

THE BEDFORD CITIZEN

Publication of Sensitive Information and/or Rapidly Developing News Stories

Policy approved September 30, 2019

The Bedford Citizen is engaged in the publication of news stories impacting the residents of our town. As an established news resource for the town, we are responsible to report accurately on all stories we publish. From time to time, these news stories may include reporting on events that we deem to be unusually sensitive because of, for example, and not limited to:

- the urgency of the events (e.g., crimes, emergencies)
- people involved in the story are minors **or might be minors**
- a story is developing rapidly and facts are incomplete
- a story is on-going for a period of time (e.g, a town-wide emergency taking place over two or more days)

The Bedford Citizen will report as clearly and objectively as possible on the facts of a story as they are discovered or made known to us through reliable sources. These resources include (but are not limited to) local and state public safety departments, the office of the Bedford Town Manager, officials speaking for relevant town boards and committees, and/or eye-witnesses.

Corroboration of details and events prior to publication will be given the highest priority in all instances.

If a story is “breaking” or “developing” *The Bedford Citizen* will report only what it can confirm. We will not speculate on what may have happened or what will happen. If appropriate, we will clearly identify a story as “in development” when it is first reported and we will update that story as new facts become available.

Careful consideration will be given to news stories involving young people who are minors **or might be minors**. Minors will not be named without the express permission of a responsible family member. Similarly, the type of incident (for example, where violence or crime is involved) will be considered along with its relevance to the town as a whole. *The Bedford Citizen* is completely responsible for decisions surrounding what it publishes or chooses not to publish.

The managing editor will first notify the president of The Bedford Citizen board in his/her role as publisher when sensitive news stories as described arise. (If the president is not available, the Managing Editor will consult with available members of the Executive Committee.) The president will determine next steps in consultation with the Executive Committee by calling for a group conference call or meeting as appropriate with whichever Executive Committee members are available at the time. The purpose of the call is to explore the issue and reach consensus on how to responsibly proceed. Depending on the situation, the group call or meeting will be repeated frequently as new information is received.

In an extreme situation, the Executive Committee may call for a “standing meeting” to monitor events, report on what is happening, and assist with communicating relevant information or instructions from public safety offices or other reliable resources.