTION:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of Illinois entered a Governor-issued State of Emergency and stay-at-home orders were initiated. During this time, it was not possible to work or meet in person. The Village was able to adjust to this remote environment by purchasing subscriptions to LogMeIn software: GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar.



GoToMeeting provides a way for people to “meet” remotely using their computer, laptop, smartphone or telephone.

GoToWebinar provides a way to hold public meetings in a virtual platform using a computer, laptop or smartphone.



Both platforms allow for the sharing of presentations, allow for open discussion and have chat and messaging features and can be operated anywhere there is an internet connection.

Our subscriptions also allow for the recording of the meetings or webinars for future archive or review.

COMMUNICATION GOAL:

To provide a remote option for meetings, both including the public (GoToWebinar) and internal staff (GoToMeeting). Allows for continuity of service during times of disruption, and for when (for any reason, including convenience) it is preferred to meet in a virtual setting rather than in-person.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

General public (residents/business owners/non-residents), Village employees, Village Board.

CONTRIBUTING TEAM MEMBERS:

Department	GoToMeeting Account	GoToWebinar Account	Staff with Log In Access
Village Administration – Communication Account	X	X	Director of Communications, Executive Assistant, Assistant Village Manager, Senior Services Social Worker, Deputy Director of Human Services
Village Administration – VMO Account	X	X	Assistant Village Manager, Assistant to the Village Manager
Public Works	X	X	Director of Public Works, Deputy Director of Public Works, Village Engineer, Assistant Village Engineer, Water & Sewer

			Superintendent, Administrative Superintendent
CD Building	X		Deputy Director of Building and Inspection Services
Police	X	X	Commander Weger, Sgt. Tweedie, Officer Sill, Crime Free Housing Coordinator
Fire	X		Fire Chief, Management Analyst

PROCEDURES:

- Any meeting that is open to the public to participate shall be conducted via GoToWebinar to allow for greater security, tracking of attendance and control over various permissions for participation.
- Each department with their own accounts may create and send meetings in accordance with the user guides created and attached to this document.

BEST PRACTICES

Become familiar with the software. This includes how to participate at all levels (attendees, panelist, host, etc.). A user guide was created for both GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar and distributed to the Leadership team. These guides are included in the appendix of this document.

Have a designated moderator. A virtual meeting should have someone included that can “run” the meeting, assisting in solving technical issues, muting and unmuting attendees, sharing screens for presentation purposes, and how to address meeting disruptions.

APPENDIX II | Message Priority Levels & Crisis Communications

Appendix II defines message priority levels [Emergency, Urgent, Severe, and Routine] and outlines processes for addressing issues for each category.

During a crisis situation, there are key Tips on creating a position and determining a Village spokesperson are discussed.

The creation and role of a crisis media center is noted, with guidance on interacting with media through the use of interviews.

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Appendix II | Message Priority Levels

The Village should define and implement a categorization such as the following:

Emergency – Cases of the highest priority in which time is essential; possible scenarios include weather emergency, active armed crime, abducted child, explosion, chemical or toxic leak. Example scenario: An Amber Alert is required for a missing child. The Chief of Police should issue the alert to surrounding communities and through the Police Twitter and Facebook accounts after notifying the Village Manager (or other protocols that exist). The Director of Communications should then provide updates through Village social sites, the website and the press utilizing information and updates provided by the Police Department.

Urgent – Cases of high priority which require rapid communications; possible scenarios include severe weather warnings, flooding, water supply issues, missing person or major fire. Example scenario: An industrial fire closes a major thoroughfare in the community and threatens neighboring addresses. The Fire Department should issue a notification via their social sites and share the information with the Director of Communications for updates across Village channels including the website, social media, the press and Village television channel.

Severe – Cases of significant importance to Village residents that are potentially harmful or severely disruptive in some way such as water main breaks, major traffic interference or anticipated weather concerns such as forecasts of extreme heat or cold. Example scenario: A water main break under a major intersection near the commuter station during rush hour. Public Works or the Police Department should alert residents through their social platforms and web pages and inform the Director of Communications so that updates can be provided across Village channels including the website, social media, the press and Village television channel.

Routine – Cases that will impact residents but pose no immediate threat or danger to them. Example scenario: A scheduled community event is cancelled at the last minute. The Director of Communications should handle messaging of this type across all channels with any relevant input from various departments.

When situations develop, they should be classified by priority level so that all personnel know which execution plan to follow.

Priority Level Processes

The process for sharing information with the public shall be based upon the message's priority level in conjunction with the processes outlined based upon the particular communication tool (social media, press release, etc.).

A process for disseminating information for each priority level should be established as follows:

PRIORITY LEVEL	ACTION
Emergency	Appropriate department head (Police, Fire, Public Works) should be authorized to issue immediate communications to the public with concurrent notification to the Village Manager and Director of Communications for subsequent action.
Urgent	Appropriate department head should first alert the Village Manager for approval before sending first communication to the public. As department heads manage the situation going forward, Director of Communications handles communications.
Severe	Department head, Village Manager and Director of Communications review appropriate plan before implementation.
Routine	All communications is delegated to and/or managed by the Director of Communications. In certain cases, third party consultants will be used to handle routine communication with the Director of Communications serving in an oversight position.

Emergency Messages

Critical and Emergency issues that require immediate action can be managed by key department heads in conjunction with the Director of Communications. In most cases these messages can be sent by the respective department heads but also repurposed by the Director of Communications or his designee on Village social media sites, the Village website and perhaps supported by press releases and video alerts. When the latter are required, the Director of Communications will coordinate activity but most likely rely of the department head to represent the Village. Some examples include:

- An Amber Alert is required for a missing child. The Chief of Police should issue the alert to surrounding communities and through the Police Twitter and Facebook accounts after notifying the Village Manager. The Director of Communications or third party consultant should then provide updates through Village social sites, the website, and the press, utilizing information and updates provided by the Police Department
- A water main break closes a major thoroughfare in the community. Public Works should issue a notification via their social sites and share the information with the Director of Communications for updates across Village channels including the website, social media and MPDC’s television channel.
- A scheduled community event is cancelled at the last minute. The Director of Communications or third party consultants should handle messaging of this type across all channels with any relevant input from various departments.

Appendix II | Crisis Messaging

During a crisis, the first and foremost goal is protecting the integrity and reputation of the Village.

- Never lie, deny or hide involvement.
- Do not ignore the situation - it will only get worse.
- It is not necessary to let the lawyers make all the communication decisions. While they are good intentioned and provide valuable feedback, it may cause the crisis to escalate by delaying a response.

Positioning

To decide on a position, it is important to step out of the role as a Village staff member and take the point of view of whomever was involved in the crisis; try to view the crisis from the eye of the public.

Examples of categories to consider for positioning are:

- Human error
- Clerical error
- Unauthorized procedures
- Inadequate supervision
- Inadequate quality control
- Misuse of confidential information
- Errors of judgement
- Inadequate standard operating procedures

Crisis Messaging Tip:
People tend to remember what they hear first and last – choose introductory and concluding statements carefully.

When deciding upon a position, it is important to consider the wide range of consequences of that position. (e.g., legal, financial, public relations, effects on administration, and effects on operations).

Designated Spokesperson

One individual should be designated as the primary spokesperson to represent the Village, make official statements and answer media questions throughout the crisis. A back-up to the designated spokesperson should also be identified to fill the position in the event that the primary spokesperson is unavailable.

In addition to the primary spokesperson and the backup spokesperson, individuals who will serve as technical experts or advisors should be designated. These resources might include a financial expert, an engineer, a leader in the community or anyone deemed necessary during a specific kind of crisis. This will take some brainstorming by the crisis communication team; what is needed may not always be apparent. Experts and advisors should be an authority or technical expert in their field and be available to supplement the knowledge of the spokesperson.

It can be anticipated that other parties involved will be involved in the crisis; police, fire department, health officials, etc. will also have a spokesperson. It is important to obtain the

identity of the individual/s as early as possible so all statements and contacts with the media can be coordinated between the spokespersons and their organizations/interests whenever possible.

Crisis Media Center and Interview Policies

During a crisis, the communications team should establish a media center, or an area where a designated spokesperson can interact with members of the media. The media center location would serve as a “home base” during a crisis. If the crisis involves an active event, such as a fire or rescue operation, the media center should be located accessible to that event. This allows the reporters to see what is going on in real-time, increasing the Village’s ability to appear transparent. While utilizing the media center, care should be taken by staff to ensure that reporters are not exposed to information which may be heard out-of-context or that is confidential in nature.

Locations for interviews and press briefings should be decided by the crisis communications team. Reporters may ask to speak to those who are involved with or have been affected by the crisis. However, it is best to restrict all interviews to the primary spokesperson, back-up spokesperson or technical expert. Controlling the interview process is key to managing the crisis.

Note: reporters to have the right to request interviews from anyone they desire. During a crisis, there will be competition among reporters for a “scoop.” If the spokesperson is able to provide a reporter with information, this information should be considered very carefully, as all media should be treated equally. What is given to one reporter (such as access to an area effected by the crisis) should be made available to all members of the media.

Crisis Contact Log

A log should be established to record all telephone calls from the media or other parties inquiring about the crisis to ensure that the many callbacks required are not overlooked. It will also assist in the post-crisis analysis.

The contact log should contain the following information:

- Date
- Name of caller
- Questions(s) asked
- Telephone number
- Person responsible for response
- Additional follow-up needs

APPENDIX III | Staff Communication Guidelines

Every employee or Village representative has the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of communication and strengthen the Village brand simply by being consistent. The use of templates, key messaging statements, and proper formatting will go far in achieving the Village's communication objectives.

This section will highlight some of the more common, everyday communication tools used by all staff on a regular basis. These guidelines will be supported with the assistance of the Village's Information Technology Department, with oversight by the Village's Leadership Team.

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Appendix III | Village Documents / Correspondence

The following information is a style guide to standardize correspondence created by representatives of the Village. These documents reflect upon not only the author, but also the Village itself, so a standard format has been defined for use by all employees who send out correspondence under the Village letterhead.

Fonts

The official font for the Village of Mount Prospect is Verdana. The majority of memos, letters, and other correspondence should be drafted using this font, which is available in all Microsoft Office applications. For this font type, 10 point to 12 point is recommended and may be adjusted to suit the application.

Verdana 10 point
Verdana 11 point
Verdana 12 point

The font size may be reduced to an 8 font or smaller if used in a footer to document the file name. In no case shall any correspondence be drafted using any type of script font.

Letterhead

The official Village letterhead template is available on the network and is modified on a regular basis to reflect current staff and board members. Departments are allowed to use letterhead depicting their specific department on correspondence, as long as the Village logo is included and the correct font type is used. However, correspondence which is a general policy statement representative of the Village shall be under the general Village letterhead and not the department letterhead.

Documents sent out of the office to a specific member of the public (external written communication) shall be completed on letterhead. Internal memo templates or other unique templates shall not be used for any outside correspondence.

Interdepartmental Memos

A general memorandum template is available for use on the Village network drives. This memo template shall be used to ensure the correct Village logo, introductory information and formatting is followed. The To:, From:, Date:, and Subject: introductory information shall be completed, with both the name and the title of the author as well as the receiver.

Electronic File Names

The filename must be on all documents and located in the footer of the last page of the document. The font size of the filename should be smaller than the general letter font size, but still be legible when copied (typically size 8). Allowing the computer to insert the filename into the document will allow the filename to track with the document if the document is copied to another location. Filenames should be descriptive enough to make searches easier and so that a user or future user can identify the content of the document based on the name. Confidential documents or documents created by the Village Board do not require a file name.

Margins and Layout

The normal margin is standard at 1" on all sides of a document, with exception of the first page of Village letterhead. When a document is made to fit a specific number of pages the margin at the bottom of the page shall not be less than ½". All documents shall include full justification.

Standard Headers and Footers

For documents longer than one page, page numbers are to be included within the header or footer for all letters and memorandums, beginning on page 2. The header shall consist of the subject (for memos) or recipient (for letters), the date of correspondence, and the page number.

Note: minutes of any meeting MUST have a page number on every page, so if changes are made at the time of minute approval, the area requiring change can easily be referenced. Ordinances must also have a page number beginning on the first page showing "Page # of #".

Signature on Documents

The author of all memorandums and letters must have his or her name printed at the bottom along with a signature. The author's signature helps signify the end of the document and confirms the author reviewed the document prior to signing.

Draft Documents

Any draft documents shall follow the standard style format, but be stamped clearly as draft or include a printer watermark. Draft documents shall not require a signature of the author at the end of the document, which helps confirm the document is a draft.

[To Be Included: Sample Letterhead, Sample Memo Template]

Appendix III | Village Agendas

Use of Granicus Peak Agenda

The Village Board Meetings, Committee of the Whole, and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings utilize the Peak Agenda software program from Granicus to create board/commission packets and agendas, as well as create minutes of the meeting. Contributing staff are trained on this software program, and input memos and supporting documents in the system, which is then ultimately reviewed and approved by the Village Manager or Assistant Village Manager, in the case of Planning and Zoning Commission.

Information placed into Peak is also reviewed, edited or formatted if necessary by the Village Clerk. The Village Clerk and the Executive Assistant to the Village Manager have the authority to push items through the approval chain and publish a final packet online.

Peak allows the general public to quickly view an item on the agenda using any internet browser.

Agendas for past meetings are available, either through the Peak interface or online through the Village's website (via a link to Laserfiche archives).

Other Village Commissions

There are several Village Commissions currently not utilizing the Peak software program to create agendas. It is essential that these commissions' agendas be created using a standard template, including the Village logo, font and consistent formatting. This will help ensure consistency among departments/commissions and supports the overall Village branding initiative.

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Appendix III | Village Email

All employees shall follow the policies included in Attachment C of the Employee Handbook as it relates to the rules and regulations regarding Village email use.

Email correspondence is a major form of both internal (interdepartmental) and external (to customers/residents) communication. It is important to recognize that each email sent by an employee or board member represents the Village. Messages shall be constructed to be professional, clear, and concise.

Font and Format

The Village uses Microsoft Outlook for Village email. Either the standard default font (Calibri) or the Village font (Verdana) may be used. Keep in mind, San Serif fonts such as Calibri and Verdana are more easily read on computers and mobile devices. Standard rules for grammar and spelling still apply. Do not use all-caps (caps lock) when emailing from a Village account.

Village emails shall use the standard white background and black or dark blue text.

All emails shall include a subject which describes the message's content.

Signature Requirements

The following information shall be included on the signature line for all initial outgoing email [email that is created by the employee] or any initial email reply [to an outside user] by a Village employee:

- Employee Name and Accreditations
- Title
- Department, Village of Mount Prospect
- Address (either Village Hall, Public Works, or Public Safety buildings as applicable)
- Contact phone number

The following items are optional to be included in the signature:

- Village website address
- Department fax number
- Email Address
- Other information as cleared by the Village Manager

If replying in an email thread, a signature is not required once it has been included at least once in the thread. This helps reduce the length of the email and eliminates redundant in addition, email signatures shall be limited to not more than five (5) lines of text.

Employee email is correspondence which represents the views of the Village of Mount Prospect. Therefore, personal quotes, the use of script or images is prohibited unless approved by the Village Manager.

Example Signature [TBD]

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Appendix III | Village Voicemail

All employees shall follow the policies included in Attachment C of the Employee Handbook as it relates to the rules and regulations regarding Village voicemail and phone use.

Message Recommendations

Voicemail recordings should include the following information:

- Employee name and title
- Department/Village of Mount Prospect
- Request the caller's name, phone, and reason for the call.

If the recording is for an out of office message (vacation, etc.), this should be noted. Also, the employee's anticipated date of return and a second option to reach another employee should be included in the message.

Main line/department wide voicemail messages shall be cleared by the department head and shall be checked throughout the workday.

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Appendix III | Media Requests

Media Requests

Media requests include asks for interviews of members of Village staff, elected or appointed officials by members of the press, including but not limited to newspaper, radio or television. The interview may be done in person, via telephone or live (such as a live news report).

If a Village employee receives a request to be interviewed by the press, the request should be routed through the Director of Communications.

If the topic involves an issue that is, or has the potential to become, controversial, the Director of Communications and Village Manager should meet with the employee first to establish guidelines. The Village Manager will ensure the views of the Village Board are considered, and will inform the elected officials as needed. In cases of live television or radio coverage, the Director of Communications should observe the interview as it takes place.

It's best practice to plan the interview in advance (as opposed to answering questions "on the fly"). Take time to understand the purpose of the interview, inform the Director of Communications that the interview is taking place, and gather information necessary to answer questions in a clear and accurate manner. During the interview, the interviewee should abide by the general policies included in the communications plan and utilize key message statements. This will help strengthen the Village's brand and ensure consistent messaging. Use caution with discussing potentially controversial or confidential topics. Keep in mind that no staff member needs to respond to a question they are not comfortable answering. When in doubt, ask for more time to respond and follow up with the Communications Team for support.

Elected officials serve in a unique capacity, at times representing the Village and in others representing themselves politically. For topics related to Village operations, it is recommended that the officials respond with some guidance from the Communications Plan; for example, using Key Messaging Statements or referring to the appropriate Village representative for specific operational questions. For interviews related to the political environment, it is understood that elected officials are not tied to specific Village protocols which are applicable to a Village employee. It is recommended that elected officials inform the Village Manager of interviews as a courtesy, with the understanding that it is that official's ultimate decision on the timing and content of the interview.

Emergency Situations

During emergency situations, the Village Manager, appropriate Directors or Chiefs may talk directly with the press. Directors and Chiefs should keep the Village Manager and Director of Communications informed of status. Crisis communication protocols may come into effect, thereby ensuring that elected officials, key stakeholders, employees, businesses and residents are kept informed during an emergency.

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Appendix IV | User Guides

The attached user guides are for specific software mentioned in this document.

- GoToMeeting
- GoToWebinar



GoToMeeting BASICS

Employee Best Practices for Holding and Participating in Online “Virtual” Meetings

Addendum to the Village of Mount Prospect Communications Plan

December 7, 2020

Page 1: Basics | Request a Meeting | Confidentiality

Page 2: Using GoToMeeting as a Participant

Page 3: Selecting Audio Controls

Page 4: Being the Presenter – Sharing Your Screen

Page 6: Using the Chat Feature

Page 7: Meeting Etiquette

Page 8: For Meeting Organizers

THE BASICS OF GoToMEETING

GoToMeeting is software that the Village uses to host internal meetings online. It allows us to meet anywhere, and any time, without the inconvenience of traveling to a specific location, and allows us to comply with current health and safety protocols.

GoToMeeting is a virtual version of sitting around a conference table.

Like an in-person meeting, GoToMeeting is an appropriate platform when:

- The number of participants is no more than about 30 people (more than that, and the meeting “room” is pretty crowded!)
- The participants (attendees) in the meeting are specifically invited by the meeting’s organizer.
- A person with a GoToMeeting link should be thought of as having a seat at the table – they will have the same rights to speak, participate, and view anything shared in the meeting.



REQUEST A GoToMEETING

Only staff with a login to the GoToMeeting Hub can create a GoToMeeting – but all staff are encouraged to utilize the software when necessary (particularly considering pandemic protocols).

If you would like to set up a GoToMeeting, contact your department representative with the date/time/subject of the meeting. Once a link is created, they can share it with you, and you can pass it on to your meeting attendees.

Each department should have a representative who is handling the scheduling of GoToMeetings. Scheduling GoToMeetings through the appropriate staff is important, as:

- Only one GoToMeeting can be running at one time, per account.
- The department representative has experience with GoToMeeting and may be able to assist you in setting up the meeting for success.

KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL

Never publically post a GoToMeeting link on the website, social media, or via email to people you do not know or do not want to attend the meeting.

Sharing a GoToMeeting link to the general public is like hanging a meeting room key card outside the door – anyone can use it.

GoToMeeting should NOT be used for a general “public participation” meeting for various reasons – mostly related to security, accountability, and record keeping. The GoToWebinar platform is catered specifically for public participation meetings.

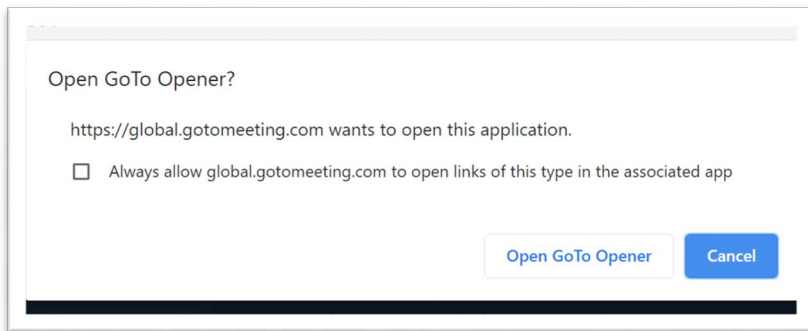
USING GoToMEETING AS A PARTICIPANT

You will likely receive either an email or calendar appointment item with a link to the GoToMeeting.

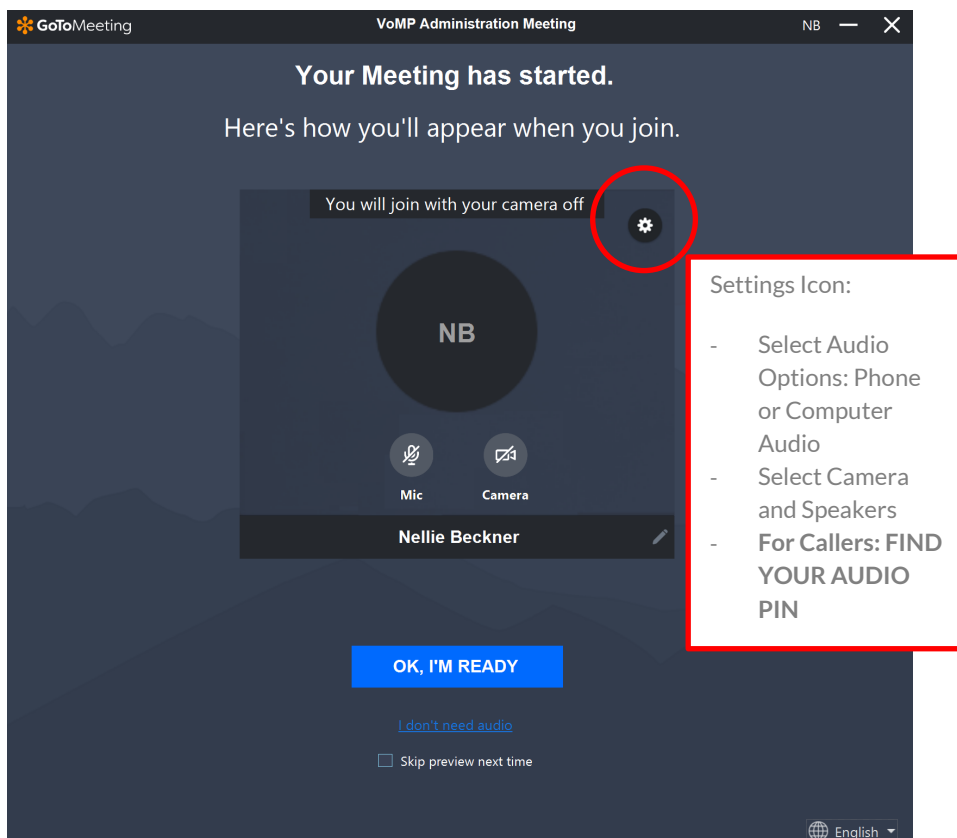
Note: If you have never used GoToMeeting on the device (laptop, desktop), you will need to download the software using the link also provided in the meeting invite (see below). You only need to do this once per device.

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/549974109>

Click the meeting link to open. You may get the following pop-up:



Select "Open GoTo Opener". You should see the following screen:



BEFORE YOU HIT THE BLUE BUTTON: Are you really ready? It is always a good idea to review your settings by **clicking the gear icon.**

Using GoToMeeting on a Smartphone

If you want to participate via your tablet or smartphone, GoToMeeting has an app that makes it easy to use.

Visit the app store to download either the android or iPhone app – search for "GoToMeeting" by LogMeIn, Inc.

Look for this icon:

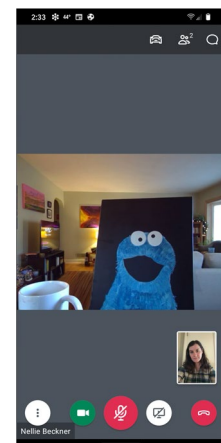


Clicking the meeting link in your calendar or email from your phone should auto-prompt the application to open.

The camera, mute and screen sharing functions are at the bottom of the phone screen, but may automatically hide. Touch your screen and they will re-appear.

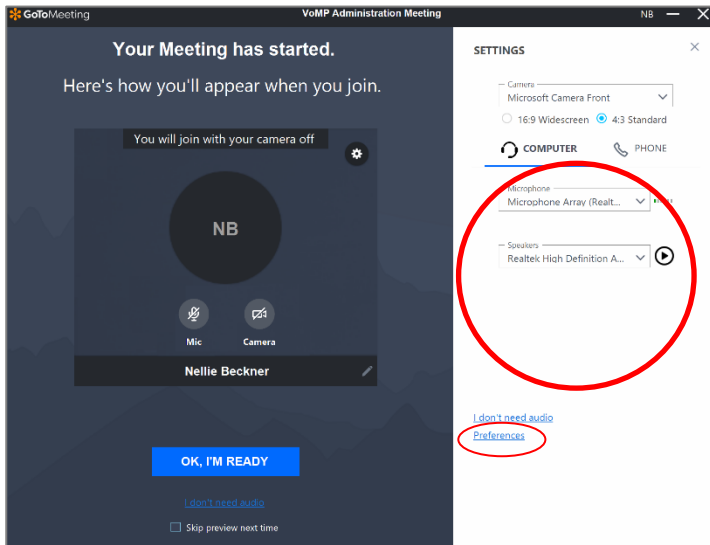
Audio options and other settings are in the "three dot" menu button in the lower left of the screen.

If you were in a meeting with Cookie Monster on your smart phone, this is how the meeting would appear to you:



SELECT YOUR AUDIO CONTROLS - COMPUTER AUDIO or PHONE AUDIO

TO USE COMPUTER AUDIO



Be sure the correct microphone and speakers are selected.

If you want to test your audio sound:

- Select “Preferences” link at the bottom.
- Your microphone and speakers must be unmuted to test them.

COMPUTER AUDIO TIPS:

- Your computer microphone will pick up more ambient noise than a phone. Paper shuffling, background noise, etc. will be heard by others on the meeting.
- Keep yourself muted unless you wish to speak.

Clicking the “Mic” icon to control - turns grey when muted and green when unmuted.

- Your camera should be turned on for most meetings if possible. See also: “Meeting Etiquette”

TO USE PHONE AUDIO

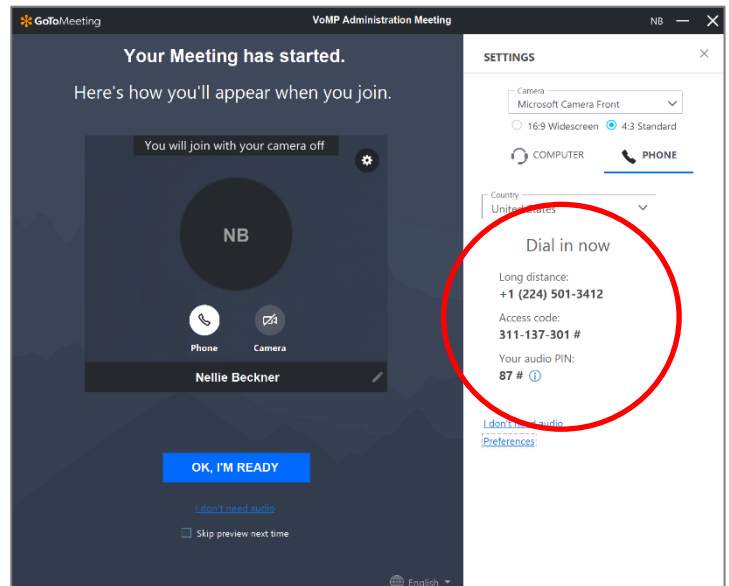
Select the “Phone” tab.

Call the number provided and enter the access code. This is the same number and access code given in the meeting invite.

When prompted, enter your audio PIN.

PHONE AUDIO TIPS:

- Using the Audio PIN allows the software to connect your phone to you as a meeting attendee – simplifying the meeting for everyone in attendance. By not using the Audio PIN, the meeting software treats your call in as a separate attendee, confusing others into thinking there’s another “person” in attendance.
- Keep yourself muted unless you wish to speak. Clicking the “Mic” icon to control - turns grey when muted and green when unmuted.
- Your camera should be turned on for most meetings if possible. See meeting etiquette for more information.



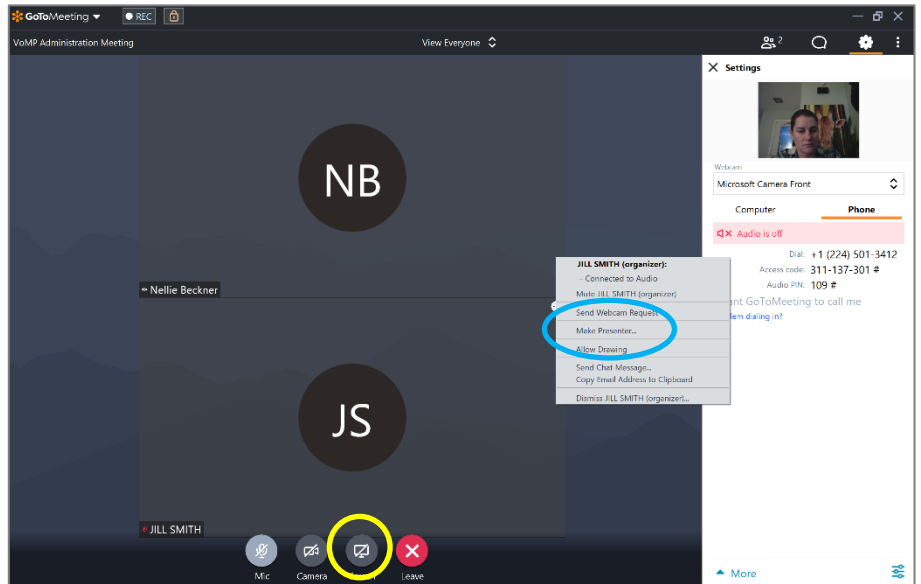
Now you can select **OK, I'M READY**.

BEING THE PRESENTER: SHARING YOUR SCREEN

SELECTING A PRESENTER

By default, the meeting's organizer is the Presenter. This means you have an additional button on the bottom near the microphone and camera icons, titled "Screen" (yellow circle, right).

The organizer can allow any attendee to share their screen (which will also make that icon appear on their device) by either: clicking on the three dot menu to open the shortcut menu, and select "Make Presenter" (blue circle, right) or selecting "Make Presenter" by utilizing the drop down arrow via the People panel.



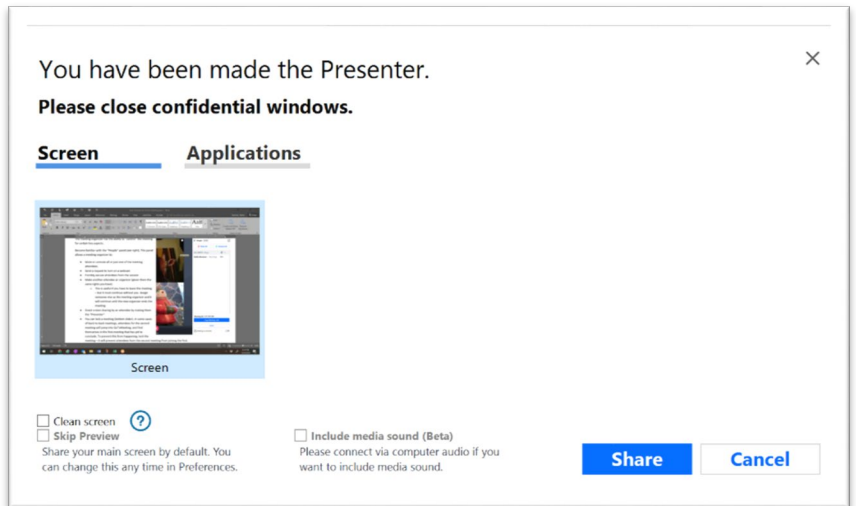
If you are attending a meeting and you would like to share something from your screen to the group, simply ask the meeting Organizer for permission to share your screen.

SHARING YOUR SCREEN

When the meeting organizer makes you a presenter, you may see a pop up appear on your screen (desktop/laptop, see right).

Before you hit share:

- Close any applications you will not need to utilize or are confidential, such as emails. Outlook sometimes includes pop up reminders that will come through on a screen share!
- Have the document or presentation open and ready to share.
- If you select the "Applications" tab, GoToMeeting will show you all windows you have open on your computer, and you can select the one you want to share prior to hitting the "Share" button. *Using this feature will "lock" your presentation to this application, so if you click out of it to a second application, it will not show up to others in the meeting.*



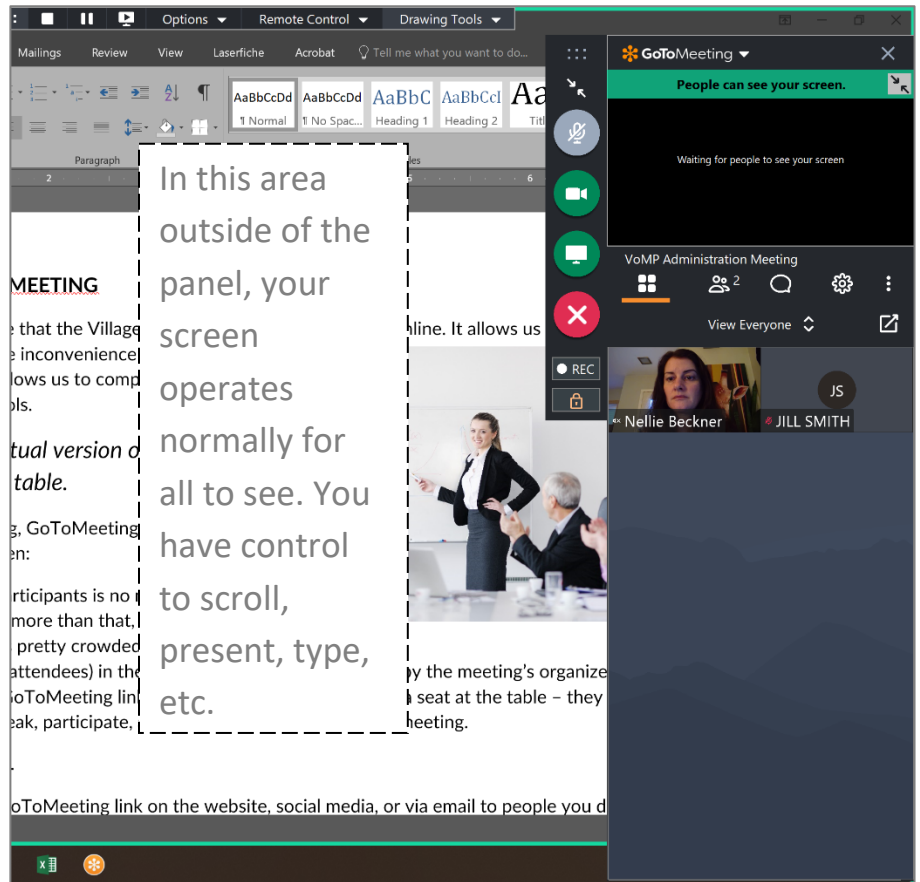
SCREEN PANEL

Once you select the “Share” button, a new panel will appear on your screen, which allows you to see a “mini” view of the meeting, while allowing you to see your screen (see right).

This panel can be moved, minimized or resized by clicking the double arrows in the upper left, or by simply dragging the box.

Give your presentation or share the information as normal.

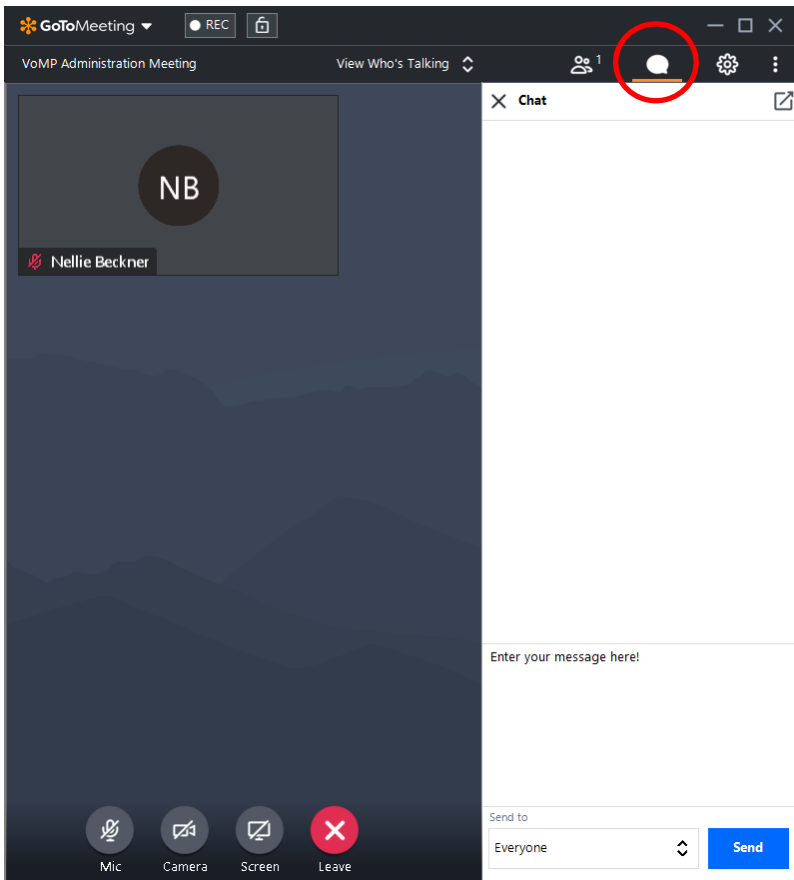
Everyone in the meeting can now see everything on your screen – mouse, scrolling, highlighting, etc. They do not see the side panel mini view of the meeting. Instead, all of the meeting attendees’ windows are condensed, usually to the top of the screen.



Your screen is visible if the green banner is shown in the panel: “People can see your screen”.

To “Unshare” your screen, simply select the screen share icon again, which will change from green to grey. Your screen, as well as other meeting attendees, will change to show just the meeting attendees once again.

USING THE CHAT FEATURE



Any attendee or meeting organizer can send a typed message to any individual or the entire group by using the Chat feature (see red circle, left)

Chat is very similar to text messaging on a smart phone – you can send to a group, or to a specific person.

To use chat:

- Simply enter your message near the bottom of the panel.
- Select who you want to see the message. Everyone literally means all attendees and organizers. You can also select a specific person.
- Previous chat messages (to you and from you) are stored in the panel, just like text messaging on a smart phone.
- If you have an unread chat message, the chat icon at the top of the panel will display a red number. If “2” is displayed, for example, you have 2 unread chat messages.

Chat is useful to send messages to a presenter without interruption, or to send additional clarifying information, or to simply alert the organizer that you have a comment you’d like to share.

Organizers and Presenters should pay extra attention to the Chat notification bubble so proper action can be taken during the meeting, such as answering a question or calling upon a participant.

MEETING ETIQUETTE

Keep in mind that although we may be participating in a meeting from home, our car, or the office, we should do our best to keep it professional and to the point, just as we would if we met in person.

Be Prepared

- Understand the point of the meeting, have supporting materials ready if needed, just as if you were meeting in person.
- Log on a few minutes early if possible, to work out any tech issues with audio, lighting, etc.

Understand the Software

- Use the “chat” feature if you want to ask the group a question but don’t want to interrupt.

- Ask to “share your screen” – aka ask to be made Presenter, if you’d like to share something with the groups such as a document or PowerPoint presentation. If you’re a meeting organizer, be sure you know how to do this.
- Learn how the software works on multiple platforms, such as a smartphone or desktop.

Be Attentive & Participate

- Listen as you would if you were attending in person.
- Ask questions and don’t be afraid to speak up if you need clarification or have something to add.
- We can’t read body language as well in a virtual setting, so try to verbalize your communication for those in attendance. Nodding in agreement, smiling, or raising your hand can help you participate even while muted and shows you’re paying attention.
- If you must attend to something during the meeting (such as take an urgent phone call or clean up a coffee spill), mute your microphone and turn off your video webcam. This will keep distractions to a minimum and lets the attendees know you may be unavailable for a short period of time.

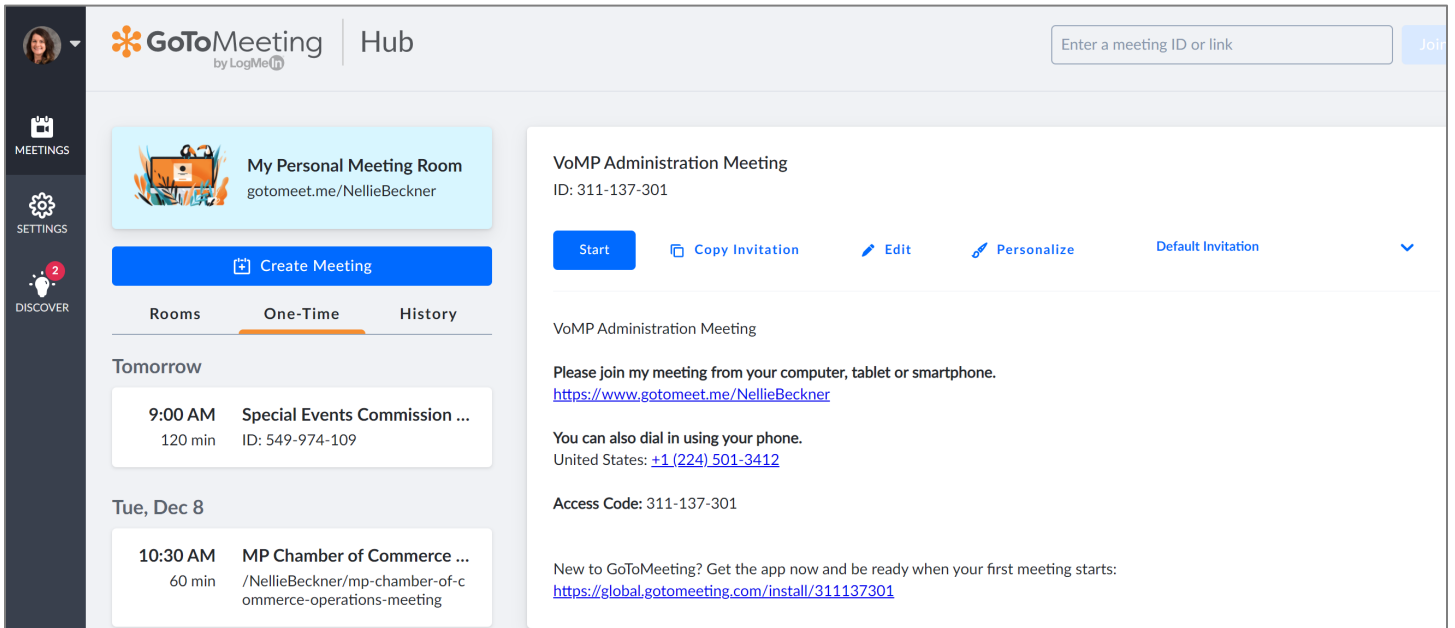
Look Like a Pro

- Mute your microphone when you aren’t speaking. Unmute when you wish to speak. Muting keeps others from inadvertently hearing something you may not wish to share!
- Try not to talk over the person who “has the floor”, and if you’d like to share during a busy conversation, raise your hand so people know you’d like to participate.
- If you want to address just one person in the group, use the Chat feature and select who you want to see the message with the drop down selection tool.
- Remember, if your camera is on, we can see you! Be aware of facial expressions, meeting distractions, etc.
- Use good lighting (avoid being back-lit), be aware of your background/what’s behind you, stay stationary if possible (especially important for phone users), don’t sit too far away from the camera.

FOR MEETING ORGANIZERS

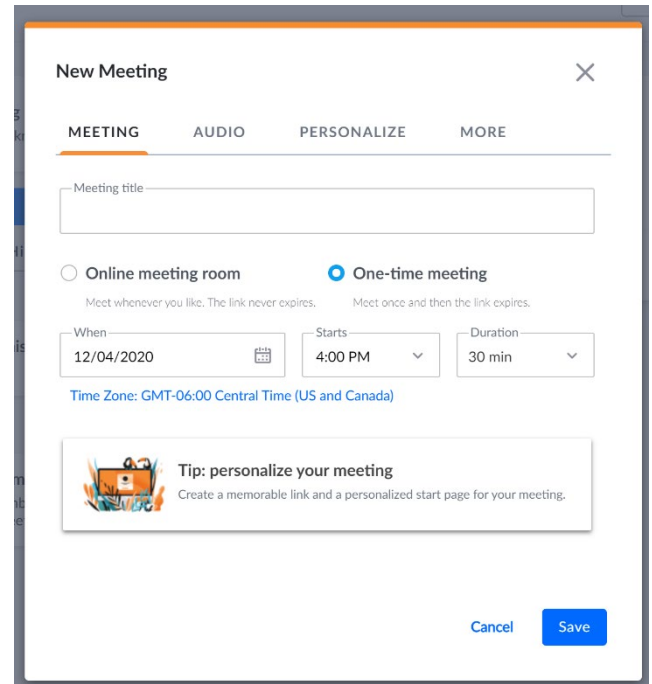
CREATING A MEETING

A GoToMeeting “Organizer” is the person, at least initially, that creates the meeting in the GoToMeeting Hub. The hub looks like this on a desktop/laptop:



Those with a GoToMeeting account login can create a meeting. There are One-Time meetings and Meeting Rooms. Select “Create Meeting” from the left side of the hub, and this popup will appear (*image right*).

- Make the Meeting Title clear and accurate, as that will be copied over into the meeting invite.
- Be sure your time zone is correct. This can be adjusted in your account settings if needed.
- Once the details are created and saved, click “**Copy Invitation**” and **paste into an outlook calendar item** (preferred, as this puts the meeting on the invitee’s calendar), or in an email. You will have to manually complete the outlook items’ details – To, Subject, Date and Time of the meeting.



RUNNING A MEETING AS AN ORGANIZER

BEFORE THE MEETING LAUNCHES

- Send an agenda to meeting participants, as well as any supporting material that they should read/review.
- If a meeting attendee is going to present or share their screen, touch base with them to:
 - Make sure they are prepared to present
 - Make sure they understand how to share their screen, and what that means. (See “Sharing Your Screen”)
- Log on to start the meeting at least 5 minutes before start time, if possible. This allows you to help others if they are having audio or connection problems.

WHILE THE MEETING IS RUNNING

The meeting organizer has the ability to “control” the meeting for certain key aspects.

People Panel

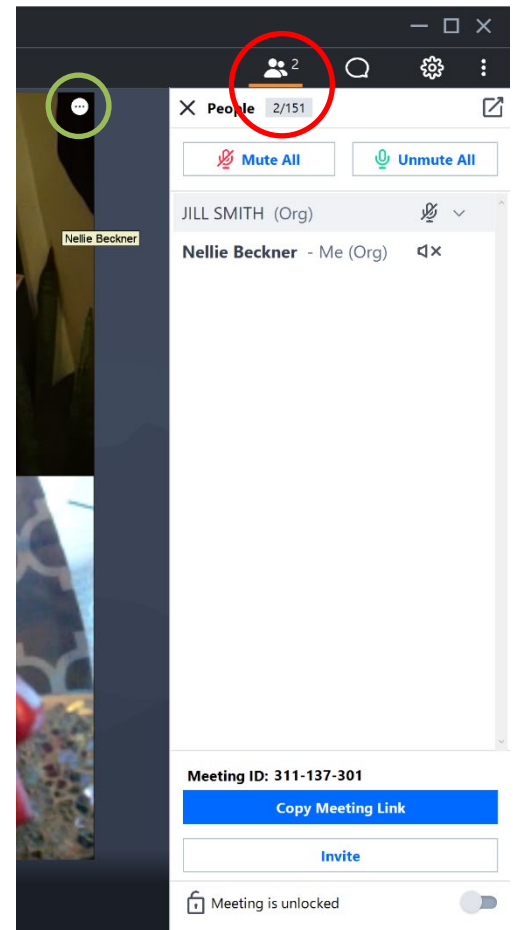
Become familiar with the “People” panel (*see red circle, right*). This panel lists all the meeting attendees, and through the drop-down arrow next to a name, allows a meeting organizer to:

- **Mute or unmute** all or just one of the meeting attendees.
- Send a request to **turn on a webcam**
- **Forcibly excuse attendees** from the session
- **Make another attendee an organizer** (given them the same rights you have).
 - This is useful if you have to leave the meeting – but it must continue without you. Assign someone else as the meeting organizer and it will continue until the new organizer ends the meeting.
- **Grant screen sharing** by an attendee by making them the “Presenter”. (See Screen Sharing)
- You can **lock a meeting** via the bottom slider. In some cases of back-to-back meetings, attendees for the second meeting will jump into GoToMeeting, and find themselves in the first meeting that has yet to conclude. To prevent this from happening, lock the meeting – it will prevent attendees from the second meeting from joining the first.

Chat Panel

As an organizer, it’s always good to keep an eye on the Chat panel, as many participants ask questions or have comments they wish to share directly with you or the group. Don’t forget to announce questions to the group if you feel they add value to the meeting.

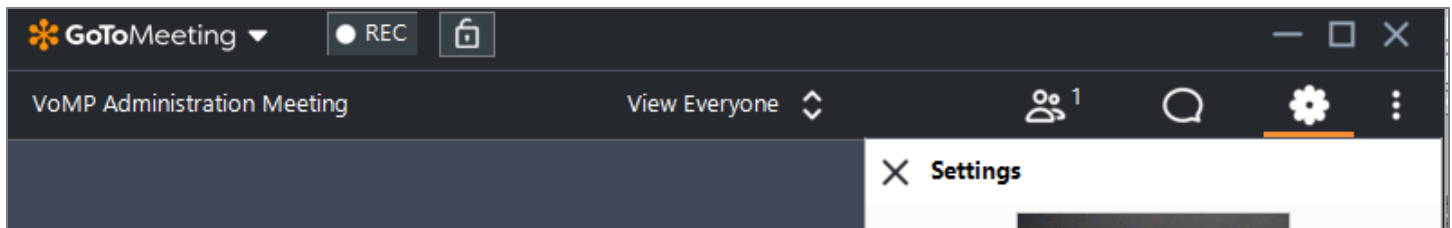
Views



In the upper middle portion of your screen, you'll find the "View" controls. There are four views:

- View Everyone: displays all attendees, regardless if they've got a webcam turned on or off, or if they've only called in to the meeting.
- Who's Talking: displays only the person that is talking at the time. Changes depends on who is talking.
- Active Cameras: displays just those with their webcams turned on.
- Hide Everyone: displays only the meeting title on a blank screen.

As an organizer, it's best to have this setting as "Everyone", especially to start the meeting. It allows you to know at a glance if all of the attendees are on the meeting.



Record the Meeting

This feature is available if you would like to record the discussion for later review. Simply click "Record the Meeting" in the upper left corner of the screen. If you select record, the GoToMeeting software will announce to all meeting attendees that the session is being recorded. Both audio and visual components of the meeting are recorded.

To end recording, simply hover over the "Rec" button and select "End Recording".

At the closure of the meeting, a separate pop up titled "Recording Manager" will ask you to select the recording you wish to convert. MP4 file default is OK to select. Once the meeting is converted, it will play on your computer's standard media player, just like any other video stream.

ORGANIZER TIPS

- Keep an eye on the entire meeting by setting your screen view to "View Everyone"
- If the box highlights around a meeting attendee, their audio controls are picking up sound. This is helpful when you need to determine who needs to be muted (and if everyone insists they are).
- You can also access controls such as muting, making someone a presenter or organizer, etc. by hovering over a meeting attendees' video square and selecting the three dot menu in the upper right corner

QUICK GUIDE TO USING GOTOWEBINAR

GoToWebinar is a virtual meeting software that is slightly different than GoToMeeting. It is ideal for running public meetings as there is an added layer of security controls; the public can also participate more easily using GoToWebinar's built-in tools – which eliminate the need for Village staff to monitor an email, phone calls or text messages during the public meeting.

- There are 3 kinds of participants in a GoToWebinar: Organizers, Panelists, and Attendees.
- GoToWebinar utilizes a registration system to send attendees a link to the event. This web link is unique to each individual registrant.

Kinds of Participants

- Organizers are those who set up the GoToWebinar. They can have the ability to:
 - Send invites to Panelists.
 - View who has registered as a meeting Attendee.
 - While the meeting is being conducted, they can mute microphones, change presenters, and participate in the chat feature.
 - Meeting Organizers can also send questions to all Attendees and conduct Polls.
- Panelists are invited by the meeting Organizer and also have a web link that is unique to each panelist.
 - Panelists can share their webcam and unmute their microphone at any time to participate in the conversation.
 - Panelists can use the chat feature to send and receive messages to meeting Organizers and other Panelists, but *not* the entire group of Attendees.
- Attendees are simply those that wish to view the event. They also have the ability to participate in the event when allowed to do so, via permission granted by the Organizer.

SAMPLE SCENARIO: A VILLAGE BOARD MEETING CONDUCTED VIA GOTOWEBINAR

Organizers:

- Howard Kleinstein, Director of Communications
- Nellie Beckner, Assistant Village Manager
- Karen Agoranos, Village Clerk

Organizers help “run” the online portion of the meeting, while the Board can focus on the items on the Agenda. Think of Howard in the control room or Karen taking minutes and roll call.

Panelists:

- Mayor Juracek
- All Village Trustees
- Mike Cassady, Village Manager
- Any member of Leadership that would be expected to present to the Board
- Any participant invited to present to the Board (such as a Petitioner or a person accepting a proclamation)

Panelists represent anyone who has a seat at the dias, as well as pre-scheduled presenters we’d normally see at the podium.

Attendees:

- Any member of Leadership/Village Staff that is requested to attend the meeting (but is not likely to present to the Board)
- Any member of the public that wants to ask a comment about an item on the agenda, or wishes to speak under “citizens to be heard”.
- Any other member of the public that wishes to watch the meeting.

Attendees are the people that would have a seat in our Board Room’s audience. During the Webinar meeting, they can ask for permission to speak “at the podium” and can be granted this permission by a Meeting Organizer at the appropriate time.

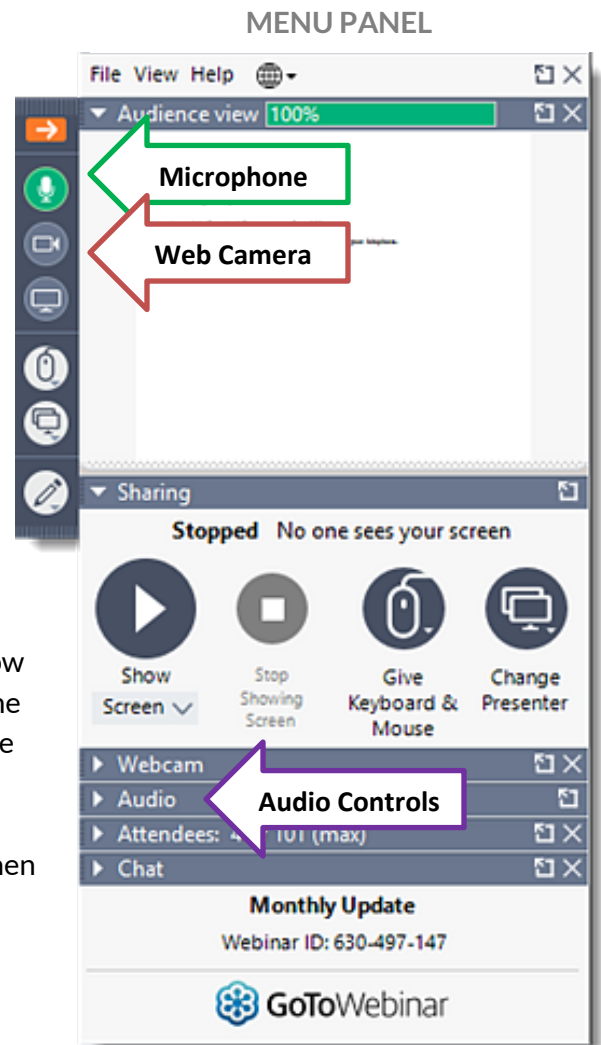
How the GoToWebinar Works

Organizer Responsibilities (Howard, Karen, or Nellie):

- Enters the meeting into GoToWebinar software, which generates the registration link we use to post online and on the Village Board meeting agenda.
- Sends invites to the Mayor, Trustees, and Leadership Team who will be Panelists.
- Monitors the meeting’s registrants up through the start time of the meeting, to let the Board know who, if any, will be in the “audience”.

Panelists' Responsibilities (Village Board, Leadership Team Presenters):

- Be sure to look for the email from Village of Mount Prospect customercare@gotowebinar.com which will contain the link you need to use to join the webinar.
 - This link is unique to you. It is different for every meeting.
 - This link will be sent to you both an initial email titled: "You're a Panelist for the Village Board Meeting", as well as through a reminder email sent about one hour prior to the meeting's start time.
- The link in the email will take you to the GoToWebinar Opener, which looks very similar to the GoToMeeting opening screen.
- Once you're on as a Panelist, your microphone and web camera may be off, but you are encouraged to turn your camera on so the remaining panelists know you've joined (Just like in GoToWebinar). **NOTE:** the icons to turn on/off mics and cameras are now in the menu panel. *See the image (right) for an example.*
- If you need to call in to the GoToWebinar, select "Audio" from the menu panel list (*see image, right*) then "Phone" for information on how to dial in and enter your audio PIN.
- If you would like to share your screen (to make a presentation), you can request this and a Meeting Organizer can make you a presenter. Usually, only Village Staff will be Presenters.



Attendee Responsibilities (any other person "attending" the meeting):

- Those that want to attend the Village Board Meeting click on a link, which takes them to a simple registration page asking for their name and email address. Once submitted, GoToWebinar will automatically send a unique URL to that attendee, which they use to enter the meeting once it's started.
- If the meeting has already started, the registration link will lead them directly into the meeting once they enter their name and email.
- Attendees are muted and cannot unmute themselves (meaning they can't disrupt the meeting). We will encourage the public to ask their questions via text through the Questions panel to avoid inappropriate commentary during the meeting.

During the Meeting:

- Organizers (Howard, Nellie, Karen) will monitor the question panel and attendees to see who has a question and/or wants to address the board. They will let the Mayor/Trustees know of any incoming questions.
- Everyone, please remember to turn on/off microphones as necessary to prevent feedback.
- Organizers Howard, Nellie or Karen will delegate panelists or other organizers to be Presenters, so they can share their presentations to the Board and public.

Overall, the meeting would run in a very similar way to our GoToMeeting sessions – but with the added benefit of having members of the public participate more easily.

CLOSED SESSION:

GoToWebinar allows Organizers and Panelists to meet privately, in a confidential manner before the public meeting is opened. This is done using the same meeting link – **no more separate meeting links for closed session and regular meeting!**

Simply use the same link and wait for the meeting organizer to set up the recording of the closed session. Once the closed session is complete, a meeting organizer will start the meeting for the public, and the panelists will then be visible to everyone on the meeting.

There's nothing for the panelists (Board Members) to do to change over from closed session to regular meeting.

GoToWebinar has information on their site as well, for Panelists, see:

<https://support.goto.com/webinar/help/panelists-g2w010018>