

Overview of the Draft Social Media Policy

Background:

- The City's existing social media policy was approved in 2011. Since then, the social media landscape for government has changed dramatically and the policy is overdue for an update.
- Cities and officials are under more scrutiny now than ever in their use of social media and how government social media use differs from personal social media use. More guidance and clarity on these issues is needed.
- We need to balance First Amendment rights to speech on limited public forums as social media constantly evolves and use in the City grows.

Draft Policy:

- For the purpose of this policy, "employees" are defined as anyone who does work on behalf of the City. This means it now includes consultants performing contract City work, elected officials, interns and volunteers.
- The policy grants Communications the authority to enter into contracts to create social media for the City, which means agree to any terms of service.
- The policy also defines additional roles and responsibilities than the previous policy, holding department heads responsible for the social media use and conduct of their department staff.
- The new policy supersedes the 2006 Blog Policy, and the 2011 Social Media Policy.

Draft Procedures:

- The procedures establish a Social Media Officer that will provide oversight of City-Supported Social Media and manage and implement the policy and procedures.
- The procedures also require City accounts be archived to comply with records retention laws.

City staff use of social media

- All new or proposed social media sites must be approved. Process is also outlined in creating new or deactivating existing social media sites.
- Social Media Officer must maintain access to all accounts for retention and continuity but will not manage day-to-day content creation and monitoring of accounts.

Elected Official use of social media

- Social media profiles for the ward will be created by Communications and will operate for each ward office rather than the individual policymaker holding the office.
- Communications will maintain access to accounts for account security and continuity.
- The purpose of separate accounts is to prevent ward/City communications from intermixing with campaign, political and personal communication.
- Provides best practices for Elected Officials' use of social media in their official capacity.

Personal use of social media

- The procedures set expectations for City staff's personal conduct as a private individual.
- Employees must not use their personal social media presence for City business, communications, or to circumvent City processes, such as releasing data.
- The procedures are not to stifle an employee's rights to free speech. The procedures set additional expectations and guidelines for conduct.

Public interactions with City-Supported Social Media

- Notices that social media communications will be archived.
- Clearly lists unacceptable content that may be removed and cause a user to be blocked. Additionally, provides guidelines for staff on how to proceed with these actions, and how the affected person can appeal.