

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **1.0 POLICY**

- 1.1 This policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administrative and supervisory personnel. The City also recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some City personnel. The personal use of social media can have bearing on City personnel in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a simply precautionary nature as well as prohibitions on the use of social media by City personnel. Prohibitions outlined in the City Personnel Manual are not affected by this policy and take priority at all times.
- 1.2 To provide guidelines for conduct by City Employees who use Social Media and Social Networking to interact with customers on behalf of the City of Mansfield.

### **2.0 PURPOSE**

The City of Mansfield, in an ongoing effort to maintain effective communication to and with residents and other audiences, uses social media platforms as a way to deliver messages directly to users and to encourage resident involvement, interaction and feedback. This policy establishes guidelines for use of social media platforms in an effort to ensure timely, accurate and appropriate use of those communication channels to deliver clear, concise and consistent messages on behalf of the City. This policy provides guidance on its management, administration and oversight.

Employees must be mindful that negative public perception of the employee may adversely affect the reputation of the employee and the City. It is important to reiterate that public servants have a responsibility to uphold the highest levels of integrity and decency.

This policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administration and supervisory personnel, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

### **3.0 SCOPE**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees including sworn and non-sworn employees, probationary employees, full-time employees, part-time employees, contract workers, volunteers and interns of the City of Mansfield.

#### **4.0 DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 “Social Media” are various forms of discussion and information-sharing tools, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards and online forums. Technologies include picture and video sharing, wall postings, e-mail, instant messaging and music sharing, to name a few.
- 4.2 “Social Networking” is the practice of expanding one’s business and/or social contacts by making connections through clubs, organizations, phone contacts, written correspondence or through web-based applications. This policy focuses on Social Networking as it relates to the Internet to promote such connections through web-based groups established for that purpose.
- 4.3 Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions or comments. The term is short for “Web Log.”
- 4.4 Crowdsourcing: An open call, usually through an Internet-based resource, to an undefined community of people to obtain and use ideas, content or solutions to business needs.
- 4.5 Electronic Communication Tools/Devices: Tools/devices used as a means of sending and receiving messages or information electronically through connected electronic systems or the Internet. Devices may include, but are not limited to City networked computers, e-mail, voicemail, iPads, cell phones/smart phones (issued by the City or personal cell phones/smart phones utilized by the employee to access social media sites for City business, whether or not a reimbursement/stipend is paid to the employee), any other similar system and new technologies as they are developed.
- 4.6 Electronic mail (e-mail): The transmission and storage of messages, documents or attachments through computers and telecommunications.
- 4.7 Employee/City Personnel: A full-time employee, part-time employee, and person(s) performing in a volunteer capacity.
- 4.8 Internet: An international network of independent computer systems. The World Wide Web is one of the most recognized means of using the Internet.
- 4.9 Microblog: A form of a blog in which frequent, short updates are posted about specific activities (i.e., Twitter)

- 4.10 Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
- 4.11 Photo sharing: The online publishing of photographs with the ability to transfer and share the photos with others.
- 4.12 Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- 4.13 Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.
- 4.14 Social Media: A form of online communication or publication that allows for multi-directional interaction. Social media includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, podcasts, social networks, photograph and video hosting websites, crowdsourcing, and new technologies as they evolve. This includes, but is not limited to social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo- and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube, and Pinterest), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).
- 4.15 Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information and socialize with others using a range of technologies.
- 4.16 Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape or related forms of communication.
- 4.17 Video sharing: The online publishing of videos with the ability to transfer and share them with others.
- 4.18 Web 2.0: The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable, user-generated content rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.
- 4.19 Wiki: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

## **5.0 LIMITS ON PRIVACY AND SPEECH**

- 5.1 No user shall have any expectation of privacy in any message, file, image or data that has been created, sent, retrieved, received or posted utilizing the City electronic communications tools/devices. Electronic communications should never be considered private, confidential or secure. All messages, files, images and data that have been created, sent or retrieved over the Internet or by any user in the transaction of public business are the property of the City of Mansfield. The city has

a right to monitor all aspects of its information infrastructure including, but not limited to:

- A. Social media visited by users
  - B. Material downloaded or uploaded by users
  - C. Posts or blog entries by users
  - D. Photo sharing or video sharing files downloaded or uploaded by users
  - E. Email sent or received by users
- 5.2. Such monitoring of City equipment may occur at any time, without notice and without the user's permission. In addition, except for exemptions under the Public Information Act, electronic records, including any message, file, image or data that has been created, sent, retrieved, received or posted utilizing City of Mansfield electronic communication tools/devices, may be subject PIA and therefore may be available for public dissemination. Personal communications that are not made in the transaction of public business are not covered by PIA.
- 5.3. Users are free to express themselves as private citizens when utilizing any electronic communication tools/devices provided by the City of Mansfield to the degree that their speech and conduct does not impair working, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among co-workers or negatively affect the public perception of the City. Personnel should assume that their speech and related activity will reflect upon their office and the City.
- 5.4. No employee shall publish, post, display or cause to be published, posted or displayed, any information, date, or photographs, in any format, electronic or otherwise, that purports, by word or presentation, to represent an official publication by, or the official position of the City without authority of the City Manager or designee.
- 5.6. The City may include Internet-based content including social media to conduct background investigations of persons seeking employment or volunteer positions. Searches shall be conducted by trained applicant/background investigators and vetting techniques shall be applied uniformly to all candidates.

## **6.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of the Communications & Marketing Department to act as the City's official spokesperson and maintain the City's official Web presence via Social Media/Networking and the Internet.

- 6.2 It is the responsibility of the Information Technology (IT) Department to administer security and monitoring measures that support this policy.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of City Departments and employees who engage in Social Media/Networking in an official capacity for their Department or Division to coordinate this activity with the Communications & Marketing Department and IT.
- 6.4 The responsibility for assuring complete compliance with the provisions of this policy lies with the Department Director, supervisors and the individual employee involved. It is the responsibility of Social Media Users and those engaged in Social Networking to stay informed regarding City policies related to this activity.

## **7.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR CITY-SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 7.1 City employees wanting to create and maintain department-specific social media platforms separate from the City's applications must obtain approval from the Department Director, the Communications & Marketing Director and the City Manager. Departments must provide specific reasons for the need to have separate social media applications and how those social media applications will be maintained and monitored. If approved, the Department Director and Communications & Marketing Director will periodically review each application. Those that do not meet the City's intended goals and objectives may be removed at any time.
- 7.2 All City of Mansfield social media sites must adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies, including all IT and City Records Management policies and other applicable City policies.
- 7.3 The Texas Public Information Act and e-discovery laws and policies apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
- 7.4 Each City social media site must identify the city name, state and department. It must also include an introductory statement that clearly specifies its purpose and topical scope. Where possible, department social networking sites should link back to the official City of Mansfield website for forms, documents and other information.
- 7.5 All City social media sites must clearly indicate that any articles and other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
- 7.6 The Department or Division Director or designee is responsible for the management, posting and monitoring of the specific department's public social media presence.
- 7.8 Social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the City or the department, that comments will be

monitored and that content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure, In addition, all social media pages should state:

- The City reserves the right to require those who comment on its posts to comply with the Terms of Use of the Social Media site and will report users the City believes to be in violation of the Terms of Use.
- Individuals who post or comment are legally responsible for their comments and/or posts. Comments and/or posts must not breach any law, confidentiality or copyright.

## **8.0 OPERATION OF CITY-SPONSORED SOCIAL MEDIA**

8.1 Employees representing the City of Mansfield via its social media platforms must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all Human Resources policies. Any employee maintaining or posting on City social media sites must adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. Administer or maintain with professional profiles connected to their city email addresses.
- B. Refrain from conducting political activities or private business from all City social media platforms.
- C. Refrain from making statements or posts about current or pending City investigations or transmitting or otherwise disseminating confidential information, including photographs or videos related to City activities or work-related assignments without permission of the City Manager or designee(s).
- D. Refrain from using personal e-mail accounts in conjunction with or to administer official City social media sites.

8.2 The purpose of using social media platforms is to provide news and information on city services, city government or city sponsored or produced events and to use the public forums for community outreach and engagement. Examples of how City social media platforms are to be used include, but are not limited to:

- A. Road Closures

- B. Public Safety and weather emergencies
- C. Community Development
- D. Community Services
- E. Employee recruitment

## **9.0 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

9.1 Personnel shall abide by the following when using social media.

- A. Personnel accessing personal social media by use of City-provided electronic devices have no expectation of privacy and may have this information accessed by city staff as outlined in city policy.
- B. While on duty, employees may only use communications devices to access social networking sites during authorized breaks, provided such usage does not in any way interfere with the performance of job duties.
- C. Disparaging or otherwise unprofessional display of the City or City department logos on clothing or similar identifying items posted on personal social media sites is prohibited.
- D. Employees may not post discriminatory, defamatory, libelous or slanderous comments when discussing the City, its governing body, supervisors and employees.
- E. Employees must comply with City policies and personal sites may be monitored to determine compliance with City policies.
- F. Employees who fail to follow the policy regarding social media may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- G. City employee's personal social media pages must not be created using City email addresses.

## **10.0 MONITORING OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

10.1 Supervisors may randomly monitor the postings of employees for purposes of protecting the integrity and reputation of the City and ensuring privacy and security of City records and information.

10.2 Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy will notify his or her supervisor immediately and if unavailable, the City Manager's Office.

10.3 No supervisor or employee of the City below the City Manager is authorized to cancel, modify or make exceptions to the contents of this order at any time.

## **11.0 DISCLAIMER**

11.1 The City Manager reserves the right to change, modify, amend, revoke or rescind all or part of this policy at any time.

## **12.0 APPENDICES:**

Social Media Networking Agreement Form



**SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING APPROVAL/AGREEMENT FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Media Site Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Department Director: \_\_\_\_\_

(Director Signature)

(Date)

Approved by Communications Director: \_\_\_\_\_

(Director Signature)

(Date)

Approved by City Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

(City Manager Signature)

(Date)

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I agree to use City-approved Social Media sites for City business as appropriate and in compliance with this policy. I understand that I must have approval from the Department Director, the Communications & Marketing Director and the City Manager to create a Social Media site on behalf of the City. I also understand that I am responsible for all postings made by me on City Social Media sites, including those made in the comments sections. I acknowledge that all City-approved Social Media sites are considered to be City property and will be monitored by officials of the City. I understand employees do not have privacy rights in the use of City Social Media Sites and the postings, data, access to or distribution of such materials is subject to Open Records. I agree to abide by all security procedures as set forth by the IT Department before accessing or posting to any Social Media sites. I acknowledge that any abuse of Social Media sites, including violation of the rules and guidelines set forth in this policy or in

any current or future modified Human Resources policy, can be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of my employment.

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Printed Name

Signature

Date