

REGION OF QUEENS MUNICIPALITY

Operational Policy No. 83 Social Media Policy

General Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Region of Queens Municipality (“Municipality”) to provide clarity and direction respecting the use of social media for employees, volunteers and elected officials.

Policy Objectives

1. To establish a policy that promotes municipal transparency and accountability to the public; and,
2. Provides clarity to employees, volunteers and elected officials with respect to their role representing the Municipality, and their interactions and representations on social media.

Policy Directions

Municipality’s Social Media Accounts and Postings

1. The creation and administration of social media sites, including but not limited to, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, representing the Municipality must be authorized in advance by the Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”).
2. Operation and administration of the Municipality’s social media accounts and postings will be delegated by the CAO to the Communications Officer outlined in the Communications Strategy. Only persons authorized per the Communications Strategy shall post on behalf of the Municipality on any social media medium. Further, only content approved by the official spokesperson or their delegate shall be posted on behalf of the Municipality.
3. When the Municipality uses a social media site which allows public comments and posts, the following content will not be permitted:
 - Comments/posts not related to a posted article/topic/information;
 - Business solicitation;
 - Profane or inappropriate language;
 - Content considered to be defamatory, disparaging, disrespectful or insulting to individuals, including municipal staff or representatives;

- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation or any other prohibited ground of discrimination under the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity; and
- Any content deemed inappropriate by the Municipality.

The Municipality reserves the right to monitor its social media sites and remove any content. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, if the Municipality finds any content on its social media site that offends section 3 herein, it will remove the content, or contact the appropriate administrator or network and request the content be removed.

4. User comments and messages posted to official social networking sites are considered transitory records and will not be kept as a permanent record by the Municipality.

Use of any Social Media

5. Social Media sites are public, regardless of the privacy settings. As such, any postings (content, statements, pictures or comments, etc.) by an employee, volunteer or elected official, regardless of whether posted on Municipality sites or otherwise, could negatively impact the Municipality, its reputation, workplace, other employees, partners/vendors or its customers/clients.

Employees, volunteers and elected officials are required to comply with the following guidelines when making posts or comments on **any** social media site, regardless of whether their social media interactions are during or outside of work hours:

- a. Conduct and represent themselves professionally;
- b. Posts, pictures, comments or any content involving the following will not be tolerated:
 - i. Proprietary and confidential municipal information, including internal information and activities, confidential information of municipal employees, businesses partners, customers or clients;
 - ii. Inappropriate content, including harassing, bullying, intimidating and discriminatory content or sexual innuendos regarding employees, management, volunteers, Council members or other elected officials, customers/ clients, corresponding organizations or vendors; and

- iii. Defamatory, derogatory or disparaging statements regarding the Municipality its employees, management, volunteers, Council members or other elected officials, customers/clients, corresponding organizations, or vendors.
 - c. No employee, volunteer or Council member shall purport to speak or post on behalf of the Municipality, unless they have received the authorization to do so, as outlined in this policy and the Communication Strategy (as amended from time to time).
 - d. Unless acting as the official or authorized spokesperson, the comments or postings of staff or elected officials do not represent the Municipality; however, all staff, volunteers and elected officials shall comply with this policy.
6. The use of social media in the workplace must not have a negative impact on that employee's productivity or efficiency, or the productivity or efficiency of others in the workplace.
7. Any communications sent over the Municipality's networks and computers are the Municipality's records. At any time without prior notice, the Municipality reserves the right to examine and analyze email, personal file directories, internet access logs, and any other information stored on the Municipalities computers. Such examinations support external and internal investigations, assure compliance with various policies, and assist in the management of information systems. Employees, volunteers and elected officials should have no expectation of privacy associated with the information they store in or send through these systems, whether encrypted or not. Employees, volunteers or elected officials using the Municipality's information systems and/or Internet access should realize that their communications are not automatically protected from viewing by third parties. Do not sent information over the Internet or internally that is considered sensitive or private without encrypting the message.
8. The Municipality will adhere to all applicable legislation regarding privacy and freedom of information, including but not limited to, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. In addition, the Municipality's records may be subject to subpoena by a court of competent jurisdiction. As such, employees, volunteers and elected officials should be aware that personal and other information contained in electronic correspondence (or printed versions thereof) which are directed to the Municipality or other information contained on the Municipality's networks and computers may be required to be disclosed under legislation or pursuant to a subpoena from a court of competent jurisdiction. The anonymity or confidentiality of the sender or author of any information contained within the correspondence or otherwise contained on the Municipality's networks and computers cannot be presumed or relied upon.

Failure to Abide by Policy

9. Any employee who fails to follow this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Any volunteer who fails to follow this policy, may face a restriction or removal from volunteer roles, activities or opportunities.

Council members who fail to follow this this policy may be subject to corrective action by Council in accordance with Policy 74 – Code of Conduct for members of Council and Public Committee Members.

Approved by Council: June 13, 2017