



Communications Policy Manual

Adopted 2018

Communications Guidelines

- Communications should be direct, timely and specific to afford the best accuracy and transparency.
- For organizational efficiency and clarity, board members should address their questions/concerns to the general manager, not staff.

Community Relations Goals/Priority Objectives

The general manager encourages the support of effective partnerships among staff, customers, municipalities, community, business and industry. Specifically, the authority and its staff will strive to do the following:

The authority will publish an annual report to the board and community regarding the status and accomplishments of the authority.

Community Involvement

The authority has an obligation to engage its customers and other stakeholders to build a better community. Examples include economic development advancement in the community due to the promotion of the availability of reliable, robust water and sewer infrastructure; customers gaining a deeper understanding of BJWSA's business and the value of water; and industry groups, public officials, and government agencies gaining a higher level of trust in the authority.

Public Information and Communication

The communications manager will implement, coordinate and supervise the public information program of the authority.

It will be the policy of the authority to keep customers and the public regularly and thoroughly informed of the policies, operation, objectives, achievements, needs and conditions through all channels of communications.

Provide the means for furnishing full and accurate information, favorable and unfavorable, together with interpretation and explanation of the authority's plan and programs

Press Releases, Conferences and Interviews

The authority believes it important that accurate information about its operations be disseminated in the community through the news media. Release of official news from the authority should be coordinated as follows:

The general manager and/or the communications manager will be the official spokespersons for the authority.

The communications manager is responsible for news releases. All official statements of the authority that are made to the news media by other staff members must first be cleared by the general manager.

When circumstances warrant, the general manager authorizes the human resources manager to request permission from an employee or former employee to discuss or release information from an employee's record with the news media in response to media inquiries about the employee. Should the employee or the human resources director decline such permission, the communications manager should respond to any inquiries from the news media by sharing the denial for release of information and explaining the authority's inability to release information or respond to allegations accordingly.

When employees speak out on public issues or in a public forum, they do so as an individual, and they should not give the appearance of speaking or acting on BJWSA's behalf. This is particularly important with regard to social media. Employees must always be aware that such services are being monitored by customers and colleagues.

Media Relations

The authority will make every effort practical to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the programs, problems, planning and activities of the authority.

The authority will give all representatives of the media equal access to information about the authority and will make general releases of interest to the entire authority available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except when media representatives request information regarding particular programs, plans, activities or problems.

Public Concerns and Complaints

The general manager recognizes that situations may arise in the operation of the authority which are of concern to customers or the public. The general manager also believes such concerns should generally be addressed through communications with appropriate authority staff. Accordingly, a customer or member of the public with a concern or complaint about the authority is requested to use the following guidelines to resolve the concern.

A matter concerning an employee should first be brought to the attention of the employee, where appropriate.

If the concern is not satisfactorily settled at the employee level, the concern should be directed to the employee's immediate supervisor at the authority level. All such concerns should be made in writing.

Unsettled matters or concerns about the authority may be directed in writing to the general manager or his/her designee. The correspondence should set forth the facts upon which the concern or complaint is based, the authority employees who have heard and responded to the concern and the relief requested. The general manager will render a written decision within a reasonable period of time.

Solicitation, Advertisement and Promotional Activities

I. Introduction. In order to maintain an environment conducive to our mission and to minimize intrusions upon time, employees of Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA) shall not be involved in the promotion or advertisement of any commercial or nonprofit agency, organization or activity during the work day, except as approved by the general manager or his/her designee in accordance with the criteria and provisions below.

II. Purposes. BJWSA recognizes concerns for the welfare of employees and customers from their entry on authority property until they leave. BJWSA staff are not to be distracted from the exercise of their job duties by the presence of unauthorized individuals who are engaged in promotions or advertising in contravention of this regulation.

III. Definitions. For purposes of this regulation, the following terms shall have the following expressed meanings:

A. Advertisement Activities - The publication or communication of information about a commercial or nonprofit organization's products, services, programs or activities to other employees and/or customers for the purpose of inducing employees and/or customers to purchase its products, use its services or attend its programs or activities.

B. Promotional Activities - Any activity in the authority designed or intended to further the growth, business, good name, and/or reputation of a commercial or nonprofit organization. The term promotional activity includes but is not necessarily limited to the distribution of gifts to employees, customers, and/or customers bearing the organization's name, logo or symbol, the distribution of discount coupons or the advertisement of a discount program for products or services to employees or customers; or the sponsorship of programs or activities in the name of another organization.

C. Commercial Activity – Any advertisement or promotional activity designed or intended to market, sell, or inform customers or employees about an advertiser's products, services and/or programs as an inducement for the customer or employee to purchase or use the product or service.

D. Political Activity – Oral, written or symbolic speech on a legitimate matter or public concern as distinguished from commercial activity to advertise or promote a product or service.

E. Religious Activity – Oral, written, or graphic speech designed or intended to evangelize or persuade the listener to adhere to a religious belief or to attend a religious worship program or activity as distinguished from commercial activity to advertise or promote a primarily secular service or activity offered by a religious institution or organization, such as youth sports, childcare, tutorial programs, or youth service organizations.

IV. Prohibited Advertisement and Promotional Activities.

A. BJWSA possesses a substantial and/or compelling interest in prohibiting the following types or categories of advertising, promotional, and/or commercial activities on BJWSA property and within BJWSA. BJWSA will not permit advertisements, promotions and commercial activities to be constructed or displayed on BJWSA property or within BJWSA if they describe, suggest, promote or are commonly identified with any product, service, activity or advocacy of a political or partisan issue or statement, which is incompatible with BJWSA philosophy or the community at large, including but not limited to the following products, services or activities:

1. Lewd, vulgar, indecent, profane and/or obscene products and/or services;
2. Inaccurate, misleading or false commercial products and/or services;
3. Products which are unlawful and/or the purchase and/or use of such is contrary to the workplace, including but not limited to:
 - a. Alcohol, beer, wine and/or liquor products;
 - b. Tobacco products;
 - c. Illegal drugs/narcotics and/or drug paraphernalia;
 - d. Dating and escort services;
 - e. Gang activities;
 - f. Gambling or gambling aids;
 - g. Birth control products or related information; and
 - h. Products with explicit sexual content or sexual overtones.

B. BJWSA shall not permit advertisements to be constructed or displayed if the name of the advertiser, promoter, solicitor and/or contributor and/or any other information as used in the advertisement, promotion, or solicitation is or may reasonably be construed to be:

1. Libelous;
2. Vulgar;
3. Obscene;
4. Racially offensive;
5. Factually inaccurate;

6. Inappropriate for the work environment;
7. Inappropriate for customers served by the authority;
8. Incompatible with BJWSA philosophy or the community at large; or
9. Is in violation of any state or federal policies, regulations, laws or statutes.

C. BJWSA prohibits the use of its electronic mail system, an authority public address system, BJWSA website and/or individual authority websites, except as set forth below, for the purpose of advertising, soliciting, and/or promoting any product, service or activity.

D. The general manager or his/her designee reserve the right to reject any advertisement, promotion or solicitation. Proposed advertisements, promotions and/or solicitations in variance of this provision shall be approved in advance by the general manager or his/her designee before construction or display. The failure to follow this provision shall not be deemed to waive the rights of BJWSA to enforce this regulation.

E. Religious organizations may advertise and promote their secular programs and activities, such as child care, youth sports and youth clubs in the same manner as other similar programs and activities. However, religious organizations may not use any of the limited public fora and nonpublic fora set forth in this regulation to advertise or promote religious activities.

V. Solicitation on Authority Property.

A. No person, firm, corporation or business shall enter upon BJWSA property for the purpose of selling, trading or bartering merchandise of any kind to a student, employee, authority club or student organization, nor shall any of the above enter upon authority property for the purpose of soliciting money from an employee or customer for any purpose. The following exceptions may be permitted when approved by the general manager unless additional approval is required in the provisions below:

1. Gifts to and solicitations by staff as permitted by BJWSA;
2. Fundraisers as permitted in BJWSA;
3. Competitive food sales and vending machines as allowed by BJWSA;
4. Vendors as permitted in BJWSA.

B. Charitable solicitations of employees. In accordance with BJWSA, gifts to and solicitation by staff, the general manager, in his/her sole discretion, may authorize charitable solicitations of employees as follows:

1. Campaigns. A non-profit, educational, cultural, recreational, health or social service organization to conduct a authority-wide solicitation of authority employees to raise funds to provide programs or services to benefit the education, health or welfare of customers of BJWSA.

2. Local or Community-Based Campaigns.

a. The general manager may authorize, in his/her sole discretion, a nonprofit educational, cultural, recreational, health or social service organization to conduct a solicitation from employees at several locations serving a particular community or geographic area of the county to raise funds for a program of service benefitting the education, health or welfare of BJWSA and its customers in the area.

VI. Limited Public Fora for Permitted Advertising and Promotional Activities; Least Intrusive and Burdensome and Most Appropriate Forum. Advertising and promotional activities may be limited by BJWSA to any one or more of the following limited public fora within BJWSA:

A. All locations.

1. Unsolicited materials and/or products provided for distribution to customers.

a. For-Profit Companies, Private Entities, Non-Profit Entities, and Other Organizations.

i. May not be distributed directly to BJWSA customers.

ii. If approved by BJWSA communications manager, or his/her designee, may be distributed to authority locations and placed on display in authority offices or lobbies at the discretion of the general manager.

b. Public Government Agencies. May be distributed directly to customers if approved by BJWSA Communications manager, or his/her designee.

2. Solicitations by Customers.

a. In activities sponsored by the authority and in which customers are to sell items or solicit advertisements, contributions, pledges or orders, the authority may, at the discretion of the general manager, unless additional approval is required in the provisions below, allow the following advertisements, provided all advertising requirements, regulations, restrictions and prohibitions are followed:

i. Advertisement in authority newsletters or other publications;

ii. Advertisement in programs for authority events;

b. These advertisements shall be limited to an advertiser's:

- i. Name, brand name, and/or trade name;
- ii. Logo;
- iii. Location or place of business and contact information;
- iv. Slogan(s) which identifies the advertiser but does not promote it; and
- v. Products, programs and/or services in a value neutral description.

3. Flyer Distribution. This limited public forum or means of advertising and/or promotion an outside organization's product, program, service and/or activity shall be limited to those advertisements and/or promotions for which there is a compelling need to communicate directly to customers. BJWSA works with community organizations to publicize not-for-profit programs, services and special events, which might be of interest to employees. In an effort to assist community organizations while minimizing the loss of instructional time associated with distributing materials at authority, BJWSA developed the following procedures for flyer distribution:

a. Authority shall make approved flyers available in display areas within individual locations as set forth herein.

b. BJWSA may approve flyers from for-profit organizations, even if those organizations are offering discounted or "free" services or products to customers and their families. BJWSA may approve flyers promoting fundraising efforts of non-profit groups.

c. Only groups meeting the criteria outlined in this regulation should complete flyer request forms and send them to the communications department at least ten (10) business days in advance of an event or activity. Community groups shall submit the following:

- i. The organization's full name and address;
- ii. The name, title, e-mail address and telephone number for the person submitting the request on behalf of the organization; and
- iii. Proof that the organization is a non-profit by providing an approved 501(c)(3) number.

d. A non-profit group meeting the above requirements shall also comply with the following:

i. A completed flyer approval form, along with a copy of the flyer for which approval is being sought, shall be submitted for approval in PDF format at least ten (10)

business days in advance of an event or activity and sent to the communications department.

ii. Programs or events must be held within Beaufort or Jasper counties.

v. The flyer must include information about the organization's non-profit status.

vi. The flyer must contain authority names only as location information for events held at authority.

vii. The flyer must clearly display the sponsoring organization's name and contact information.

viii. The flyer must not disrupt the work process, violate the rights of others, include material that is defamatory, invade the privacy of others, infringe on a copyright or use words or images that are obscene, vulgar or indecent.

x. The flyer must include the following wording: "Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority does not endorse, sponsor or supervise the organization or activity represented in this material. The distribution or display of this material is provided as a community service. The sponsoring organization has agreed to hold Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority harmless and has indemnified the authority from any legal action associated with the sponsoring organization."

e. Once a flyer has been approved, the authority may place copies in the appropriate display areas at individual authority locations.

f. Entities seeking to display flyers within BJWSA shall also comply with any additional reasonable requirements and requests for information set forth on BJWSA flyer distribution application form.

B. Bulletin Boards, Banners and Other Display Advertisements.

1. Display advertisements include, but are not limited to:

a. Advertisements in areas of public assembly, such as meeting rooms or the training room;

b. Advertisements inside a authority, such as on bulletin boards.

2. Display advertisements shall be limited to an advertiser's:
 - a. Name, brand name or trade name;
 - b. Logo;
 - c. Location or place of business and contact information;
 - d. Slogans which identify but do not promote the advertiser; and
 - e. Products, programs or services in a value neutral description.
3. Display advertisements for any location shall be no larger than 8.5 inches by 11 inches. BJWSA shall not approve three dimensional (3-D) signs of any type.
4. An authority manager or supervisor may designate no more than one (1) bulletin board in a hallway or common area of his/her location for advertisements and/or promotional material.
5. A manager or supervisor may limit the number and location of advertisements which may be displayed in an approved location at his/her authority. Issues regarding the number and/or location of advertisements at a particular authority site shall be resolved by the general manager.
6. Advertisements placed on BJWSA property shall become the property of BJWSA and may be removed by BJWSA at any time and for any reason, in the sole discretion of BJWSA.
7. A location shall designate space in an employee lounge or workroom for placement of approved advertisements and/or promotional materials for employees.

VII. Intent.

A. Other than as set forth expressly herein, this regulation does not create, nor is it intended to create, a public or limited public forum.

B. Nothing herein shall be interpreted or implemented so as to open BJWSA facilities for indiscriminate use by the general public.

C. Advertising on BJWSA property does not constitute an endorsement of any business or service by BJWSA. No warranties or guarantees are implied. Neither BJWSA, BJWSA board, nor their employees are responsible for any harm or loss that may result from interaction with any and all advertisers.

VIII. Procedures.

A. Requests for permission to distribute advertisements and/or promotional materials in one (1) or more BJWSA authority or throughout BJWSA shall be submitted, in writing, to BJWSA communications manager.

B. Denial of a request to distribute an advertisement and/or promotional activity may be appealed to the general manager, who may review the basis for appeal and the denial advertisement and/or promotional activity. The general manager or his/her designee shall, in his/her sole discretion, grant or deny the appeal. The decision of the general manager or his/her designee shall be final.

Visitors

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for public visits to authority locations.

BJWSA encourages citizens to visit BJWSA campuses for business and educational purposes.

It is required that all visitors report to the main office and receive the proper credentialing before visiting elsewhere on the property

BJWSA will not permit unauthorized persons in authority buildings or on authority grounds. The general manager authorizes the manager or supervisor at that campus to take appropriate action, including summoning law enforcement officers, to prevent unauthorized persons from entering buildings and from loitering on grounds.

Employees may not bring family to work with them, except in unusual circumstances.

The authority recognizes that the Fourth Amendment protects citizens, including visitors, from unreasonable searches. However, pursuant to state law, BJWSA may conduct reasonable searches of the person and property of visitors on authority premises. The general manager directs managers and supervisors to ensure that appropriate notice regarding searches of visitors are posted at all regular authority entrances and other access points to the authority grounds. Any person, including visitors, entering the premises of any campus in the authority will be deemed to have consented to a reasonable search of his/her person and personal property.

In conducting searches of visitors, authority officials will make every effort to protect the privacy interests of individuals. The authority's express intention for this policy is to enhance security on the campus and to prevent violations to authority policies, security and federal and state laws.

PHOTO RELEASE FORM



Date _____

I, _____, hereby give *Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority* the unqualified right to take photographs of me, and to use these photographs on their website or in print. I understand that online photographs will be accessible to anyone with Internet access.

Additionally, photographs of identifiable minors will not be used on the Internet or in print without written permission from a parent or guardian.

Subject signature _____

Subject name printed _____

Parent's signature of minor child _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Photographer's Name Pamela Flasch or Lou Brown

Please return to Pamela Flasch or Lou Brown; 6 Snake Road; Okatie, SC 29909.