

# **City of Elkins Social Media Policy**

## **Purpose**

This policy institutes guidelines for the establishment and use of sanctioned City of Elkins social media platforms as a means of communicating City information to its citizens. Further, this policy addresses city personnel use of personal social media sites as it relates to City business.

The intended purpose behind establishing City of Elkins social media sites is to disseminate information from the City and its associated departments to its citizens on commonly used information platforms.

The City of Elkins has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is communicated on behalf of the City on approved social media sites as well as protecting confidential and potentially harmful information from being released on city personnel's social media sites.

## **Applicability**

This policy applies to all City of Elkins employees, appointed officials and elected officials. It also applies to members of boards and commissions established by the City and volunteers providing service to the City. All parties will hereinafter be referred to collectively as "City Personnel".

This policy exists in coordination with the City of Elkins Personnel Manual Chapter 15.E: Ethics and Chapter 16: Office Technology and Systems Use. Any violation of this policy may be addressed under the auspices of the City or Elkins Personnel Manual Chapter 13: Disciplinary Policy.

The City reserves the right to revise this Social Media Policy at any time.

## **Definitions**

Social media – an umbrella term that encompasses the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation on the Internet. Social media use many technologies and forms, including but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google +, LinkedIn, Instagram, blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, other social networking, mashups, and virtual worlds.

Content – includes information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on a social media site.

## **General Policy**

1. The establishment and use of any City social media sites are subject to approval by the Personnel Committee. All City of Elkins social media sites shall be administered by authorized personnel only, appropriately designated for each department.
2. City social media sites should explicitly state that they are maintained by the City of Elkins and that they follow the City's Social Media Policy.
3. Wherever possible, City social media sites should link back to the official City of Elkins website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City of Elkins.
4. Authorized administrators will monitor content on City social media sites to ensure adherence to both the City's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the City of Elkins.
5. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law.
6. Comments on topics or issues not considered to be within the relevant concerns of the City of Elkins may be removed.
7. These guidelines must be displayed to users of City social media sites or made available by hyperlink.
8. The City will strive for consistency in its approach to the use of all social media tools.
9. All City social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
10. The City of Elkins website at [www.cityofelkinswv.com](http://www.cityofelkinswv.com) will remain the City's primary and predominant internet repository of accessible online information.
11. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business may be considered a public record subject to public disclosure. This may include a list of subscribers (excluding information of a personal nature), posted communication, and communication submitted for posting.

## **City Personnel Policy**

*The following guidelines apply to any sanctioned City social media site:*

1. Employees designated to represent individual department's interests on City sites are to be approved by the department head and submitted to the Personnel Committee. Any changes in this designation must be submitted to the Personnel Committee immediately.
2. The use of department computers by City Personnel to access social media for personal use is prohibited without authorization.

3. City Personnel use of personally owned devices to manage the City's social media activities or in the course of official duties is prohibited without express permission from the department supervisor.
4. Any City Personnel who alter, comment or access any City social media site are to conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City and, accordingly, shall adhere to all City and departmental standards of conduct as well as observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
5. City Personnel shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark and service mark restrictions in posting content to any City social media site.

*City Personnel are prohibited from the following on City sanctioned social media sites:*

1. Posting, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to City training, activities, or work-related assignments without express written permission.
2. Offering speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images or acts and statements or forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, religion or protected class of individuals.
3. Making any statements, speeches, appearances or endorsements' or publish materials that could be reasonable considered to represent the views or positions of the City without express authorization.
4. Conducting political activities or private business.
5. Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern and would be offensive to a reasonable person.
6. Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitive purpose; or publish the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.

*City Personnel are prohibited from the following on personal social media sites:*

1. Posting, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to City training, activities, or work-related assignments without express permission.
2. Making any statements, speeches, appearances or endorsements, or publishing materials that could be reasonable considered to represent the views or positions of the City without express authorization.
3. Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern and would be offensive to a reasonable person.
4. Posting any content which would jeopardize police or fire investigations, or be viewed as harmful to the City or its administrators.

### *Public Comment policy*

1. As a public entity the City must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
2. The intended purpose behind establishing City of Elkins social media sites is to disseminate information from the City, about the City, to its citizens.
3. Comments or profiles/screen names/handles containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on City of Elkins social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the authorized administrators:
  - a. Unrelated to the original topic, including those found to be random or unintelligible;
  - b. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic images or language;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin;
  - d. Defamatory or personal attacks;
  - e. Threats to any person or organization;
  - f. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
  - g. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
  - h. Conduct in violation of any federal , state or local law;
  - i. Encouragement of illegal activity;
  - j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - k. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, or any party.
4. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Elkins social media site in the opinion of the commentator or poster only, any publication of a comment or other type of content, does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by the City of Elkins, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions of the City of Elkins.
5. The City of Elkins reserves the right to deny access to City of Elkins social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Elkins' Social Media Policy, at any time without prior notice.
6. When City Personnel responds to content in his or her capacity as a City employee, appointed official, elected official or other representative, their name and title should be made available.

Nothing in this policy shall restrict or prohibit a City department from developing and adopting their own policy regarding topics covered herein with the approval of City Council. Departmental policies shall not be more lenient or permit behavior restricted by this policy, but may be more restrictive in nature.