

## ***Chapter 5 - Social Media Policy***

### **A. Purpose**

The use of social media presents an opportunity for the City of Pine Forest (City) to further its goals of creating a vibrant community for its citizens to live and work. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on social media sites. This policy establishes social media use policies, protocols, and procedures intended to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology, where possible.

### **B. Scope**

This policy applies to all City officials, employees, and volunteers.

### **C. Definitions**

- 1.) "City-issued electronic or wireless communication device" includes an iPhone, iPad, laptop personal computer, macbook computer, or any other device used to send and receive messages, electronic mail, and/or access the internet.
- 2.) "City social media account" is the official social media account for the City as a whole that has been approved by the City Public Information Office. Only one city social media account should exist on each social media site.
- 3.) "Departmental social media accounts" are the social media accounts approved by the City Public Information Office for use by a specific city department.
- 4.) "Social Media Site" means a third-party platform that allows for creation of social media content between users. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram.
- 5.) "Social media content" includes information, images, or photographs posted or provided on a social media site.

### **D. Policy**

#### **1.) Acceptable Use**

Employees creating, maintaining, or posting social media content on a City social media account must at all times conduct themselves as representative of the City and follow Employment Policies and Procedures, as well as other departmental rules or directives. Employees should follow these guiding principles when posting social media content:

- A. Use correct grammar and spelling;

- B. Writ and post only about the employee's area of expertise;
- C. Keep postings factual and accurate (advocating for certain elections may result in criminal prosecution);
- D. Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate;
- E. Understand that postings are widely accessible, not retractable, and content should be carefully considered before posted;
- F. Refrain from posting social media content that is considered private or confidential;
- G. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or an investigation without approval from the City Attorney; and
- H. Refrain from expressing personal opinions or positions regarding political campaigns, religion, or practices of other public or private agencies.

Non-exempt employees who maintain or post content on city or departmental social media accounts shall work on the City or departmental social media accounts only during normal office hours unless specifically pre-approved in writing by the employee's supervisor.

## **2.) Account Management**

No employee may create or maintain a social media account that purports or appears to be a City social media account without the permission of that employee's department director and the Public Information Office. Before any employee or department representative creates a City Social Media Site, approval must be provided by the Public Information Office.

Once the City or departmental social media account is approved, then the following information must be provided to the Public Information Office:

- A. The login and password information;
- B. Any changes to the login and password;
- C. Names of the employees authorized to maintain and obligated to report a violation on the Social Media site to the City Secretary.

The following should be clearly posted on the City social media account on a social media site:

This social media account is a public forum. The City respects the viewpoint of each and every citizen. As such, the City will err on the side of non-removal of posts on the City's official social media accounts. However, the City recognizes that in some instances, it is necessary to hide or remove certain types of social media content posts. A post that contains any of the following material is prohibited and will be removed:

- A. Obscene or pornographic material;
- B. Harassing statements, personal attacks, or threats to another poster;
- C. Support or opposition for a political campaign, candidate, or measure; or
- D. Advertisements of a commercial entity, product, or service.

Each departmental social media account shall contain a clear statement of the intent, purpose, and subject matter of the account. The following should be clearly posted on any Departmental social media account:

This social media account is a limited public forum. As such, any social media content posted must pertain to the scope and purpose of the department's page. A post that contains any of the following material is prohibited and will be removed:

- A. Contains obscene or pornographic material;
- B. Harasses, personally attacks, or threatens another poster;
- C. Endorses or opposes a political campaign, candidate, or measure;
- D. Is unrelated to the purpose and topical scope of the page;
- E. Contains profanity or abusive language; or
- F. Advertises a commercial entity, product, or service

All city and departmental social media accounts should also include:

- A. City contact information;
- B. Link to the City website;
- C. A statement indicating that all social media content posted on a city or departmental social media account is subject to the Public Information Act, including private messages sent;
- D. A statement indicating that Public Information Act requests may not be made through social media and providing the email address where an individual should submit a request; and
- E. "Posted comments do not necessarily reflect the views or position of the City."

### **3. Citizen Conduct**

The official City social media account is considered a "public forum" site. Departmental social media accounts that are focused and limited in scope and topic are "limited forum" sites.

The City respects the viewpoint of each and every citizen. As such, the City will err on the side of non-removal of posts on the City's social media accounts. However, the City recognizes that in some instances, it is necessary to hide or remove certain types of social media content posts. A post that contains any of the following material is prohibited and will be removed:

- A. Obscene or pornographic material;
- B. Harassing statements, personal attacks, or threats to another poster;
- C. Support or opposition for a political campaign, candidate, or measure; or
- D. Advertisements of a commercial entity, product, or service.

If a post contains any material prohibited above, the City Secretary shall immediately screenshot the post for record retention and delete the post from the social media account. As soon as practicable, the City Secretary shall send a private message to the user:

"Dear [Name]: We removed your post on the City [social media site] because it violates our terms; the content you posted was found to be [INSERT REASON]. Please review our social media content posting guidelines. Frequent and repeated violations of our terms may lead to your temporary or permanent loss of posting privileges. Thank you."

After 3 violations, the City Secretary shall report the violator to the City Attorney. If the City Attorney agrees to block the user, then the City Attorney, or a designated representative of the City Attorney's Office, shall send a private message to the blocked user:

"Dear [Name]: Due to frequent and repeated violations of our terms, you have been temporarily blocked from posting on the City's [social media site]. If you wish to have your privileges restored, please send your request to [Designated Employee and Email Address] no earlier than 6 months from today's date. Thank you."