



COUNTY OF ST. PAUL NO. 19

BALANCING RURAL HERITAGE WITH A DIVERSE ECONOMY

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The County of St. Paul desires to provide online communications using County-managed social media platforms to inform the public on a diverse variety of topics. County-managed social media platforms will be used to communicate County initiatives, goals, objectives, educate the public, and provide any other pertinent information.

A) **POLICY STATEMENT**

The County shall endeavor to deliver prompt, positive, courteous, and responsive communications on Approved County Social Media Platforms that reflect the needs and concerns of the public, while respecting privacy and individual rights for all those who participate.

B) **DEFINITIONS**

- 1) **“Approved County Social Media Platform”** means social networks and websites that the Chief Administrative Officer and Communications Coordinator have assessed and approved for County use;
- 2) **“Social Media”** is an umbrella term for various online communication channels in which the objective is to publicly share information and create a dynamic interaction between parties. These channels can include Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter as well as blogs, discussion boards, mobile applications, photo boards, podcasts, video-sharing, websites, and wikis or any other online location where commentary is publicly shared by an authorized employee; and
- 3) **“User-Created Content”** means comments, opinions, ratings, responses, reviews, and tags provided by an external individual or a group on a social media site concerning content posted on the site or a topical issue.

C) PURPOSE

- 1) This policy governs the use of Approved County Social Media Platforms used to further the business purposes of the County, while protecting and promoting the County's image.
- 2) The primary goals of the County's use of social media are as follows:
 - (a) Increase awareness of municipal services;
 - (b) Enhance existing corporate communication methods and processes;
 - (c) Provide an additional mechanism through which the County keeps abreast of customer comments and perceptions regarding the municipality;
 - (d) Disseminate time-sensitive information quickly;
 - (e) Provide communication in a cost-effective manner;
 - (f) Correct misinformation and remedy mistakes;
 - (g) Develop trust and build relationships with the public;
 - (h) Use Social Media analytical tools to help monitor, track, and evaluate the County's communications and marketing efforts; and
 - (i) Provide an alternate method for stakeholders to engage with the County.

D) SCOPE

- 1) This policy applies to Social Media use for official and authorized corporate purposes only.
- 2) This policy applies to all County employees who are authorized to post information on Approved County Social Media Platforms in an official capacity on behalf of the County. It does not apply to personal use of social media by employees conducted on personal equipment.
- 3) Social Media sites representing the Reeve and Councillors are exempt from this policy, as this activity is governed by the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw.
- 4) Communication through Social Media must comply with all other relevant corporate policies, procedures, and guidelines as well as federal and provincial legislation.

E) GENERAL MATTERS

- 1) The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for authorizing employees to use Social Media on behalf of the County, and for designating appropriate access levels.
- 2) Directors and managers are responsible for establishing and sharing content with the Communications Coordinator that needs to be posted to Approved County Social Media Platforms.
- 3) Authorized employees shall only post within their area of subject matter expertise. Where appropriate, an employee may inform readers that another authorized employee with subject matter expertise may respond at a later time.
- 4) Where possible, Social Media accounts will clearly indicate that they are maintained by the County and will contain relevant contact information. Profile images for Approved County Social Media Platforms shall contain the County's official logo.
- 5) No confidential information shall be posted to any Approved County Social Media Platforms.
- 6) User-Created-Content containing any of the following shall not be allowed on the Approved County Social Media Platforms and may be removed by the Communications Coordinator:
 - (a) Comments not typically related to the particular site or article being commented on;
 - (b) Profane language or content;
 - (c) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
 - (d) Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - (e) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - (f) Comments determined by the County to be a specific attack on groups or individuals or to be inherently political in nature or cause;

- (g) Content that reveals personal or private information about any particular person or is otherwise protected by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
 - (h) Content that violates any County policies; and
 - (i) Content that is deemed inappropriate by the County's Chief Administrative Officer and/or Communications Coordinator.
- 7) The County reserves the right to add, edit, modify, or remove content or other information or materials submitted by users.
 - 8) The County may share links to other websites as part of efforts to serve online participants. The County is not responsible for the content of any linked websites and these links do not constitute an endorsement of those websites.
 - 9) Approved County Social Media Platforms are monitored from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday excluding statutory holidays, declared holidays, and during office closures as determined by Council from time to time.
 - 10) Authorized employees posting on Approved County Social Media Platforms shall adhere to the Employee Ethics Policy HR-1.

