

Municipal Records Retention Policy

SECTION I: PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this Policy is to ensure compliance with laws and regulations regarding municipal records retention and disposal, including, but not limited to, record types listed in State of New Hampshire RSA 33-A. The secondary purpose is to identify and preserve records of local historical interest.

SECTION II: AUTHORITY

This policy is adopted in accordance with State of New Hampshire RSA 33-A.

SECTION III: DEFINITIONS

A *record* refers to documentary material in any format (e.g. paper, electronic, audio, video, image).

PDF/A refers to an ISO-standard Portable Document Format developed for the long-term preservation of electronic documents.

SECTION IV: APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to municipal records generated in the course of the Town of New London's administration and operation.

SECTION V: MUNICIPAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

1. The Municipal Records Committee oversees the retention and disposition of municipal records.
2. The Committee must include a member of the Board of Selectmen or their designee, the Town Clerk / Tax Collector, and the Town Treasurer. In addition, the Board of Selectmen may appoint representatives of other town departments, boards, and committees.
3. A *Municipal Records Retention Schedule*, drafted and maintained by the Committee, lists the retention period and disposal instructions for specified types of municipal records and is appended to this policy. The committee shall monitor and modify the *Schedule* to ensure continued compliance with local, state, and federal laws; it may also extend minimum retention periods for records of historical interest and it may add new record types to the *Schedule* as needed.

4. The Committee shall monitor compliance with the minimum storage, retention, access, and disposal procedures specified by the *Municipal Records Retention Policy*, and after considering statutory requirements, operational capabilities, and privacy concerns, the Committee may recommend policy changes for adoption by the Board of Selectmen.
5. The Committee shall review the *Municipal Records Retention Policy* and appended *Municipal Records Retention Schedule* annually.

SECTION VI: STORAGE, RETENTION, AND DISPOSAL OF MUNICIPAL RECORDS

1. **Storage Procedures** — Each department shall store retained records in a suitable enclosure, labeled with department name, carton number (if applicable), retention period, scheduled disposition date, authority granting or allowing the disposition, and a general description of the contents. All non-current or inactive materials scheduled for permanent retention must be enclosed in archival (pH-neutral, lignin-free) folders, envelopes, and record cartons; binders and non-archival folders must be discarded prior to long-term storage.
2. **Retention of Records** — The *Municipal Records Retention Schedule* lists the minimum retention period for specified record types and formats (paper and electronic); any unlisted record type must be added to the *Schedule* before such records can be discarded or destroyed.
3. **Electronic Records** — Electronic records may be maintained if they meet local and state requirements for preservation and access; all such records will be backed up in at least one off-site location. Electronic records with scheduled retention of more than 10 years must be transferred to paper, microfilm, or converted to PDF/A format, per New Hampshire statute RSA 33-A:5-a.
4. **Paper Records** — Paper records with scheduled retention of *10 years or less* may be scanned and stored in PDF/A format (subject to local and state preservation and access requirements). Once scanned and verified, original paper records may be destroyed, per New Hampshire statute RSA 33-A:5-a. Paper records with scheduled retention *exceeding 10 years* may be scanned to PDF/A, but the original records must also be retained unless exempted by the *Municipal Records Retention Schedule*.
5. **Destruction of Records** — *Records* eligible for disposal according to the *Municipal Records Retention Schedule* must still be reviewed for historical value.
6. **Unauthorized Activities** — Municipal records belong to the public in perpetuity and shall not be destroyed, maliciously damaged, or retained by any unauthorized person.

SECTION VII: SUSPENSION OF RECORD DISPOSAL

The scheduled destruction of records will be suspended immediately and all records retained in the event of a legal inquiry or investigation related to the Town of New London. This suspension will be lifted at the direction of the Board of Selectmen after consultation with the Town's legal counsel.

SECTION VIII: REQUESTS FOR RECORDS

In accordance with RSA 91-A:4, public records are available for inspection at the Town Offices during regular business hours. In response to an inquiry, selected records may be duplicated (on paper or electronically); such copies are not thereafter subject to the *Municipal Records Retention Schedule*.

SECTION IX: ADOPTION

The Town of New London, New Hampshire, has adopted this *Municipal Records Retention Policy* effective November 1, 2021.

Approved by the Board of Selectmen:

John A. Cannon

Janet R. Kidder

Nancy L. Rollins
