TOWN OF GUILFORD, VERMONT
Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

SECTION 1: TITLE AND AUTHORITY

This policy shall be known as the Town of Guilford Artificial Intelligence Use Policy (hereafter "Policy"). It has been adopted by the Town of Guilford Selectboard (the "Selectboard") pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 1121, 1122, and 872.

The Selectboard reserves the right to amend any of the provisions of this Policy for any reason and at any time, with or without notice.

This Policy is administered by the Town Administrator or their authorized representative or designee.

SECTION 2: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish standards for the responsible, transparent, and accountable use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by Town officials in the creation and distribution of official Town communications.

AI tools offer meaningful opportunities to improve the efficiency and quality of municipal communications. At the same time, their use raises important considerations regarding accuracy, transparency, confidentiality, and public trust that require clear guidance.

This Policy applies to all official Town communications, including but not limited to social media posts, email correspondence, public notices, letters, meeting minutes, agendas, and other official documents published or transmitted on behalf of the Town. It applies to all Town officials, as defined in Section 3, who use AI tools in the course of their official duties or in the creation of any Town communication.

This Policy complements and should be read in conjunction with the Town of Guilford Social Media Policy and any other applicable Town policies governing official communications.

SECTION 3: DEFINITIONS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tool means any computer-based software, application, or service that uses machine learning, natural language processing, or related technology to generate, draft, edit, rewrite, translate, summarize, or format text or other content. This includes, without limitation, generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and substantially similar tools.

AI-Generated Content means any text, image, or production—including the substance of a communication—that was substantially produced by an AI tool, even if reviewed, edited, or approved by a Town official prior to use.

AI-Assisted Content means content in which an AI tool played a material role in drafting, reformatting, substantially editing, or structuring the communication, even if the Town official contributed substantially to the underlying substance.

Town Official means an employee of the Town, an elected or appointed public officer, or a Town volunteer.

Official Town Communication means any post, letter, email, notice, document, presentation, or other communication issued, published, or transmitted by a Town official acting in their official capacity on behalf of the Town of Guilford.

The Town will interpret these definitions consistently with Vermont's AI Division and Council guidance as it evolves.

SECTION 4: PERMITTED USES

AI tools may be used by Town officials in connection with official Town communications in the following circumstances, subject to all requirements of this Policy:

- Drafting initial versions of social media posts, correspondence, public notices, website updates, or informational materials for review and editing by a Town official;
- Improving grammar, clarity, tone, or formatting of content that was primarily written by a Town official;
- Summarizing meeting notes, agendas, or research materials for internal review and use;
- Translating content to improve accessibility for non-English-speaking residents;
- Assisting with background research for Town communications, subject to independent verification by the Town official; and
- Supporting data analysis, reporting, or visualization for planning, budgeting, or infrastructure, where a staff member validates outputs before acting on them.

AI use must comply with Vermont statutes, public records and open meeting laws, records retention requirements, and federal law.

SECTION 5: PROHIBITED USES

AI tools shall not be used in the following circumstances:

- To generate content on legal matters, litigation, or quasi-judicial proceedings without prior specific approval from the Selectboard or Town Administrator and review by legal counsel;

- To produce content that constitutes or could be construed as an official board position, vote, ruling, or decision of the Selectboard or any other Town public body;

- To impersonate, simulate, or generate communications purporting to originate from named Town officials, residents, or other identifiable individuals;

- To produce synthetic media, deepfakes, or AI-manipulated images, audio, or video involving identifiable individuals;

- To enter Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, financial account information, health information, or other confidential or legally protected data into public or consumer AI tools; and

- In any manner that would violate any provision of this or any other Town policy, including but not limited to the Town of Guilford Social Media Policy, or Vermont or applicable federal law.

SECTION 6: DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

To promote transparency and maintain public trust, the Town requires disclosure whenever an AI tool has played a material role in the creation of an official Town communication.

Disclosure is required when an AI tool materially shapes a communication; it is not required for routine or minor assistance.

This requirement applies to all official communications issued by Town officials, including social media posts, emails sent from Town accounts, public notices, letters, and formal meeting documents.

When Disclosure Is Required

Disclosure is required when an AI tool materially shaped the final content of the communication.

This includes situations where an AI tool:

- generated most of the content from a prompt;
- expanded, organized, or structured content in a way that significantly influenced the final communication; or
- substantially rewrote or reformatted content beyond minor editing.

When Disclosure Is Not Required

Disclosure is not required when an AI tool was used only for minor or mechanical assistance, including:

- spelling or grammar correction;
- minor wording or tone adjustments; or
- formatting that does not change the substance or structure of the communication.

For purposes of this Policy, the determining factor is whether the substance and structure of the communication remain primarily the work of the Town official.

Standard Disclosure Language

Social media posts and website content: *"This post was [drafted / formatted] with the assistance of artificial intelligence and reviewed by [Name], [Title]."*

Emails and letters: *"This [email / letter] was [drafted / formatted] with the assistance of artificial intelligence and reviewed by [Name], [Title], on [Date]."*

Meeting documents, public notices, and other formal documents: *"This document was [prepared / formatted] with the assistance of artificial intelligence. It has been reviewed and approved by [Name], [Title], on [Date]."*

The Town Administrator may issue supplemental guidance establishing alternative or additional disclosure language as AI tools and best practices evolve.

SECTION 7: HUMAN REVIEW AND ACCURACY

Town AI users shall seek to understand responsible AI use, including privacy, bias, and records obligations, using materials available from the Vermont AI Division, Council on Artificial Intelligence, and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) as they become available.

Town officials remain fully responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and appropriateness of all content they post, send, or publish, regardless of whether that content was generated or assisted by an AI tool. Prior to publishing or transmitting any AI-generated or AI-assisted content in an official capacity, the responsible Town official must:

- Review the content in full for factual accuracy, including verifying all dates, figures, legal citations, and references to Town policy or law;
- Ensure the content is consistent with the Town's current policies, positions, and official information;
- Correct any errors, inaccuracies, or fabricated information introduced by the AI tool; and
- Confirm the content complies with all applicable provisions of this Policy.

Staff must promptly report suspected misuse of AI, security incidents, or significant errors in AI-influenced decisions to their supervisor and the Town Administrator.

AI tools are known to generate inaccurate, incomplete, or entirely fabricated information. Town officials must not rely on AI output without independent verification, and the use of AI does not relieve any Town official of the obligations imposed by this Policy or any other applicable Town policy or law.

SECTION 8: CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PRIVACY

Town officials must not enter confidential, private, sensitive, or legally exempt information into any AI tool or platform. This prohibition includes:

- Personally identifiable information about residents, employees, or officials;
- Information exempt from disclosure under Vermont's Public Records Law (1 V.S.A. § 317(c));
- Personnel records, disciplinary matters, or information related to ongoing investigations;
- Legal strategy, attorney-client privileged communications, or information related to actual or potential litigation; and
- Financial account information, access credentials, passwords, or cybersecurity-sensitive information.

Town officials should be aware that content entered into AI tools may be stored or processed by third-party service providers. Town officials using AI tools for Town business should use only tools that provide reasonable protections for government data consistent with applicable state and federal law.

SECTION 9: PUBLIC RECORDS AND INBOUND AI COMMUNICATIONS

Outbound Communications

All AI-generated or AI-assisted communications created, sent, or received in the course of Town business are public records subject to Vermont's Access to Public Records Law (1 V.S.A. §§ 315–320) and applicable retention schedules to the same extent as any other Town communication. The fact that content was produced with the assistance of an AI tool does not alter its character as a public record, exempt it from disclosure, or modify its retention obligations.

Inbound AI-Generated Communications

The Town may receive communications from members of the public, other government entities, or third parties that were generated or substantially assisted by AI tools. Town officials shall evaluate all inbound communications on the merits of their content, regardless of whether AI was used in their creation. Officials are advised to:

- Apply the same verification standards to factual claims in inbound communications as to any other correspondence;
- Not assume that AI-generated communications represent the actual views or intentions of the nominal sender without reasonable confirmation; and
- Exercise appropriate judgment when responding to inbound communications that appear to contain AI-generated errors, fabrications, or inconsistencies.

Nothing in this section creates any new obligation to investigate the authorship of inbound communications, or to treat AI-assisted correspondence differently from any other public communication for purposes of responding, acting, or retaining records.

SECTION 10: ACCOUNTABILITY, OVERSIGHT, AND TOOL APPROVAL

The use of AI tools does not diminish the personal accountability of any Town official for the content they publish or transmit. The Town official who reviews and approves AI-generated or AI-assisted content assumes full responsibility for that content under this Policy and all applicable laws.

The Town Administrator may, from time to time, issue supplemental guidance, training requirements, or lists of approved tools governing the responsible use of AI tools in Town communications. Town officials shall comply with all such guidance. Specifically:

The Selectboard retains authority to require more formal review or approval for AI tools that would be used in high-stakes or sensitive decision-making contexts.

SECTION 11: VIOLATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from office, in accordance with applicable Town personnel policies, Vermont law, and any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

The Town Administrator shall have authority to investigate suspected violations of this Policy and to take or recommend appropriate corrective action. Selectboard members found to be in violation of this Policy shall be subject to such remedies as are available under Vermont law and Selectboard rules of procedure.

Nothing in this Policy shall be construed to create any private right of action against the Town, its officials, or its employees arising from the use or misuse of AI tools. Violations of this Policy do not, in themselves, create liability under state or federal law beyond what would otherwise apply.

The Town Administrator may establish procedures for reporting suspected violations of this Policy. Town officials who in good faith report suspected violations shall not be subject to retaliation for doing so.

ADOPTED this 11 day of May, 2026.

SIGNATURES OF THE TOWN OF GUILFORD, VERMONT SELECTBOARD

Selectboard Chair

Sheila Moser

Selectboard Vice-Chair

Tara Cheney

Selectboard Member

Michael H Szotek

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

ADDENDUM A: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OFFICIAL USE BY AUTHORIZED TOWN OFFICIALS

I, _____, acknowledge that:

- I have received a copy of the Town of Guilford's Artificial Intelligence Use Policy on _____ and it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with its contents;
- I understand that it is my responsibility to ask questions if there is anything in this Policy that I do not understand;
- I understand that this Policy replaces any and all prior versions and that the Town of Guilford reserves the right to add, amend, or discontinue any of its provisions for any reason, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice;
- I acknowledge that I understand this Policy and I agree that I will comply with all its provisions;
- I understand that violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action or other consequences as described in Section 11;
- I understand that I am fully responsible for any content I create, approve, or transmit using artificial intelligence tools, and that such use does not reduce my obligations under this Policy or Vermont law.

Town Official Signature

_____

Date

_____

Print Name

_____

Title / Role

_____