

CITY OF GUSTAVUS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Title: Policy on Social Media Use

Purpose

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for the City of Gustavus, the “City”. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, City departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on its behalf on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

Definitions

“Social Media” means the collection of web tools that facilitate collaboration and data sharing. Web based communities and hosted services include social-networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc.), video and photo sharing sites (i.e. Instagram), wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, and all other emerging technologies that are used to communicate or share information with others electronically.

“Limited Public Forum” is a subcategory of the public forum created by a government for expressive activity that may be restricted as to subject matter without violating the first amendment right to free speech.

Acceptable Use

Personal Use

All City employees may have personal social networking, Web 2.0 and social media sites. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or nonwork related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and City views.

City employees must never use their City e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking, Web 2.0 or social media site.

The following guidance is for City employees who decide to have a personal social media, Web 2.0 or social networking site or who decide to comment on posts about official City business:

- Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t reflect or represent the positions of the City or the City Council for which I work.”

Professional Use

All official City-related communication through social media, Web 2.0 and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with the City's communications policy, practices and expectations. Employees must not use official City social media, Web 2.0 or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities, or for personal communications.

Inappropriate or improper usage of official City social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites can be grounds for disciplinary action, including termination. If social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites are used for official City business, the entire City site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best practices guidelines and standards. Only public information, which could not be withheld in response to a public records request, may be shared to any City social media site.

Individuals may only publish content on behalf of the City if they have been given written authorization to do so through the City of Gustavus Authorized Social Media Form found in the City of Gustavus Social Media Guide.

Approval and Registration

All City social media sites shall be

- (1) approved by the City Administrator;
- (2) published using approved social networking platform and tools; and
- (3) administered only by those to whom the City Administrator has granted permission.

Oversight and Enforcement

Employees representing the City through social media outlets or participating in social media features on City websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in City social media sites, blogs, or other social media features and possible disciplinary action, including termination.

Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy, and should avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms.

City employees recognize that the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official City statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other City communication policies.

City employees shall not publish information on City social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information (this includes people's names, addresses, or other identifying information about people unless that person gives permission to do so.)
- Copyright violations

- Profanity, racist, sexist, insensitive or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM
 - Internal city or department communications that do not represent policy or position statements of the City

Records Retention

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the City and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to AS 40.25 Public Record Disclosures and CoG Title 2 Chapter 2.70 – Documents and Records. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (for example, digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).

City utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by a professional archiving contractor to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements. Contact the City Administrator or the City Clerk to access the City social media archive site.

Internal Disciplinary Procedures

City employees who do not follow this policy may lose social media privileges and are subject to City of Gustavus Code Section 3.08.090 Progressive Discipline, including termination.

EXTERNAL POLICY

The following guidelines must be displayed to users on all social media sites or made available by hyperlink.

Moderation of Third-Party Content

This City social media site serves as a limited public forum and all content published is subject to monitoring. User-generated posts will be rejected or removed (if possible) when the content:

- is off-subject or out of context
- contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest
- contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information
- contains offensive terms that target protected classes
- is threatening, harassing or discriminatory
- incites or promotes violence or illegal activities
- contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual. This does not include mentioning or thanking individuals and/ or entities in regards to when they partner and/or sponsor a particular city program.
- involves or relates to political campaigns or candidates

Public Records Law

City social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to City business, including communication posted by the City and communication received from citizens, is a public record.