

City of Port Townsend – Social Media Policy
Finalized 03/26/20

Purpose

Use of social media by the City of Port Townsend is to further enhance the City's outreach to a broader audience. Social media channels allow the City to publish time-sensitive information quickly as well as inform the community about City programs, services, projects, and news. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media and is intended to inform employees and the public.

The City reserves the right to remove any content from its social media sites at any time.

Communication made through the platform's email and messaging system will in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment to the City or any official or employee of the City for any purpose.

All City of Port Townsend communications, including social media are public records and are subject to public disclosure.

COVID-19 Social Media Pilot

1. In response to an immediate need for additional communication and engagement channels posed by the COVID-19 emergency, the City has decided to deploy its first social media channel via Facebook.
2. The City Manager is responsible for developing or approving all content and posts to ensure consistency of message, regular frequency of posts and focus on our most immediate communication needs during the emergency. Department Directors or staff may propose posts or content for consideration, but additional sites or channels will be limited at this time to this one pilot.
3. The social media pilot via Facebook will begin on 3/26/20 and will be re-evaluated on 5/26/20 for a decision to proceed and, if so, to make modifications to approach.

Use of Social Media Platforms

1. After the initial pilot period described above, use of any and all social media sites by City of Port Townsend departments must receive prior approval from the City Manager and will be subject to review. In order to gain approval for an additional site, departments need to present a Social Media Action Plan which includes:
 - a. Overall vision for social media strategy
 - b. Why a specific social media page is the right fit
 - c. Goals and objectives
 - d. Target audiences

- e. Resources and staff time needed
 - f. Marketing and public feedback opportunities
 - g. Records retention
 - h. Success metrics
2. The City's official website (www.cityofpt.us & www.ptpubliclibrary.org/library) will remain the City's primary means of internet communication.
3. City social media sites shall clearly state that such sites are maintained by the City and that the sites comply with the City's social media policy.
4. City social media sites shall link back to the City's official website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct City business. Social media sites are not a mechanism for conducting official City business, rather a channel to informally communicate with the public.
5. The City reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.
6. The City's social media policy shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
7. City of Port Townsend social media sites shall include notification to site users/visitors that the intended purpose of this site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the City departments and the members of public.

Content

1. All content on City social media sites shall be reviewed, approved, and administered by the City Manager's office.
2. City social media sites may contain content, including but not limited to, advertisements or hyperlinks over which the City has no control. The City does not endorse any such hyperlink or advertisement placed on City social media sites by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners.
3. The content of City social media shall only pertain to City-sponsored or City-endorsed programs, services and events. Content includes but is not limited to information, photo graphs, videos and hyperlinks.
4. The City shall have full permission and right to any content posted by the City, including photographs and videos.
5. Content provided on City social media sites should avoid the use of abbreviations, jargon, acronyms or slang. Although social media sites are often more casual than other communications tools, they still represent the City and should maintain a professional image.
6. The following content will not be allowed on the site:
 - a. Comments not typically related to a particular social media thread
 - b. Comments in support or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures
 - c. Profane language or content
 - d. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination of any kind
 - e. Sexual content or links to sexual content

- f. Solicitations of commerce
- g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- h. Personal attacks

Any content removed based on these restrictions must be retained including time and date of the posting and identity of the poster.

Procedures/Guidelines/Content

1. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the City's social media sites shall review, be familiar with, and comply with the City's social media policy, and review it regularly to ensure compliance.
2. Each department using social media sites will be responsible for the content and up-keep of any social media sites their department may create. To promote consistency and timeliness of information each department shall designate one employee who may post information and maintain the social media site.
3. Staff are encouraged to post secondary copies of information to social media sites rather than original source content. For example, staff should post information that has already been posted on the City's website.
4. All City social media sites shall be set up with the approved City branding guidelines and City logo. This includes the official City name.
5. Posting shall be made during normal business hours using City equipment. After-hours or weekend posting shall only be made with approval of the City Manager's office.
6. Some comments to City posts may require an answer. The answer needs to be timely and accurate. Only staff members that are authorized to respond shall respond.
7. A social media platform like any communications resource must be updated regularly to ensure information provided is current, accurate, and useful. If a City account is no longer updated on a regular basis, the City Manager's office may discontinue its use and close the account, while ensuring all records are preserved in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Social media site content should be updated at least once per week.

Roles

1. The Communications Officer or the appropriate member of the City Manager's office staff will be responsible for the following:
 - a. Administer and enforce this policy.
 - b. Oversee and confirm decisions regarding social media sites including authorization of sites, and requests for usage.
 - c. Provide oversight for account set-up to assure compliance with applicable brand standards, and records management requirements.

- d. Maintain a list of social media sites and tools which are approved for use by City departments and staff, including log-on and password information.
- e. Monitor content to ensure adherence to the policy and the interest and goals of the City.
- f. Remove prohibited content.
- g. Archive content as per required records retention and compliance laws.
- h. Create name, brand and image guidelines for all City social media accounts

City Council Use of Social Media

1. Participation in online discussions by City Council Members or members of City boards and commissions could constitute a meeting under Open Public Meetings Act. In order to avoid a violation of state law, Council Members and members of a City boards and commissions may not participate in discussions on the City's social media sites.
2. City Council Members, Boards and Commissions members are not permitted to create a City individual social media account.
3. City Council Members, Boards and Commissions members should not talk about City business on their personal non-City social media accounts.

Public Records Compliance

1. Information posted to the City's social media sites are subject to the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) and records retention requirements (RCW 40.41) set by state law.
2. All comments posted by outside users on City social media sites, including those that are inappropriate and removed by staff, must be retained. When staff removes inappropriate content, they need to include their name and the date and time that content was removed.
3. All social media sites are subject to state law regarding the creation, storage and disposition of public records. The Communications Officer or appropriate member of the City Manager's office staff will ensure that City accounts are appropriately archived, and data preserved in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
4. All City accounts must clearly state that content is subject to public disclosure.