

TOWN OF WESTPORT

POLICY ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY TOWN AGENCIES

(adopted by the Board of Selectmen April 24, 2019)

Purpose:

The Town of Westport is committed to using social media tools to enhance communication and outreach to people and businesses who live, work and do business in the Town. This Policy on Use of Social Media by Town Agencies (“Use Policy”) sets forth the guidelines for establishing and maintaining social media accounts (“Town Social Media”) by Town departments and elected and appointed boards, commissions, task forces and committees (hereafter referred to as “Town Agencies”). For purposes of this Use Policy, Town Social Media includes all types of online communities, such as websites, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Yelp, blogs, message boards, chat rooms and the like.

The purpose of this Use Policy is to

- Ensure uniform standards for creating, monitoring, and modifying Town Social Media for which the Town is or may be held responsible
- Ensure that all Town Social Media created by Town Agencies are archived by the Town’s Information Technology Department, in order to comply with state record retention laws and the Freedom of Information Act
- Ensure that all Town Agencies have designated administrators who are familiar with and consistently enforce the Town’s Social Media Policy (attached as Exhibit A) regarding public comments, including the procedures for deleting comments and removing users who violate that policy
- Ensure that the Town’s Information Technology Department has access to all Town Social Media
- Ensure consistent compliance with Freedom of Information Act requests relating to Town Social Media. The Town Attorney’s Office can be consulted regarding any questions regarding Freedom of Information Act compliance.

Existing Town Social Media Accounts and Creating New Ones:

The Town’s Department of Information Technology (“IT”) archives all activity on Town Social Media, in order to comply with state record retention laws and the Freedom of Information Act.

In order to ensure that all Town Social Media accounts are registered with the archiving software, IT maintains a list of all Town Social Media accounts.

Each Public Agency must ensure that:

- Each and every Town Social Media account previously or newly established and/or maintained by that Public Agency, including accounts that have been abandoned, are on IT's list of Town Social Media.
- Each Town Social Media account established and/or maintained by the Public Agency is being archived by IT and is able to retrieve Comments as needed to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.
- Each administrator of such agency's Town Social Media account has been given and understands this Use Policy and the Social Media Policy.
- It has provided to IT the names and contact information for each other administrator of each of its Town Social Media accounts ("Registered Administrator") and that it promptly updates IT with any changes of Registered Administrators.
- Each of its Town Social Media accounts has at least two (2) Registered Administrators at all times
- Only Registered Administrators may make official posts on behalf of the Town Agency.
- All posts, links, videos, photos, text, material and comments (together "Comments") made by Registered Administrators comply with the Social Media Policy.
- Each of its Town Social Media accounts has at least one Moderator who is actively and regularly monitoring the postings on such account for Comments that may violate the Social Media Policy.
- It has provided to IT the name(s) and contact information for each Moderator, and that it promptly updates IT with any changes in the identity or identities of the Moderator(s).
- No Comments are removed, and no users are banned, from any Town Social Media account without careful review with the Town Attorney's Office.
- All Comments made to each post by Registered Administrators, whether such Comments are made by other members of the Public Agency or by the public, comply with the Social Media Policy.
- It notifies the Town Attorney's Office of all Freedom of Information Act requests regarding Town Social Media that are delivered to the Public Agency.

Social Media Policy on Comments by the Public:

The Board of Selectmen has adopted the Town's Social Media Policy, attached as Exhibit A, to set forth the types of Comments by the public that are not allowed and may be removed. Registered Administrators and Moderators of Public Agencies are responsible for complying with this Use Policy and the Social Media Policy.

The public has certain First Amendment free speech rights regarding Comments on Town Social Media. Therefore, it is extremely important that Registered Administrators and Moderators of Town Agencies comply with this Use Policy when deleting Comments or banning users from Town Social Media, and that any decision to delete a Comment or ban a user is made with the approval of the Town Attorney's Office.

Deleting Comments from Town Social Media: Town Agencies may only delete Comments that violate the Social Media Policy. Public Agencies cannot remove a Comment based merely on the "viewpoint" of the Comment; Comments cannot be removed unless they violate the Social Media Policy. Any decision regarding whether a particular Comment violates the Town Social Media policy must be discussed with the Town Attorney's Office.

Banning Users from Town Social Media: Town Agencies may ban users from Town Social Media for violating the Social Media Policy only with the approval of the Director of Information Technology and the Town Attorney's Office.

Reasonable Accommodation:

If anyone requests a reasonable accommodation to access Town Social Media, please contact the Town's Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator at 203-341-1043.

Questions or Concerns:

Questions or concerns regarding this Use Policy or the Social Media Policy should be directed to the Town's Office of Information Technology at socialmedia@westportct.gov.

TOWN OF WESTPORT

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

(Adopted by the Board of Selectmen April 24, 2019)

The Town of Westport and its departments and elected and appointed boards, commissions, task forces, and committees (together, “Town”) may share information, images, and video with the public through external social media websites and apps (“Town Social Media”). Town Social Media is not meant for requests for help or services. For assistance, general comments, and communications concerning a Town department, board, commission, task force, or committee, please contact that office through the contact information provided on westportct.gov.

Please be aware that when posting on Town Social Media, you are agreeing to the following:

Public Activity on Town Social Media Sites

We review posts and comments made by the public to Town Social Media, and the following types of posts, links, videos, photos, text, material and comments (together “Comments”) are prohibited and may be deleted after careful review with the Town Attorney’s Office:

- Comments that do not directly relate to the purpose or topic of Town Social Media or the Town’s post
- Comments promoting or opposing the election of any person campaigning for election to a political office, including without limitation Comments promoting or opposing the election of any candidate holding office at the time of the post (incumbents)
- Promotion or advertisement of a for-profit business or commercial transaction, except in connection with newsworthy events
- Promotion of crowd funding campaigns other than for civic projects
- Obscene, threatening, or defamatory language or material
- Personal attacks (i.e., abusive remarks)
- Discriminatory language (including hate speech) about any ethnicity, race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or other protected group
- Comments advocating illegal activity or Comments that violate copyrights or trademarks of others
- Personally identifiable information like phone numbers and postal and email addresses
- Photographs of minors, unless the Town has received an acceptable written release from a parent or legal guardian
- Spam and undecipherable language
- Comments that are reasonably determined to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Comments that violate any local, state or federal law

We may deny access to Town Social Media to any person who violates this Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.

You are subject to the Terms of Service (TOS) of the host site. Information (photos, videos, etc.) you share with or post to Town Social Media is also subject to the TOS of the host site and may be used by the owners of the host site for their own purposes. For more information, consult the host website's TOS.

Although Town Social Media is generally available all of the time, the Town's monitoring capabilities are generally available only during normal business hours. We do not guaranty or warrant that any information posted by anyone other than an authorized Town of Westport administrator is correct, and we disclaim any liability for loss or damage resulting from reliance on any such information. We do not endorse any external posts or links that are posted by the public on Town Social Media.

This comment policy is subject to amendment or modification by the Board of Selectmen.

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