



## Social Media Policy

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for use of social media for the City of Faribault and its representatives.

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### 1. PURPOSE

The City of Faribault endorses the secure use of social networking in government to communicate and deliver messages to citizens and to encourage citizen involvement, interaction and feedback. Information which is distributed via social networking must be accurate, consistent, and timely and meet the information needs of the City's customers. This policy seeks to ensure proper use of the City of Faribault's social media sites by its representatives to minimize risk associated with social networking activities. City representatives include its employees and other agents of the city, such as independent contractors or elected and appointed officials.

The City of Faribault wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. City representatives have the responsibility to use the City's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing City and departmental policies. The policy also provides guidelines and standards for city representatives regarding the use of social media for communication with residents, colleagues and all other followers.

This policy establishes the City's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, but rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

The Police Department has developed a social media policy which provides more specific information as it relates to police officers and their use of social media.

### 2. GUIDELINES

- A. The City will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy. The strategies used are as follows:
  1. Social media pages may be designed for a target audience, such as local business owners, recreation facility users or program groups as well as general interest pages that represent an entire department.
  2. Social media should have a demonstrable departmental focus, such as recreational youth programs, police protection, fire safety, or general administration.

3. Third party social medial sites may be used to post City-created content, if it is clearly labeled as provided by a department of the City of Faribault and if the department has the right to publish the content.
  4. Social media content postings should be aggregated using content syndication tools (where allowable) to reduce staff time for publishing content.
- B. City social media accounts are considered a City asset and administrator access to these accounts must be securely administered in accordance with the City's Computer Use Policy. The City reserves the right to shut down any of its social media sites or accounts for any reason without notice.
  - C. All social media web sites created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to the City of Faribault, including a link to the City's official web site.
  - D. This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media web sites sponsored, established, registered or authorized by the City of Faribault. This policy also covers the private use of the City's social media accounts by all City representatives, including its employees and agents, Council members, appointed board or commission members and all public safety volunteers to the extent it affects the City.
  - E. Definitions of social media are internet and mobile-based applications, websites and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, video, comments and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to a "user-generated content" or "consumer-generated media". Social media includes, but is not limited to:
    - Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and online dating services/mobile apps
    - Blogs
    - Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
    - Video and photo sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, and Flickr
    - Wikis, or shared encyclopedias such as Wikipedia
    - An ever emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above

### **3. RULES OF USE**

City employees and agents with administrator access are responsible for managing social media websites.

- A. As public representatives, City employees and officials are cautioned that speech on or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties-that is, that owes its existence to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities- is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the City. Employees should assume that their speech and related activity on social media will reflect upon their department and the City.

- B. Administration of all social media web sites must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.
  - a. The City Administrator or appointed designees shall be responsible for the City's main social media pages. Each department will be responsible for the administration, content and upkeep of any social media sites the department may create.
  - b. All postings to City of Faribault social media sites may be subject to review by the Department Head and/or the City Administrator and may be deleted without notice.
  - c. All City sponsored social media sites shall prominently post the Disclaimer and Comments Policy found in Appendix A. In situations where a social media site does not allow for prominent posting of the Disclaimer and Comments Policy, a link to a PDF copy of Appendix A shall be posted instead.
- C. City social media accounts accessed and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties may not be used for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.
- D. No social media website may be used by the City or any City employee or agent to disclose private or confidential information. No social media web site should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential or sensitive, contact the City Administrator. Law enforcement may be excluded per Statute 13.82, Subd. 15, Public benefit data.
- E. When using social media sites as a representative of the City, employees and agents will act in a professional manner. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - a. Adhere to all City personnel and Computer Use policies
  - b. Use only appropriate language
- F. Be aware that content will not only reflect on the writer but also on the City of Faribault as a whole, including elected officials and other city employees and agents. Make sure information is:
  - a. Accurate and free of grammatical errors.
  - b. Not providing private or confidential information, including names, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
  - c. Not negatively commenting on community partners or their services, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
  - d. Not providing information related to pending decisions that would compromise negotiations.
  - e. Be aware that all content added to a site is subject to open records/right to know laws and discovery in legal cases.
  - f. Always keep in mind the appropriateness of content.
  - g. Comply with any existing code of ethical behavior established by the City.
- G. Where moderation of comments is an available option, comments from the public will be moderated by City staff, with administrative rights, before posting. Where moderation prior to posting is not an option, sites will be regularly monitored by City staff.
- H. When/How to respond to comments:
  - a. If the person has a question – Respond with information or point them back to the City's website or other resource. You may ask them to contact you offline when

- appropriate (when it is a private issue, when the issue is one in which there is little or no interest by others, etc.)
- b. If the person has a complaint – If inaccurate, politely correct inaccuracies. When a general complaint, thank them for sharing feedback and give any other direction that may be needed. If it is a personal matter, reply that you would like to address the issue offline and provide contact information.
  - c. If the person leaves a general comment, such as “Wow, this is cool” or “Can’t wait,” no response is required.
  - d. If the person wants to start debating with City employees – Provide proper contact information and resolve the issue offline. Do not debate them on the site. It is acceptable to correct inaccuracies and to provide evidence to support information, but avoid debates.
  - e. If in doubt how to respond to a comment, please contact the City Administrator for guidance.
- I. City staff with administrative rights will not edit any posted comments. However, comments posted by members of the public will be removed if they are abusive, obscene, defamatory, in violation of the copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate or incorrect. The following are examples of content that may be removed by City staff before or shortly after being published:
- a. Potentially libelous comments
  - b. Obscene or racist comments
  - c. Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
  - d. Plagiarized material
  - e. Private, personal information published without consent
  - f. Comments totally unrelated to the topic of the forum
  - g. Commercial promotions or spam
  - h. Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
- J. Correcting Mistakes:
- a. If an employee, council member or volunteer makes a factual mistake on a City social media site/website, he/she should correct it as soon as possible. Corrections should be upfront and timely.
  - b. If modifying an earlier post, make it clear that the post has been corrected.
  - c. Designate corrections with “Fixed Link” or “Fact Correction” prior to the correction.
  - d. Do not try to “hide” corrections, as someone may have seen the incorrect information and may be acting upon it.
- K. The City respects employees and agents’ rights to post and maintain personal websites, blogs and social media pages and to use and enjoy social media on their own personal devices during non-work hours. The City requires employees and agents to act in a prudent manner with regard to website and internet postings that reference the City of Faribault, its personnel, its operation or its property. Employees and agents and others affiliated with the City may not use a City brand, logo or other City identifiers on their personal sites, nor post information that purports to be the position of the City without prior authorization.
- L. City employees and agents are discouraged from identifying themselves as city employees when responding to or commenting on blogs with personal opinions or views. If an employee

chooses to identify him or herself as a City of Faribault employee, and posts a statement on a matter related to City business, a disclaimer similar to the following must be used:

- a. "These are my own opinions and do not represent those of the City."
- M. Occasional access to personal social media websites during work hours is permitted, but employees and agents must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the City's Computer Use Policy and the City's Respectful Workplace policy. Employees and agents should also review the Ownership section of this policy (below).
- N. There may be times when personal use of social media (even if it is off-duty or using the employee's own equipment) may spill over into the workplace and become the basis for employee coaching or discipline. Examples of situations where this might occur include:
  - a. Friendships, dating or romance between co-workers
  - b. Cyber-bullying, stalking or harassment
  - c. Release of confidential or private data; if there are question about what constitutes confidential or private data, contact Human Resources.
  - d. Unlawful activities
  - e. Misuse of city-owned social media
  - f. Inappropriate use of the city's name, logo or the employee's position or title
  - g. Using city-owned equipment or city-time for extensive personal social media use

Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are complex. If you have any questions about what types of activities might result in discipline, please discuss the type of usage with the HR Manager.

- O. Facilities or departments wishing to have a new social media presence must submit a request to the City Administrator in order to ensure social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. All approved sites will be clearly marked as the City of Faribault site and will be linked with the official City website ([www.ci.faribault.mn.us](http://www.ci.faribault.mn.us)). Login and password information for City social media accounts should be shared with the MIS Coordinator for storage purposes in case an account must be accessed in the absence of the employee maintaining the site. No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of the City unless authorized in accordance with this policy.

**4. Elected official and officials appointed to City Boards, Committees, and Commissions should comply with the following guidelines when posting to City of Faribault social media sites:**

- A. Official city social media sites shall not be used for campaigning purposes.
- B. Comments or links to any content that endorses or opposes political candidates or ballot propositions, including links to an elected official's campaign site shall not be posted. (ALL comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed).
- C. Elected officials and members serving on a city board, commission, or committee should be mindful of the risks of electronic communication in relation to the Minnesota Data Practices Act and the Open Meeting Law; two-way communication between elected officials or between members of the City boards, commissions, committees should be avoided. Adding to a post or comment on a non-public, private social media website that would create a quorum of the group you represent is prohibited. If the comment or posting requires official review it should be handled before the group at a public meeting.

- D. Social media sites should not be used as a mechanism for conducting official City business other than to informally communicate with the public.
- E. When posting or commenting on a City social media site, officials shall reveal their position, be honest, straightforward and respectful, and not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the City.
- F. In an effort to be honest, officials must ensure they do not share non-public information related to coworkers, personnel data, medical information, claims or lawsuits, or other non-public or confidential information.
- G. Strive to add value to any social media discussion by staying focused on the issue.
- H. To help prevent errors and liability issues, officials are encouraged to ask the City Administrator to provide response and clarification rather than summarizing them from memory.
- I. Officials are asked to correct errors or mistakes in a posting or comment as soon as possible. If you modify an earlier post, make it clear the posting has been corrected. Consider designating corrections with "Fixed link" or "Face correction" prior to the correction.

**5. Data Ownership**

All social media communication or messages composed, sent, or received on city equipment in an official capacity are the property of the City and will be subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. The City of Faribault also maintains the sole property rights to any image, video or audio captured while a City employee is representing the City in any capacity.

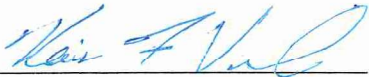
The City retains the right to monitor employee's social media use on city equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication.

**6. Policy Violations**

Violations of this Policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

THIS POLICY SPECIFICALLY REPEALS AND REPLACES PRIOR CITY POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDA RELATIVE TO SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES.

Approved:



Mayor



City Administrator

May 22, 2018

## **Appendix A**

### **City of Faribault**

#### **Social Media Disclaimer and Comments Policy**

The purpose of this and other City sponsored social media sites is to communicate between the City, its individual departments and members of the public. We reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to change, modify, add or delete comments or posts, photos and videos in accordance with this policy.

In general, it is the City's intent to not allow posts to be initiated by users on its social media pages. However, in the instances where comments are allowed, the City will remove comments that:

1. Contain obscenities;
2. Demean specific individuals or groups of people;
3. Are libelous/slanderous;
4. Contain factual inaccuracies;
5. Qualify as SPAM;
6. Are not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
7. Express support for or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
8. Contain sexual content or links to sexual content;
9. Solicit commerce;
10. Conduct or encourage illegal activity;
11. Compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
12. Violate a legal ownership interest of any other party.

Additionally, ALL comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed.

The views, postings, positions or opinions expressed on this site do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Faribault.

The City of Faribault does not use its social media sites to promote, become a "friend" of or "fan" of, or link to individuals or private sector businesses.

#### **Advertising**

The City of Faribault does not endorse any product, service, company or organization advertising on its social media pages. The ads that appear on social media pages are sold, posted and maintained by those social media sites.

#### **Privacy policy**

Please note that the City of Faribault does not share information gathered through its social media sites with third parties for promotional purposes. However, any information you provide to the City is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request.

**CITY OF FARIBAULT, SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**REPRESENTATIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have received and read the above policy and have had an opportunity to ask any questions. I understand that my failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action, including revocation of system privileges or termination.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Print Representative's Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Representative's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Print Department Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)



**CITY OF FARIBAULT**

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**RESOLUTION #2018-100**

**APPROVING COMPUTER USE POLICY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statutes, section 13.05, subdivision 5 requires cities to establish appropriate security safeguards for all records containing data on individuals, including procedures for ensuring that data that are not public are only accessible to persons whose work assignment reasonably requires access to the data, and is only being accessed by those persons for purposes described in the procedure; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes there are many evolving risks associated with storing and sharing data on computers and mobile devices; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Faribault must protect computers from data breaches, virus contamination, hacker attacks and employee misuse; and

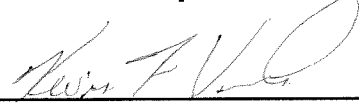
**WHEREAS**, the City Council also recognizes the different forms of social media and associated risks; and

**WHEREAS**, with the increased number of data breaches being reported, it is more important than ever to secure data and ensure there are policies in place to protect computer data.


**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the attached Computer Use Policy and the Social Media Policy dated May 22, 2018 are hereby adopted as written.

**Date Adopted:** May 22, 2018

**Faribault City Council**

  
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**Kevin F. Voracek, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

  
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**Timothy C. Murray, City Administrator**