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Policy No. 69

Social Media Policy

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## 1. OBJECTIVE

1.1 These social media guidelines set responsibilities and procedures intended to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange through the use of social media technology. Use of social media for municipal purposes falls under the same legal and ethical standards as any other means of communication with the public on behalf of the Municipality of the District of Barrington (“the Municipality”).

## 2. APPLICABILITY

2.1 These guidelines apply to all municipal departments and covers officially established, publicly available and Municipally-managed social media accounts.

## 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide the social media practices of the Municipality:

3.1 **Value** – to encourage the safe, creative, and effective use of social media by municipal staff by providing a framework for the application of the policies and guidelines that oversee social media use.

3.2 **Quality of Service** – to improve communication and public engagement through the presentation of information and knowledge that is timely, accurate, and relevant.

3.3 **Transparency** – to present information to the public in a way that is easily discoverable and readily accessible, and presents the Municipality in a fair and reasonable manner.

3.4 **Respect** – to ensure that social media interactions are conducted in a manner that conforms to the same professional and ethical standards required in the workplace.

3.5 **Integrity** – to ensure that municipal staff and Council conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on social media sites, respecting the laws of copyright infringement, software licensing, property rights, security and privacy.

3.6 **Accountability** – to require that all municipal staff and Council are responsible for understanding and following the relevant policies and procedures affecting the use of social media.

3.7 **Legislative** – to adhere to applicable provincial, federal and municipal laws, regulations and policies.

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Social media** includes all online technologies and practices used to share information, express opinions, and build relationships. It can involve a variety of formats, including text, pictures, video, audio, and real-time dialogues. It includes, but is not limited to, such things as social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), media-sharing (e.g., YouTube, Flickr), webcasts (e.g., RSS, podcast), and collaborative media (e.g., wikis, blogs). Not all forms of social media may be appropriate for use by the Municipality. Social Media does not include text messaging and emails.

4.2 **Contributor** refers to any staff of the Municipality (full and part-time, councillors, and all other municipal advisors or consultants using corporate resources) who creates content that is posted to any of the Municipality's social media accounts.

4.3 **Subscriber** refers to members of the public who receive or access content from a social media account. Different forms of social media may have specific jargon for this concept (e.g., Twitter subscribers are known as "followers"). Subscribers may, depending on the privacy settings of the social media site, submit comments for posting in response to content.

4.4 **Moderator** refers to an authorized municipal staff person who reviews, authorizes, and allows content submitted by staff contributors and public subscribers to be posted to a Municipally-managed social media account.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 **The Clerk-Treasurer** will:

- administer and implement the Social Media Guidelines of the Municipality, and;
- identify necessary revisions to the Social Media Guidelines in consultation with other managerial staff.
- grant approval where appropriate for all new external social media endeavours that are initiated or created by the Municipality, and;
- determine that each new social media endeavour initiated or created by the Municipality has plans that are based on reasonable communication practices and include technical and monitoring measures which ensure the timely removal of any defamatory or objectionable submissions.

5.2 **Department Managers** will:

- ensure that department staff is advised of the approved Social Media Guidelines of the Municipality;
- act as the designated representative authorized to post social media content in an official capacity on behalf of the Municipality;

- act as the Moderator responsible for reviewing, authorizing, and allowing content submitted by staff contributors and public subscribers to be posted to a Municipality-managed social media account, and;
- review site activity and content **at least twice weekly** for exploitation or misuse. Each review of site is **to be logged.**

### 5.3 Employee Responsibility

Employees of the Municipality of Barrington should consider the following when discussing, sharing or commenting on Municipal business on personal social media sites, networks and/or personal websites:

- Use of an employee's Municipal email address, communicating in an official capacity or discussing Municipal business on personal or corporate social media sites and/or personal websites will constitute conducting Municipal business.
- Any Municipality of Barrington employee engaged in online electronic dialogue that involves information about Municipality of Barrington business, including dialogue or information posted to personal social networking sites and/or personal websites, is also required to meet a standard that mandates:
  - **Transparency of Origin.** The Municipality requires that employees disclose their employment or association with the Municipality of Barrington in all communications when speaking about the Municipality of Barrington or Municipality of Barrington business.
  - **Accurate Information.** Communications on all social networking sites, should be based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data. Anecdotes and opinions should be identified as such.
  - **Protection of Confidential and Proprietary Information.** Municipality of Barrington employees must maintain the confidentiality of information, including Municipal financial and business information, citizen and/or customer personal information, personal information about Municipal Councillors, partner and/or supplier information, personal employee data or any other information not generally available to the public.
- Municipal-staff-to-municipal-staff communications for the purpose of conducting official Municipal business should not take place using any social media tool.
- Recognizing the benefit of monitoring online stakeholder input into Municipal issues – and the potential need for the Municipality to respond to and/or correct information – Municipal staff can access social media sites during work hours provided that they are related to or contain posts or discussion related to Municipal business.
- Municipal staff are not permitted to access their personal social media pages during work time unless they do so during their break or lunch hour.

#### **5.4 Council Responsibility**

Councillors for the Municipality of Barrington should consider the following when discussing, sharing or commenting on Municipal business on public social media websites or on personal social media sites, networks and/or personal websites:

- The Warden or designate speaks on behalf of the Municipality on all social networking sites, blogs, forums or websites. Unless otherwise authorized, Councillors who choose to discuss Municipal business within their posts to personal social networking sites and/or personal websites must make it clear that they are speaking on their own behalf and not as a representative of the Municipality or Municipal Council
- Use of a Councillor's Municipal email address and/or discussing Municipal business on personal or corporate social media sites and/or personal websites, without making it clear that they are speaking on their own behalf, constitutes conducting Municipal business.
- Councillors who choose to discuss Municipal business within their posts to personal social networking sites and/or personal websites must conduct themselves at all times in accordance with this policy and all Municipality of Barrington administrative policies and corporate values.
- Councillors discussing Municipality of Barrington business on any social networking website or personal website, should ensure their discussions are based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data. Anecdotes and opinions should be identified as such.
- Councillors must protect confidential information from accidental or deliberate disclosure, including in camera meeting topics and discussions. Municipal financial and business information, citizens and/or customer personal information, personal information about employees or Municipal Councillors, partner and/or supplier information, personal employee data, or any other information not generally available to the public.

### **6. TERMS OF USE**

#### **6.1 Municipal representation**

- Only staff who are given authorization to act as a designated representative by their department managers may post content in the name of the Municipality of Barrington to any social media site.
- Contributors and moderators of the Municipality are required to identify themselves honestly, accurately, and completely when participating in social media.

#### **6.2 Appropriate content**

- Only information that is publicly available may be posted to social media sites. It is unacceptable to publish or report on conversations or information that is confidential, pre-decisional, or speculative.

- Content from contributors and public subscribers containing any of the following shall *not* be allowed for posting:
  - comments that are not topically related to the site or article being commented upon;
  - confidential information pertaining to personnel;
  - personal information;
  - profane language or inflammatory content;
  - content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, physical or mental disability, or sex orientation;
  - sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - encouragement of illegal activity, and;
  - information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that is deemed by moderators to be unsuitable according to the above criteria shall be removed and retained, in log book, along with a description of the reason that the specific content was deemed unsuitable for posting.

### **6.3 Copyright, fair use, and privacy laws**

- Communication through social media is subject to all relevant provincial, federal and municipal laws, regulations and policies.
- Any content posted to a third-party social media site is ultimately owned and controlled by the site operator according to its established terms of use.

**Adopted by Council May 26, 2014.**