

CITY OF CENTENNIAL, COLORADO
CITY COUNCIL POLICY NO. 2021-CCP-01

**CITY COUNCIL POLICY CONCERNING
USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

DATE OF POLICY/REVISION:	October 4, 2021 (Resolution No. 2021-R-43)
PURPOSE AND INTENT:	This Policy establishes the rules, procedures, and guidelines for City Official's use of social media.
SCHEDULED REVIEW AND REVISION:	As deemed necessary or desirable by the City Council or upon recommendation of the City Manager or the City Attorney.
ATTACHMENT(S):	None
REFERENCE(S):	None
SPECIAL PROVISIONS	The City Council reserves the right to amend or rescind this Policy at any time without notice.

I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The City is committed to enhancing the traditional communication methods through the use of Social Media. This commitment primarily stems from public expectations, the capabilities of current technology, and the City's current use of Social Media. The City recognizes that Social Media can be used effectively to enhance communications.

Unless otherwise specifically noted, when the City establishes a City website or Social Media Account it does so to communicate to the public, to inform, and to relay official City Content. The City, therefore, regulates the City Social Media Sites that it maintains for the following reasons:

- Posts on City Social Media Sites appear to carry the approval of the City and unauthorized posts on those sites can confuse people as to whether the City endorses the post or if a specific post forms a position of the City and whether it is the City's official position.
- City Social Media Sites are not intended to operate as a traditional open public forum as there are ample open forums for purposes of expressing opinions and views.

This Policy is adopted to provide guidance and information to the public on the City's use of Social Media and guidance to City Officials on the use of Social Media.

II. AUTHORITY:

The City Council, as the legislative body, is authorized to adopt policies that establish rules and guidelines governing City Council's conduct and appointed members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions of the City.

III. SCOPE:

This Policy establishes the policies and procedures that govern City Officials when working with Social Media tools on behalf of the City, and the Policy applies to an Official's use of personal Social Media Sites.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

City Business is any activity carried out by an employee or an Official in the performance of City duties and responsibilities.

City Social Media Sites are those pages, sections, or posting locations in Social Media websites established, managed, or maintained by an employee of the City authorized to do so as part of the employee's duties.

Content is any post, writing, material, document, photograph, graphic, or other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted via Social Media.

Custodian is the Custodian of Records and means the City Clerk.

Officials mean all City Elected and Appointed officials including all members of City

Council, Boards, Committees and Commissions of the City.

Social Media is internet and mobile-based applications, websites, and functions, other than email with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation, and information sharing. These venues include social networking sites, forums, weblogs (blogs, vlogs, microblogs), online chat sites, and video/photo posting sites, or any other such similar output or format. Examples include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and emerging new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed.

Social Media Account any account established on Social Media.

Social Media Administrator means the City Employee or Employees expressly designated by the City Manager to monitor, manage, supervise, or control the City Social Media Sites as provided in this policy.

Personal Use is any use of social media that is not conducted for City Business.

V. POLICY:

A. Overview.

- (1) All City departments may use the City's Social Media as outlined in this policy. Social Media is a communication channel for distributing information to the public. It is used in addition to existing communication channels such as City newsletters, the website, press releases, and official documents. The City encourages the use of social media sites and tools to further the goals and vision of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate. The most appropriate uses of City Social Media Sites are for:
 - (a) time-sensitive and emergency information;
 - (b) citizen engagement, promotions,
 - (c) public service announcements;
 - (d) information on City projects; and
 - (e) as a tool to direct citizens and site users to the City's official website.
- (2) The Communications Department is responsible for implementing this Policy and leading the City's Social Media efforts for official City Business. The Communications Director serves as the Social Media Administrator of the City.
- (3) City Officials are responsible for ensuring that all use and contributions to City Social Media Sites adhere to the standards of conduct and requirements as regulated in this Policy.

- (4) All information posted and other activity conducted on Social Media Sites may be subject to the Colorado Open Records Act, Part 2, Article 72, Title 24, C.R.S., and records retention guidelines.
 - (a) All City Social Media Sites should contain a statement that all Content submitted by users is potentially subject to disclosure pursuant to the Colorado Open Records Act.
 - (b) All information and Content on a City Social Media Site that is required to be retained under state law and City retention policies and guidelines shall be maintained for the required retention period on a City server in a format that preserves the metadata of the original record.
- (5) All laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including City of Centennial's own copyrights and brands shall be followed on Social Media Sites.
- (6) The City's Social Media Sites may be designated as a limited public forum. As a limited public forum, the Social Media Administrator is authorized to edit and remove unauthorized Content or links posted on City Social Media Sites as provided in this Policy.
- (7) Use of Social Media Sites shall not serve as a replacement for official postings and notifications required by law except under and as allowed by those laws.
- (8) The Social Media Administrator is responsible for developing and administering the City's presence on a Social Media Account that is the City's Official Social Media Account or Site. The Social Media Administrator or designee review, monitor and enforce all approved Social Media Accounts and sites.
- (9) The City Manager is the final decision-making authority for the approval or denial of any Social Media Sites and the use of such Sites by the City.

B. City Official's Use of Social Media for City Business.

- (1) Members of City Council and City Boards, Committees, and Commissions must comply with this policy.
- (2) City Officials may suggest Content for the City Social Media Sites. Content suggestions must be submitted to the City Manager or designee and that person is responsible for ensuring that any request for Social Media tools or resources is coordinated with the Social Media Administrator.
- (3) The City does not create, operate, or maintain Social Media Accounts for the use of City Officials. City Officials may not create a site or account or platform separate from the City Social Media Sites for conducting City Business or as operated in an official capacity.

- (4) City Social Media Sites may be subject to the Colorado Open Meetings Law, Part 4, Article 6, Title 24, C.R.S. Online communications by City Officials regarding public business may fall under the definition of a meeting and may be subject to the requirements of the Colorado Open Meetings Law. City Officials must comply with Colorado Open Meetings Law and must not use City Social Media Sites to discuss matters that may only be discussed in a public meeting. City Officials who "like," comment, share, tweet, or otherwise engage in another City Official's Content on Social Media may be engaging in City business and the open meetings law may apply if there is discussion that accompanies that conduct. City Officials may "like" or share content on City Social Media Sites provided the City Official does not engage in discussion regarding the content
- (5) To avoid a violation of the Fair Campaign Practices Act, Article 45, Title 1, C.R.S., City Officials may not use Social Media Sites to discuss a candidate for elected office, any political party, ballot proposal, or any organization seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office or ballot proposal.
- (6) City Officials must identify themselves by name and position title when participating in City Social Media Sites.
- (7) City Officials may not claim to speak on behalf of the City, the City Council, or any City department when participating in City Social Media Sites unless authorized to do so by the City Council.
- (8) The City's Code of Ethics applies to communications and participation on the City Social Media Sites. A City Official's participation on the City Social Media Sites must be conducted without bias or prejudice. City Officials are prohibited from using City Social Media Sites to engage in any activity that constitutes a conflict of interest.
- (9) It is anticipated that from time to time, City Officials may have access to information that is considered privileged or confidential under Colorado law. Such information is typically considered to be an exception to the public records law and may be specific consequences for inappropriate disclosure. By way of example, such information may include but is not limited to personnel information, non-public information from criminal investigations, and attorney-client privileged communications. City Officials must not reveal any confidential or privileged information about the City, its constituents, its employees, or its contractors.
- (10) Regular business of the City Council, board, committee, or commission may be posted to the City Social Media Sites without formal action of the City Council, board, commission, or committee provided that posted documents are also available on the City's website. In general, it is preferred that such a posting simply provides a link back to information and documents posted on the City website. "Regular business" is defined as the standard and routine activity of any council, board, committee, or commission, and generally includes agendas, minutes, presentation documents, and backup items created during the course of regular Board proceedings.

C. City Official's Use of Social Media for Campaigning or other Election Activities.

- (1) The City does not create, operate, or maintain Social Media Accounts for the use of City Officials for a campaign or other election activities ("Campaign Social Media Site"). A Campaign Social Media Site may not be operated in the City Official's official capacity.
- (2) City Officials who create, operate, or maintain a Campaign Social Media Site may not use the City's trademark or logo.
- (3) The Campaign Social Media Site should be identified as a campaign Social Media Site. To identify the site as a campaign one, it is recommended that a disclaimer such as the example provided below is added to the intro or about section:

This is my campaign Facebook account and is intended for my campaign messaging. This account is not affiliated with the City of Centennial. The postings on this account are my own and do not reflect or represent the City of Centennial's opinions or views. I reserve the right to remove any content on my page. I review posts and comments to this page, and I reserve the right to restrict any content.

- (4) City Officials may not speak as a representative of the City or City Council in the course of their personal use of Social Media.
- (5) City Officials may identify themselves as holding an elected or appointed position with the City. In the situation where a City Official's personal use of Social Media may be perceived as being on behalf of the City, such as if the City Official does identify his or her role, the City Official should include a disclaimer either on the Social Media Site or in the post or comments (for example, "the posting on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the City of Centennial's positions or opinions.").
- (6) It is recommended that the City Official deactivate or cease using the campaign social media site after the person is elected and is no longer campaigning.

D. Guidelines for Officials' Personal Use of Social Media

- (1) City Council recognizes that many City Officials use Social Media tools such as Facebook in their personal lives. This Section of the Policy provides guidelines for City Officials for the personal use of Social Media as a private citizen.
- (2) The purpose of these guidelines is not to stifle rights of free speech, but to ensure that when City Officials are speaking as private citizens that they clearly communicate their status in doing so and do not violate laws designed to protect confidential information, to adhere to the rules of ethics,

public records laws and open meeting law requirements, and to protect and maintain the stability and integrity of the workplace.

- (3) Personal or private business venture Social Media Account names must not be tied to the City. For example, CityofCentennialFinance or CentennialSeniorCom would not be appropriate personal account names.
- (4) If engaging in discussion regarding City Business or commenting on a post involving City Business, City Officials must use a disclaimer, which establishes that their comments represent their own opinions and do not represent those of the City (for example, "It is my individual, personal opinion . . .").
- (5) City Officials must not attribute personal statements or opinions to the City when engaging in private blogging or postings on Social Media Sites. If through their identification or their posts, there is reasonable confusion as to whether their statements might be attributable to the City, then the City Officials should clarify that the post is their own and not those of the City. A clear and conspicuous disclaimer will usually be sufficient to dispel any confusion that may arise.
- (6) City Officials must not use their City email account or password in conjunction with a personal social media site.
- (7) City Officials must not use a City brand, logo, or other City identifiers on their personal sites, nor post information that purports to be the position of the City without *prior* authorization.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE:

This Policy shall be effective on October 4, 2021, the effective date of Resolution 2021-R-43, approving this Policy.

VII. APPROVAL:

Resolution No. 2021-R-43



Stephanie Piko, Mayor

10/4/2021

Date

ATTEST:



City Clerk or Deputy City Clerk