



Pepperell, MA – Business Continuity Best Practice

Offsite Backup Solution

Summarized by: The Office of Municipal & School Technology

EOTSS | Executive Office of Technology Services & Security



Image: Pepperell Town Hall¹

Executive Summary

In May of 2017, the Town of Pepperell became active members of the Community Compact Cabinet; an initiative created through Governor Baker’s first executive order to strengthen relationships between cities and towns, and the administration. Through the Community Compact, the Town of Pepperell agreed to implement best practices in the areas of Housing & Economic Development and Information Technology. Pepperell selected Business Continuity as an IT best practice and proposed to implement an Offsite Backup Solution by June 30, 2017. Once completed, this initiative would result in municipal data being stored safely offsite, along with relevant policies and procedures to ensure effective ongoing backup.

¹ John Phelan. “Pepperell Town Hall, Pepperell Massachusetts.” Wikimedia Commons. Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license. Accessed on November 29, 2017.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pepperell_Town_Hall,_Pepperell_MA.jpg

Project Purpose & Deliverables

Business continuity is an essential component of any organization’s IT environment. Establishing data backup, storage, and recovery processes is necessary to effectively prevent the loss of critical data. Unfortunate incidents like file corruption, malware, and human error can have a significant impact on an organization’s ability to function. The Town of Pepperell chose to implement an Offsite Backup Solution to avoid breaks in continuity by physically separating their live and backup data sets. Doing so would ensure the redundancy, security, and availability of the Town’s data. Leadership planned to implement a system that would replicate the Town’s data and store it offsite at a separate, secure location. To accompany this initiative, Pepperell developed an Offsite Data Backup Policy that contains details about the new system and its components. The following sections are samples of the Town’s official policy. Specific details about the offsite backup locations have been omitted for security reasons.

Section Title	Description
<i>Project Purpose</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To safeguard the data assets of the Town of Pepperell. • To prevent the loss of data in the case of accidental deletion, corruption of data, system failure, or disaster. • To permit timely restoration of information and business processes. • To manage and secure backup media employed in the process.
<i>Project Scope</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data for the Town of Pepperell located in all Town facilities. Including but not limited to network user file shares, shared folders, email databases, network attached storage and servers.
<i>Overview of Backups and Retention of Backups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily backups are done to prevent accidental data loss, damage from malware attacks and minor hardware failures. • Retention policy of backups is intended to guarantee that versioning of data is available and files can be recovered from previous data. Media associated with the retention policy must be stored offsite.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requirement for backups to be stored offsite is due to the nature of major disasters that could potentially affect entire facility (i.e. flood, fire, theft) and cause irreversible loss of data by damaging both the live set of data and all existing backup sets.
<i>Locations and Identification of Data Sources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section of the Offsite Data Backup Policy contains a list of government facilities in Pepperell that generate municipal data and the systems used to store them. Specifics from this section have been removed due to security reasons.
<i>Identification of Backup Destinations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section of the Offsite Data Backup Policy contains a list of Pepperell’s offsite backup locations. Specifics from this section have been removed due to security reasons.
<i>Backup Schedule and Frequency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section of the Offsite Data Backup Policy lists Pepperell’s backup locations and indicates how often Town data is replicated and stored offsite. Specifics from this section have been removed due to security reasons.
<i>Storage of Backup Media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This section of the Offsite Data Backup Policy describes Pepperell’s the processes between Town facilities and their offsite backup locations. Specifics from this section have been removed due to security reasons.
<i>Access to Backup Media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to backup media is to be restricted to the IT Director and Town Administrator.
<i>Backup Media Replacement and Media Destruction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to retirement and disposal, IT will ensure that the media no longer contains active backup images. The media’s current or former contents cannot be read or recovered by an unauthorized party. With all backup media, IT will ensure the physical destruction of media prior to disposal.