



Town of Lunenburg

Citizen Engagement Best Practice

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Image: Ritter Memorial Building¹

Introduction

The Town of Lunenburg is located in Worcester County, Massachusetts. Originally incorporated in 1728, the Town has a population of 10,086 and median household income of \$89,706². Lunenburg covers approximately 26.4 miles of land, and contains several recreational gems including Lake Shirley, Cowdrey Nature Center, and Hickory Hills Lake. Like many other Massachusetts Towns, Lunenburg does their best to keep its citizens informed and engaged in government processes. This dynamic inspired Lunenburg's Town officials to sign a Community Compact agreement, where they would receive assistance to implement citizen engagement best practices. Through the Community Compact program, Lunenburg leveraged grant funding to redesign and modernize its website. Adding new tools and processes to the website facilitated citizen engagement best practices, and helped the Town disseminate information online and gather constituents' input more effectively. Today, the improved interface has encouraged more departments to keep content up to date on a more regular basis. This summary report is an overview of the website redesign process and several new features.

¹ Doug Kerr. "Lunenburg, Massachusetts." *Flickr.com*. Accessed on December 12, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2GbKxAc>

² "Community Facts." United States Census Bureau. *American FactFinder*. Accessed on November 9, 2018. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

Project Purpose & Process


Town officials chose the citizen engagement best practice track due to a need to improve communication and transparency, and to encourage wider involvement in town government activities. Prior to the Community Compact engagement, Lunenburg’s official website lacked sufficient tools and mechanisms to facilitate this increased engagement. Through the Community Compact program, the Town was able to engage the services of QScend Technologies, Inc. to redesign the website with the aim of enabling citizens and local businesses to more effectively participate in government processes. A full list of features can be found on QScend’s [website](#). The following features are particularly citizen-focused:

E-NOTIFICATIONS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

When it comes to organizing and disseminating information, it’s important to consider how news updates and events are being created and shared. The new Content Management System (CMS) makes it easy for municipal staff to create and share information on the website. Users can also easily subscribe to receive information they care about by creating an account on the municipal website, then selecting relevant topics of interests. By completing this process, users can receive e-notifications about Town events and news that are relevant to them.

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

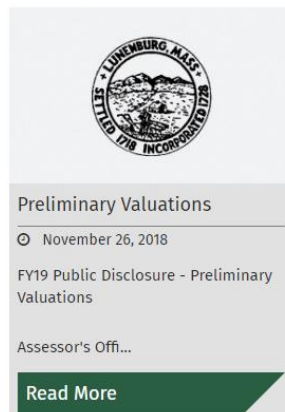
The News & Announcements section of the new website homepage draws attention to events and news that are impacting the community. Each event page has a thumbnail image, a short description, and a link to “read more”. Municipal staff can attach documents to event pages to add more context. Below are a few samples that were recently added to the website.




TOWN OF LUNENBURG
TRANSPARENCY CENTER
powered by CLEARGOV

New Budget Transparency Center
January 7, 2019
The Town of Lunenburg has partnered with ClearGov, a leading...

[Read More](#)




Preliminary Valuations
November 26, 2018
FY19 Public Disclosure - Preliminary Valuations
Assessor's Offi...

[Read More](#)




Household Hazardous Waste disposal
October 3, 2018
We have had several people come into the Public Safety Building...
Fire-Rescue

[Read More](#)

MOBILE / RESPONSIVE DESIGN

With rapidly growing usages of smartphones and mobile devices, a need for responsive mobile design has become essential in the website redesign process. With this in mind, Lunenburg’s new website is now more responsive and mobile-friendly. It automatically conforms and configures content to fit various screen sizes and resolutions. This helps users to navigate the site with ease from any device, while maintaining the integrity of the website’s original design look and feel.

INTERACTIVE WEB FORMS

Lunenburg’s new website has built-in web forms, using “if, then” logic to provide additional contextual information to users. The image below demonstrates how the form automatically expands based on a user’s answer. These capabilities are incredibly useful, especially for complex processes or workflows.

The diagram illustrates a form expansion process. On the left, a smaller form contains the following elements:

- Entity Address ***
- The address is correct as it appears currently
- The business has moved or is moving soon
- License Number or EIN Number ***
-

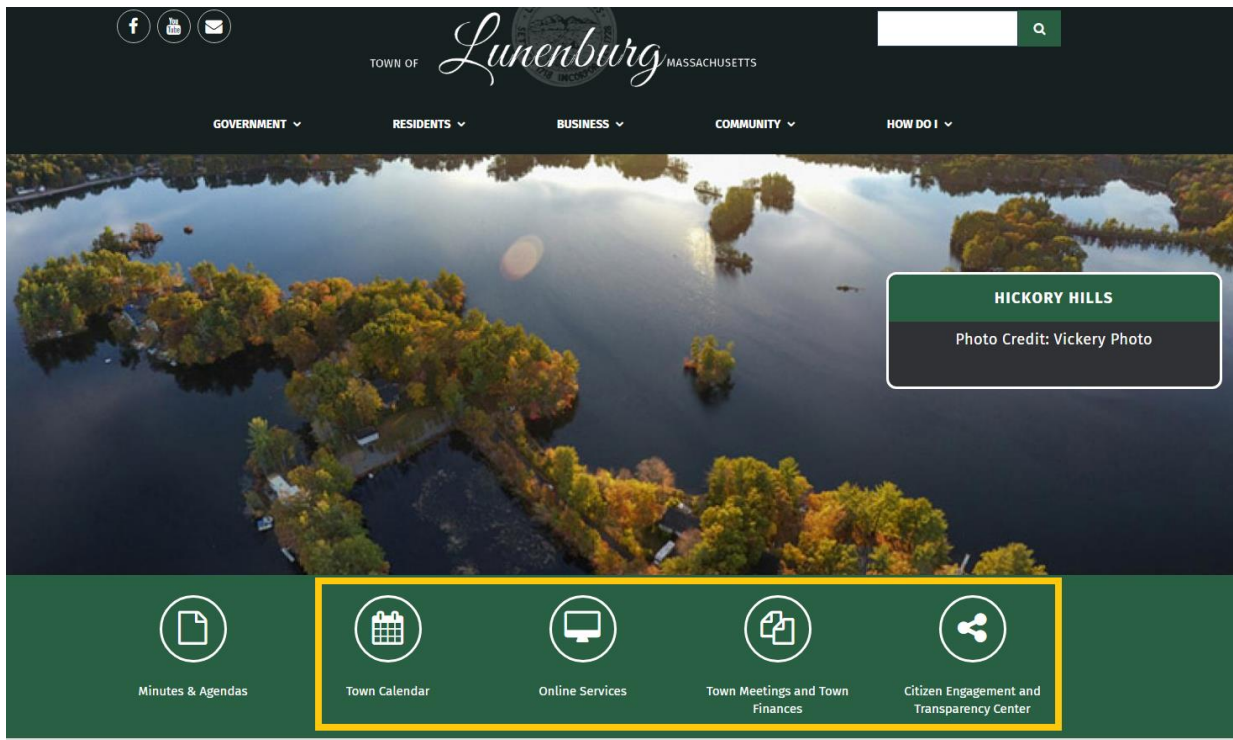
A large black arrow points from this form to a larger form on the right, which shows the expanded state:

- Entity Address ***
- The address is correct as it appears currently
- The business has moved or is moving soon
- Change Entity Address**
-
- Please provide the full mailing address.
- License Number or EIN Number ***
-

ANALYTICS AND USER FEEDBACK

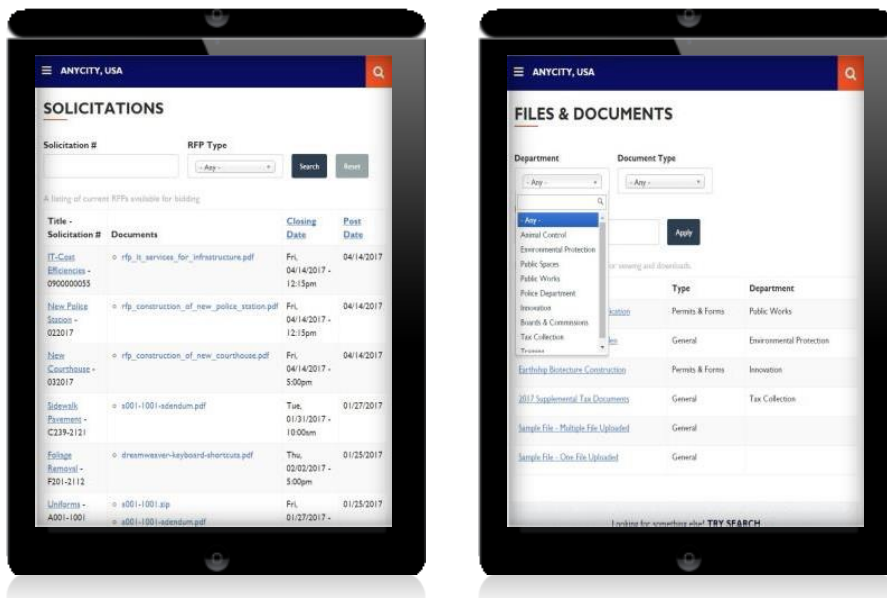
Lunenburg uses the CMS’s Google Analytics module to track user traffic throughout the website. The module also generates website statistics, which are used to see visitation trends and click-throughs to the Town’s various social media accounts to evaluate the different points of contact. This feature provides insight into how the website is being used and how it can be improved. At the time of launch, the municipal website received a spike in user traffic. The Town also saw an increase in the numbers of click-throughs to Lunenburg’s social media accounts and discovered that roughly 80% of user traffic on the website was going to the page containing information about trash and recycling.

Along with Google Analytics metrics to gather constituent input more effectively, the Town leveraged resident feedback to reflect change requests made by constituents, emphasizing the goals of transparency and engagement. As shown in the screenshot below, the Town renamed the previously titled “Get Connected” button to “Citizen Engagement and Transparency Center,” and also made the Town Calendar and Town Meetings and Town Finance items more prominent on the home page.



BID SORTING & DOCUMENT CENTER

The Town relies on smart technology to support time-sensitive business processes. The website's new features and functionality make it easy to virtualize some of the Town's internal processes, adding more convenience and efficiency to Lunenburg's workflow. The new Bid Management Center and Document Center are examples of built-in tools that will help to manage these processes. Not only are bids searchable, but also subscribers can get automatically notified whenever a bid is posted or updated. Moreover, the Document Center provides the option to search for, upload, download and subscribe to documents of interest. The website's automation and subscription options create a more seamless workflow around these municipal processes.



LISTSERV / NEWSLETTER CAPABILITY

Lunenburg can disseminate email campaigns from the website and social media sites. Municipal staff can view and organize materials in one place with this module, which offers the following additional capabilities.

- **Social Sharing** one click or Auto-tweet/Auto-post
- **Activity/Clicks Tracking**
- **Bounce Management** Reporting
- **Monitored IP** acceptance rates
- **Authentication** to avoid filters & spam
- **Double-opt-in** to verify email validity and participation



3,289 Avg Subs Rate	34 Avg Unsubs Rate	1,683 Total Unsubs	157 Total Cleaned
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Conclusion

The Town of Lunenburg completed its website redesign in July of 2018. Today, citizens are better equipped to tailor their online experience and engagement with Town officials and processes. The ease of signing up for updates and contacting various departments through web forms directly from the site, has improved communications with residents. To date, over 100 residents have created accounts to enable use of the many new tools available in the redesigned website, and more do so every week. Lunenburg will be able to track citizen engagement going forward using Google Analytics for general site traffic and track click-throughs to their various social media accounts. The Town has completed their citizen engagement initiative for the Community Compact and will continue to engage with constituents via technology.