



**APPROVED MAY 23, 2016**

## **ROCK ISLAND TOWNSHIP** **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by Township elected officials and employees when engaged in Township business.

Social media at this time refers to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google Plus, and any other form of communication that is open to response or comment. Rules are necessary to assure that:

- communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form;
- communications to the Township by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent;
- all communications to the Township are directed to the proper recipient; and
- the sender is clearly and fully informed that a message received by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

The objective of the use of social media by the Township is to expand and facilitate communication between the Township and its residents, taxpayers and the general public, and so that interested citizens may also share Township information. Users are encouraged to submit comments, questions and concerns, but please note that Township social media sites may serve as moderated online discussions and not public forums.

### **Standards**

1. This policy governs all social media use by or on behalf of the Township.
2. The Township shall have a single, official presence on each social media site approved for use.
3. All Township presence and activity on social media are an integral part of the Township's information networks and must comply with all rules and policies governing the Township's computers and electronic media, as detailed in the Personnel Policy.
4. All Township users of social media, are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws, and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Township.
5. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the Township's official website.
6. Employees representing Township government on social media outlets must identify themselves by name, and when relevant, by role at the Township. All Township policies

are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.

7. The designated Township Administrator(s) shall monitor content on all social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with Township goals.
8. No “friending,” “liking” or other special relationship between a Township elected official or employee and a third person is permitted.
9. Social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, giving notice required by any statute, ordinance or regulation (e.g. notice of claim). Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting such a communication.
10. The Township Administrator(s) or duly designated Webmaster shall have the authority to remove any Prohibited Content (see below) from any Township social media site at any time, subject to archiving and retention requirements.

### **Prohibited Content**

The following content is prohibited and subject to removal:

- a. Comments or images not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
- b. Comments or images that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- c. Comments or images containing vulgar, offensive, threatening, or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations;
- d. Defamatory statements or personal attacks;
- e. Threats to any person or organization;
- f. Profane, obscene, sexually suggestive, explicit or pornographic content or links to such sites;
- g. Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity;
- h. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as copyright or trademark;
- j. Internet links of any kind;
- k. Content that incites violence;
- l. Information about a user that is private or personal;
- m. Spamming or repetitive content;
- n. Content in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
- o. Promotion of services, products or activities not related to governmental business, including charitable solicitations or proselytizing;
- p. Solicitation of commerce, including advertising any business or product for sale.

Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township Social Media.

### **Applicability**

This policy shall apply to all Township elected officials and employees permitted by the Township to post on Township social media sites.