

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**  
**MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF VICTORIA**

**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 These social media guidelines set responsibilities and procedures intended to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange through the use of social media technology. Use of social media for municipal purposes falls under the same legal and ethical standards as any other means of communications with the public on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Victoria.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

- 1) To use social media platforms to engage, share & exchange information with Victoria County residents, visitors and businesses, utilizing text, photos and videos in virtual communities & networks; to guide traffic to the Victoria County website, linking users to relevant and current municipal information;
- 2) To monitor the results of various social media tools (e.g. Facebook insights, Twitter analytics etc.) and to determine the best social media tools to use based on analytics;

**3. APPLICABILITY**

- 3.1 These guidelines apply to all municipal service areas and covers officially established, publicly available and Municipally-managed social media accounts.

**4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The following principles will guide the social media practices of the Municipality of the County of Victoria.

- 4.1 **Value** – to encourage the safe, creative and effective use of social media by municipal staff by providing a framework for the application of the policies and guidelines that oversee social media use and to encourage information sharing, collaborations and citizen engagement about our activities and our operations;
- 4.2 **Quality of Service** – to improve communication and public engagement through the presentation of information and knowledge that is timely, accurate and relevant. Every post must have a purpose;
- 4.3 **Transparency** – to present information to the public in a way that is easily discoverable and readily accessible and presents the Municipality in a fair and reasonable manner;
- 4.4 **Respect** – to ensure that social media interactions are conducted in a manner that conforms to the same professional and ethical standards required in the workplace and that any municipal social media platforms are not used for political or personal purposes;
- 4.5 **Integrity** – to ensure that municipal staff and Council conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on social media sites, respecting laws of copyright, software licensing, property rights, security and privacy;

- 4.6 **Accountability** – to require that all municipal staff and Council are responsible for understanding and following the relevant policies and procedures affecting the use of social media;
- 4.7 **Legislative** – to adhere to applicable provincial, federal and municipal laws, regulations and policies;

## 5. DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 **Social Media** means any online, electronic communication for publication or commentary including but not limited to blogs, wikis and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram. It can involve a variety of formats, including texts, pictures, video, audio, and real-time dialogues. Not all forms of social media may be appropriate for use by the Municipality;
- 5.2 **Contributor** refers to any authorized staff of the Municipality (full and part-time, Councillors and other municipal advisors or consultants using municipal resources) who create content that is posted to any of the Municipality’s social media accounts;
- 5.3 **Subscriber** refers to the members of the public who receive or access content from a social media account. Different forms of social media may have specific jargon for this concept (e.g. Facebook ‘friends’, Twitter subscribers are known as ‘followers’). Subscribers may, depending on the privacy settings of the social media site, submit comments for posting in response to content;
- 5.4 **Moderator** refers to an authorized municipal staff person who reviews authorizes and allows content submitted by staff contributors and public subscribers to be posted to a municipal-managed social media account;

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1 The Chief Administrative Officer will:

- Administer and implement the Social Media guidelines of the municipality and;
- Identify necessary revisions to the Social Media Guidelines in consultation with other managerial staff;
- Act as the moderator or appoint the another staff member to act as moderator responsible for reviewing, authorizing, and allowing content submitted by staff contributors and public subscribers to be posted to a municipally- managed social media account, and to monitor the analytics of social media programs;
- Grant approval where appropriate for all new external social media endeavors that are initiated or created by the Municipality;
- Determine that each new social media endeavor initiated or created by the municipality has plans that are based on reasonable communication practices and include technical and monitoring measures which ensure the timely removal of any defamatory or objectionable submissions;

### 6.2 Directors will:

- Ensure all employees are advised of the approval of Social Media Guidelines of the Municipality;
- Ensure implementation of this policy and procedure;

- Ensure this policy is reviewed every year;
- Make recommendations to the CAO of necessary policy or procedure amendments;

**6.3 Communications Officer will:**

- Provide leadership in the implementation of this policy and procedure, ensuring alignment with municipal communication plans and strategies;
- Ensure policy is reviewed every year;
- Make recommendations to the CAO of necessary policy amendments;
- Assist in planning social media campaigns;
- Ensure all social media posts meet standards of readability, clarity and relevancy; are timely and are in compliance with the Victoria County social media policy & guidelines;
- Monitor all Victoria County social media sites for the purposes of identifying additional content and for issues and reputational management. Review site activity and content daily;

**6.4 All employees and Council members will:**

- Understand, agree to and comply with this policy and procedure;

**7. PROCEDURE: SET UP AND MANAGEMENT**

7.1 As with all communications activities, social media activity works best as part of a comprehensive communication plan in which it meets clearly outline communication strategies, goals, objectives, audiences, timelines, tactics and success measures. Departments wishing to employ social media should have their Director consult with the Communications Officer to determine the social media platform and usage that can best serve the departments overall objectives, in keeping with the municipal Social Media Policy.

7.2 Only staff given authorization to act as a contributor may post content in the name of the Municipality of the County of Victoria to a social media site. All passwords must be provided to the CAO (or his designate) at the establishment of any social media platform and when there are any changes to passwords;

7.3 All profiles on social media will be consistent with Municipal branding and in keeping with the Victoria County brand book and all social media profiles will display the county logo;

7.4 Any record ( e.g. text, images, video, documents) that records approvals, recommendations, opinions, decisions or transactions of the Municipality of the County of Victoria must be maintained in the county's record's management system;

7.5 Any social media initiative that requires the collection of personal information (e.g. public engagement efforts) must adhere to FOIPOP requirements. In social media, personal information includes the individual's names, a portion of their name or otherwise identifies them. Any photos posted to municipal social media websites must have the proper clearances (individual's permission) and licenses (stock photos). Standard Victoria County release forms are to be used;

## **8. TERMS OF USE**

### **8.1 Municipal Representation**

Contributors and moderators of the Municipality are required to identify themselves honestly, accurately and completely when participating in social media.

### **8.2 Appropriate content**

Only information that is publicly available may be posted to social media sites. It is unacceptable to publish or report on conversations or information that is confidential, pre-decisional or speculative. Only authorized contributors shall post content within their departments. Only the CAO or his designate can provide approval to post outside their department. Content deemed by the moderator(s) to be unsuitable shall be removed.

- Comments that are not topically related to the site or article being commented upon;
- Profane language or inflammatory content;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Content encouraging illegal activity;
- Content for the purposes of promoting a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;
- Commercial advertising;
- Content that is believed to be inappropriate in the opinion of the Municipality of the County of Victoria;

### **8.3 Copyright, fair use and privacy laws**

Communication through social media is subject to all relevant provincial, federal, and municipal laws, regulations and policies.

Any content posted to a third-party social media site is ultimately owned and controlled by the site operator according to its established terms of use.

## **9. GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL USE**

**9.1 Code of Conduct** – Employees shall exercise caution and discretion when posting publicly on issues, programs and policies related to municipal activities and shall not use their position to lend weight to the public expression of any personal views. Be mindful you are representing the Municipality of the County of Victoria.

**9.2. Affiliation** – Authorized employees and Council communicating on behalf of the Municipality should disclose their name and affiliation. It is never acceptable to use aliases or otherwise deceive. Your relationship with the Municipality must be stated at the outset.

**9.3. Rights** - Do not use copyrights, trademarks, publicity rights or the rights of others without the necessary permissions.

**9.4 Questions** - When in doubt, do not post. In any circumstance where there is uncertainty about posting, discuss with the moderator.

#### **10. ENFORCEMENT**

Violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to lock-out from municipal social media and up to and including termination, in accordance with disciplinary actions outlined in the present collective agreement.

**I CERTIFY** this to be a true copy of the "*Social Media Policy*" as adopted by the Council of the Municipality of the County of Victoria at a meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. W. Hudson", is written over a horizontal line.

A. W. (Sandy) Hudson  
Chief Administrative Officer