

CITY OF PORTLAND

COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & GUIDELINES

December 2015

I. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

The purpose of this policy is to establish City of Portland (City) general standards and responsibilities for the acceptable communication and use of social media. The policy governs the use, administration, management, monitoring, and retention of social media and social media content, consistent with state, federal, City laws and regulations, and City Manager and Communications Director goals.

This policy applies to all uses of social media by City employees maintaining, using, or providing oversight of social media tools. Employees include, but are not limited to, full-time and part-time employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers who access or contribute content. This policy also applies to members of the public who comment or otherwise interact with the City through its social media websites.

All content created, received, transmitted, stored on, or deleted from City information systems is exclusively the property of the City or, to the extent provided by applicable law, of the person or entity that created or owns the copyright or trademark rights to that content.

It's also important to remember that while this policy governs your use of social media in a City capacity, and gives guidelines for personal use, you should remember that City employees do not have an expectation of privacy or the ability to control the public's use of social media while you are performing the duties of your job. This means that you may be the subject of photographs and video recordings that are shared on social media sites. Therefore, it is important to be mindful of your conduct and communications.

II. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL COMMUNICATION (OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL)

City of Portland employees have a responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to fellow employees and members of the public in a professional manner. Any employee who identifies a mistake in reporting should bring the error to the Director of Communications or other appropriate staff. Employees must comply with all laws relating to trademark, copyright, confidentiality, software use, etc.

Handling General Requests:

Staff is responsible for communicating basic and routine information to members of the public in relation to their specific job duties. Requests for private data or information outside the scope of an individual's job duties should be routed to the appropriate department or to the employee's supervisor.

Handling Media Requests:

With the exception of routine events and basic information that is readily available to the public, requests for interviews or information from the media are to be routed through the Director of Communications. Media requests include contact from people who say they represent: print publications, such as weekly and daily newspapers and magazines; electronic media such as television and radio stations; and, informational websites.

III. SOCIAL MEDIA

A. BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

When used in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as prudent operational, security, and privacy considerations, Web-based social media tools can (at little to no cost):

- Enhance the speed, reach, and targeting of communications (particularly during disaster/emergency incidents);
- Facilitate collaboration;
- Improve information exchange between residents and employees;
- Increase citizen engagement and dialogue;
- Streamline processes;
- Foster productivity improvements; and
- Increase the City's ability to broadcast messages to the widest possible audience (City, region, nation, world).

B. DEFINITIONS

“**Social media**” means and includes Internet technologies that facilitate and promote interactive communication, participation, and collaboration. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, the web sites and applications Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+, Tumblr, Blogger, WordPress, Foursquare, Meetup.com, Flickr, YouTube, Yelp, Second Life, and Wikipedia, and the interactive tools and functions they provide to users.

“**Authorized social media user**” or “**authorized user**” means and includes any City employee, contractor, consultant, vendor, and any other City employee responsible for the use, administration, management, monitoring, and/or retention of social media, social media tools or web sites, and/or social media content, in the name of or on behalf of the City or any City agency.

“**Social media content**” means and includes any materials, documents, photographs, graphics, and other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted using social media Internet sites or social media tools.

C. STANDARDS FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

All uses of social media on behalf of the City or any City agency, or in any manner that appears to represent the City or constitute communication by the City, must comply with the following standards.

1. Departments and department heads

a) No department or division may establish or use or terminate a social media identity, account, profile, page, or site (collectively, social media account(s) or account(s)) without the approval of the City Manager or designee and the Director of Communications.

b) Department heads, with the approval of the City Manager or designee, and the Director of Communications or designee, shall designate one or more department employee(s) to be the authorized social media user(s) for the department, if a departmental level social media account exists. Only the department's authorized social media user(s) shall be authorized to post social media content on the department's social media account(s) and may have access to the department's social media accounts that permit such posting.

c) Department heads shall establish a procedure for approving, prior to posting, and shall issue department guidelines for, all social media content that is posted on the department's social media accounts, including the designation of one or more department managers (who may also be department authorized social media users) to be responsible for the approvals. All Department social media guidelines and policies must be consistent with this policy, and must be approved by the City Manager or designee, and the Director of Communications.

d) No information or link (hyperlink) to any Internet site or other materials or communications may be posted, or approved for posting, on a department social media account that is not directly related (as determined by the department head) to the mission, services, and business objectives of the department.

e) Department social media pages must clearly identify the pages as created and managed by the department, identified as a department, office, commission, or agency of the City of Portland.

f) Department social media sites must prominently display, on the first page accessible to site visitors, links to the City's official Internet site www.portlandmaine.gov, and to the agency's official Internet pages on www.portlandmaine.gov or, if applicable, any agency Internet site that is not part of www.portlandmaine.gov.

2. Employees

a) No City employee may establish any social media account in the name of or on behalf of the City or any City department unless: (i) the City Manager or designee and the Director of Communications or designee, and the user's department head have all approved the account; and (ii) all information to be posted on the account is approved in accordance with Subsection i) above. This requirement applies regardless of whether the account is established, accessed, or used by means of City information systems or by means of the employee's or others' information systems, and regardless of whether the account is established, accessed, or used from City or non-City premises.

b) Social media accounts established by the City or a City department are to be used for City and department business purposes only. Use for communications and postings that are not directly related to a City or department business purpose is prohibited.

c) Employees must report unauthorized uses of City social media or City social media accounts to the head of their department, the City Manager or designee, and the Director of Communications.

d) Employees are expected to be attentive and careful in their use of social media. Employees should be aware that their use of social media may be perceived as representing the City and City government, and should tailor their use accordingly.

e) Unacceptable uses. The City considers the activities and uses of social media listed below to be unacceptable. Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of them on a social media account established by the City or a City department.

i. Using social media in a manner that does not comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with City and department policies.

ii. Using social media in a manner that:

1. Violates the copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights of any person or entity, or otherwise violates their legal ownership interests;

2. Includes ethnic slurs, profanity, personal insults; material that is threatening, intimidating, harassing, libelous, fraudulent or discriminatory on the basis of age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, marital status, or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances.; *or other* content or communications that would not be acceptable in a City workplace under City or department policy or practice;

3. Violates the terms of contracts governing the use of any social media content, including but not limited to, software and other intellectual property licenses;

4. Displays sexually explicit images, cartoons, jokes, messages, or other material in violation of the City Policy Preventing Sexual Harassment in City Government;

5. Contains confidential or “for official use only” information or information that compromises the security of City networks or information systems. Such for official use only or confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information that is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) or other federal, state, or local laws and regulations (except as permitted under such laws and regulations), as well as social security numbers and other personally identifiable information;

6. Violates the terms of use governing the social media account.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions about particular uses of social media or particular social media content should be directed to the department head and the City Manager or designee and the Director of Communication.

f. 'Personal' Communication That Can Become 'Public'

It is important for employees to remember that some personal communication of employees may reflect on the City of Portland, especially if employees are commenting on: anything political in nature; federal, state or local government activities; or, City business. The following guidelines apply to personal communication including various forms of social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, etc), letters to the editor of newspapers, and personal endorsements.

- Remember that what you write is public and may be so for a long time. It may be spread to large audiences. Use common sense when using email or social media sites. It is a good idea to refrain from sending or posting information that you would not want your supervisor or other employees to read, or that you would be embarrassed to see in a newspaper or on a prominent website.
- The City of Portland expects its employees to be truthful, courteous and respectful toward supervisors, coworkers, members, citizens, customers and other persons associated with the City. Do not engage in name-calling or personal attacks. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Human Resources Department or Employee Assistance Program than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage co-workers or members of the public, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or a post that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or other status protected by law or City policy.
- City employees should remember that they have no expectation or right to privacy with respect to their personal use of social media or personal social media accounts accessed by means of City information systems, or with respect to personal social media content so accessed. They should not expect or assume privacy or confidentiality with respect to any such personal social media use or social media content.
- Postings and user profiles on personal social media accounts must not state or imply that the views, conclusions, statements or other social media content are an official policy, statement, position, or communication of the City of Portland, or represent the views of the City or any City officer or employee, unless the department head and the City Manager or designee and the Director of Communication have granted express permission for that user to do so.
- City of Portland resources and working time should not be used for personal profit or business interests, or to participate in personal political activity.
- Personal social media account names or email names should not be tied to the City (e.g. "PortlandCityManagerGuy").

Nothing in the City of Portland's social media policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment. City of Portland employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

3. Interactive Communications; Notices to Site Visitors

a. A City or agency social media site or page may be a "limited public forum" under the First Amendment if visitors to the site are able to post comments or other communications. Where permitted by the operator of the site, the comments and similar functions should be disabled on City and department social media pages, unless the department head, City Manager or designee, and Director of Communications or designee determine that permitting or encouraging interactive communications with site users is necessary to carry out the business objectives of the department in creating the site.

b. If interactive communications (e.g. comments) are permitted, terms of use for visitors to the site must be posted prominently on the site, unless prohibited by the terms of use governing the social media account or prevented by the site. The terms must include: (i) A clear description of the topics that the site is intended to address and that may be addressed in comments, with a statement that user postings will be removed if they are not directly related to those topics; (ii). Statements substantially similar to the following:

- Communications posted by visitors on this site may not contain ethnic slurs or profanity; material that is threatening, intimidating, harassing, libelous, fraudulent, discriminatory on the basis of age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, marital status, or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or ordinances, or sexually explicit; or any material that infringes copyright, trademark or other intellectual property right. Any such communications may be removed at any time without notice.
- This site is not owned, controlled, or operated by the City or the department. Visitors to the site must comply with the terms of use and privacy policies of the site operator, and are subject to the site operator's practices regarding the collection and retention of passive information (e.g. cookies) and other information from and about visitors.
- Any advertisements appearing on the site are not controlled by the City or the department and do not reflect endorsement by the City or department.
- Opinions expressed by visitors to the site do not reflect an endorsement or opinion on the part of the City or department.
- All postings by visitors to the site may be retained by the City, in its discretion and as required by applicable law or City policy.
- All postings may be subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act and other public records and disclosure laws, as well as discovery in litigation. This includes, but is not limited to, information

made available through a user's privacy settings on their own social media and other Internet pages.

- Visitors to the site should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality with respect to any content they post to the site, and the City and department have no responsibility for maintaining any such privacy or confidentiality.

c. The content of communications posted by site users may not be edited or otherwise modified; removal is the only action that may be taken, and then only for communications that violate the terms of the statements under subsections a and b above.

3.1 Information Requirements. Department heads must submit a list of all social media accounts maintained by the department to the Communications Director or designee, including, at a minimum, the following information: (1) the name, hosting site and Internet address and date of inception for the account, and a statement of the purpose and scope of the agency's use of the account; (2) all user names, passwords, and other log-in credentials for the account; (3) all authorized social media users for the agency that have access to and/or responsibility for the account; and (4) the administrative contacts and contact information for the account. The agency head must promptly notify the Director of Communications of any changes in any of the foregoing, and of any new department social media accounts or pages and any termination of accounts or pages. Department heads shall ensure that all agency-approved social media accounts and social media content are periodically reviewed for compliance with this policy. Department heads are responsible for all social media content created, received, transmitted, stored, deleted, destroyed, and/or printed in the name of or on behalf of the City or the department.

4. Compliance. Each City department head shall be responsible for enforcing compliance with this policy by department employees. Employees who violate this policy, or any other City or department policy, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with the disciplinary policies of the employee's department and of the City, and, for union members, the terms of the applicable collective bargaining agreement. If a City contractor or third party user knowingly or negligently commits or permits a material violation of this policy, the City may terminate the contract in accordance with its terms, and/or terminate the contractor's or third party user's access to City information processing facilities, information systems, and information, in addition to any legal or remedial actions the City may take to enforce and protect its interests.

5. Questions.

Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Director of Communications or an employee's department head.

Approved by Jon P. Jennings, City Manager

Date 12-21-2015

REVISED RULES & ORDERS OF THE SACO CITY COUNCIL (AS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL 1/27/25)

RULE 1. MEETING NIGHTS

The regular meetings of the City Council shall be the first, second and third Mondays of each month and shall commence at 6:30 PM. In the event of a holiday falling on the regular meeting date, the meeting may be held the 4th Monday of the month. Meeting dates for June, July, and August will be the first and third Mondays of the month. Workshops will be conducted at the will of the Mayor on an as needed basis and will precede the official call to order for regular meeting business. There will be no new business after 9:30 p.m., unless Council votes to continue.

RULE 2. CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor shall take the chair at 6:30 PM for the meeting and shall call the members to order. A roll call shall be taken to determine if a quorum is present.

RULE 3. CHAIRING OF THE MEETING

The Mayor shall chair the meeting. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor shall preside during the meeting or until the Mayor arrives.

RULE 4. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. Call to Order: Mayor's responsibility to start the meeting.
- II. Roll Call: Recognition of members present, those absent, and those excused.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance: Please stand and participate in the Pledge.
- IV. General: This section is usually for Awards, General Presentations, Proclamations, or Recognitions.
- V. Committee Correspondence to Council: This is a time for representatives from different committees, advisory boards, or commissions to speak to the Council. It is encouraged that members of these organizations inform the Mayor and City Administrator prior to their attendance so that they can plan accordingly.
- VI. Public Comment: The public will be allowed to speak for a maximum of three (3) minutes during the public comment item on the agenda. Members of the public will sign up ahead of the start of the meeting and state their full name and address of residence. In addition, the public is allowed to speak at the Mayor's discretion and during public hearings on specific matters.
- VII. Approval of Minutes: Minutes of the City Council meetings are "Action Based" minutes, wherein little narrative is included, and only motions and votes are shown in the record. Such minutes shall be submitted to the Council for review and correction in draft form via email (as part of the meeting packet) prior to a vote for acceptance. Minutes are voted upon and adopted by a majority vote of Council. It is the policy of the City Council that only the Mayor, members of the Council, and the City Clerk have the authority to revise the minutes subject to a majority vote of the City Council. Council members having only typographical

corrections to minutes are encouraged to provide such corrections to the City Clerk directly and need not wait to submit such corrections at a meeting. As a time saving measure, even full correction items should be written ahead and passed to the City Clerk before the meeting. Minutes are recorded in a book designated for Council Minutes only and are accessible on the City website.

- VIII. Consent Items: This section is for appointments to boards/committees/commissions, approval of bids, various resolutions approving agreements or routine city operations, and various licenses and permits. Those items on the Council agenda, which are considered to be of a routine nature by the City Administrator, are placed under "Consent Items". These items shall be approved, adopted, accepted, etc., by one motion of the Council. Councilors should be afforded the opportunity to remove an item from the Consent agenda before the vote is taken if they wish to have further conversation on an item. That/those items will become the first item on the Action Items section of the meeting.
- IX. Action Items: Items requiring Council vote that may require additional information. A Council member may ask questions on any item on the Action Item agenda. Council members are encouraged to seek clarifications prior to the meeting, if possible. A member may request an item be referred to the next Council meeting for further discussion. Example of Action Items include final reading and adoption of ordinances, various resolutions approving agreements, minor budgetary items, public hearings, status reports, and routine City operations. Action Items have previously been a part of New Business and are ready for further Council action.
- X. New Business: This is a chance for discussion and presentation with the Council and is a part of the larger meeting. Items on New Business may not require Council action, but if they do, the vote will be to move them to the Action Items section at a future meeting. Only the City Council, staff, advisory body chairs, or designated representatives shall be permitted to address the Council directly during new business unless a motion to suspend the rules is presented and a four-sevenths majority of the Council shall concur therein.
- XI. Administrative Update: An opportunity for the City Administrator to share with the Mayor, Council, and the General Public issues or concerns of staff, the community at large, or future items that the Council may need to take action on (not ready for new business discussion or debate, but topics that may already be being discussed publicly).
- XII. Council Discussion and Comment: An opportunity for Councilors to share topics of interest to them, events taking place, requests for further information, or future agenda items for consideration.
- XIII. Executive Session (closed to the public): The ability of a City Council to conduct Executive Sessions is restricted by State Law. A motion to go into Executive Session shall indicate the precise nature of the business of the Executive Session. Certain defined circumstances exist wherein a City Council may meet without the public in attendance. Such circumstances include:

1. Real Property: Discussions concerning the condition, purchase, sale, exchange, or lease of real or personal property with the City's negotiator must be announced in open session prior to the Executive Session.
 2. Litigation: Consultation between the Council and its attorney(s) concerning the legal rights and duties of the City; discussions concerning pending or contemplated litigation, the decision to initiate litigation, and the possible settlement of any dispute or legal claims. The litigation or title of the matter must be identified in open session prior to the Executive Session unless the Council states that to do so would jeopardize its ability to conclude existing settlement negotiations or make service of process.
 3. Personnel: An Executive Session is held to discuss the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a public employee, or to hear complaint against the employee unless the employee requests a public hearing.
 4. Labor: Labor contracts, proposals, and meetings between a public agency and its negotiators. The parties must be named before the body or agency may go into Executive Session. Negotiations between the representatives of a public employer and public employees may be open to the public if both parties agree to conduct negotiations in open sessions.
 5. Poverty Property Tax Abatements: Under 36 M.R.S.A §841(2), municipalities may abate (forgive) a property tax for or for reason of "infirmity or poverty".
 6. Prohibited Records. Discussions of information contained in records made, maintained or received by the City when access by the general public to those records is prohibited by statute.
 7. Examinations. Discussion or approval of the content of examinations administered by the City for licensing, permitting or employment purposes; consultation between the City and any entity that provides examination services to that the City regarding the content of an examination; and review of examinations with the person examined.
 8. Code Enforcement. Consultations between municipal officers and its code enforcement officer representing the City pursuant to Title 30-A, section 4452, subsection 1, Paragraph C, as may be amended, concerning the prosecution of an enforcement matter pending in District or Superior Court when the consultation relates to that pending enforcement matter.¹
- XIV. Conduct during an Executive Session. The Council shall only discuss the matter identified in its motion to enter Executive Session. No other matters may be discussed. No vote of decision shall be made in Executive Session.

¹ See Title 30-A Section 4452 at this link: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/30-a/title30-Asec4452.html>

- XV. Report from Executive Session: A motion to exit Executive Session shall be held as part of public record. After a motion, second and vote take place, further action should be considered, and a motion should be made. This would be the report from Executive Session. If there is no report, that should be stated by a member of the Council.
- XVI. Adjournment: A motion, a second, and a vote of the Council would be required to end a meeting.

RULE 5. CONFIDENTIALITY/ SCHEDULING OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

It is critical to stress that there shall be no violation of closed session confidential information. Members of the Council, employees of the City, or anyone else present shall not disclose to any person, including affected/opposing parties, the press, or anyone else, the content or substance of any discussion which takes place in Executive Session. Typically, Executive Sessions are scheduled at the conclusion of the public portions of the meeting. This is done so public portions of the meeting are not interrupted by Executive Sessions. In addition, such sessions may require the attendance of special legal counsel and consultants. In an attempt to manage the costs of these professionals, it is beneficial to conduct Executive Sessions at a time certain and the Mayor and City Administrator will consult as to when the timing of an Executive Session will take place.

RULE 6. ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor shall consider a motion to adjourn always in order. Such motion shall be decided without debate.

RULE 7. DISPOSITION OF MOTIONS

- A. After a motion is seconded, and stated by the Mayor, it shall be disposed of by vote of the Council unless the mover withdraws it before a decision or amendment.
- B. A friendly amendment is one in which the councilor amending the motion and the originator of the motion and the seconder agree on the change. Friendly amendments accepted by the originator of the motion shall be voted by the whole if any member of the council requests a vote on the amendment.

RULE 8. MOTIONS DURING DEBATE

When a question is under debate, only the following motions shall be received: Motion to Adjourn; Motion to Take a Recess; Motion to Raise a Question of Personal Privilege; Motion to Lay on the Table; Motion to Amend; Motion to Move the Question; Motion to Postpone; Motion to Postpone Indefinitely; Motion to Reconsider; Motion for Point of Order; Motion to Suspend Rules; and Motion to Appeal from Chair's Decision.

RULE 9. ORDER OF QUESTIONS

The Mayor shall put all questions in the order in which they are moved, unless the subsequent motion shall be previous in its nature; except in naming sums and fixing times, the largest sum and the longest time shall be put first.

RULE 10. MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION

A motion for the reconsideration of a vote shall be open to debate, but such motion shall not be considered unless made by a member voting with the majority, nor unless such motion is made at the meeting at which such vote is passed, and only one motion for the reconsideration of any vote shall be permitted.

RULE 11. TABLING

No motion which has been tabled at a Council meeting may be acted upon until the next regular Council meeting, and upon its inclusion in the agenda as an Action Item.

RULE 12. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No member shall serve on any committee or vote on any question as to which the member has a direct, personal and pecuniary interest.

RULE 13. ORDINANCE PROCEDURE

As required by Charter Section 2.09 and excluding Emergency Ordinances as described in Section 2.10 of the Charter, every Ordinance shall pass through the following stages: There shall be a first reading for information. Administration may have special presentations at the first reading in order for the public to be able to consider the Ordinance change. If the first reading is passed, the Council shall, consistent with public notice requirements of law, set a time and place for a public hearing and consideration of second reading.

RULE 14. SUSPENSION OF RULES

No standing rule or order of the Council shall be suspended unless a four-sevenths majority of the members of the Council present shall consent thereto, for a specific purpose; nor shall any rule or order be repealed or amended without one week's notice being given of the motion therefore, or unless a four-sevenths majority of the Council shall concur therein.

RULE 15. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Except where specifically controlled by Charter, Statute, Ordinance or these Rules, proceedings of the City Council shall be conducted pursuant to the parliamentary authority of the most recent revision of Roberts Rules of Order.

RULE 16. PUBLIC COMMENT SECTION

A Public Comment session shall appear on the agenda of every regular Council meeting. The public may have three minutes to address any topic. Speakers shall be limited to one three-minute comment period per person per meeting and may not defer any of their allotted speaking

time to any other person. All speakers must register in person (not electronically or telephonically) prior to the City Council meeting. The playing of music, videos, or recordings of others is prohibited. Residents, business owners and taxpayers of the City shall be given speaking priority over any other speaker. All speakers must give their home address at the time of their speaking. Speakers must not indulge in the use of inappropriate or offensive language. Any person abusing the provisions of this rule may be prohibited from speaking. Any provision of this rule may be modified on a per case basis by majority vote of the Council.

RULE 17. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Mayor, or by four members of the City Council as described in Section 2.08 of the Charter. The City Administrator may request the Mayor to call a special meeting. Written notice must be given to the City Council and to the media at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting. No business other than that announced may be discussed. All meetings shall be public. Notice requirements shall be complied with for all meetings; minutes of the meeting shall be taken by the City Clerk or designee and shall be available for public inspection.

RULE 18. COUNCIL WORKSHOPS

Workshops will be held on an as needed basis at the will of the Mayor and will precede the official City Council meeting. Workshops are held in the City Hall Auditorium with normal parliamentary procedures suspended and are open to the public. These meetings will enable the Council to discuss topics away from the more formal Council meetings.

RULE 19. PLACING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

1. Mayor or City Council: The Mayor or a Council member may request an item to be considered on a future agenda. Such a request should be submitted to the City Administrator for review and shall be acted on within sixty (60) days.
2. Saco City Staff: Many times, City Staff will have ideas, projects, or items which require council input or approval. Such items should be submitted to the City Administrator for review and action.
3. Members of the Public: A member of the public may request an item and/or petition to be placed on a future agenda via formal written request to the City Administrator.
4. Emergency Items: Emergency items may be added to an agenda only in accordance with the Charter Section 2.08(e). Emergency items are only those matters affecting public health, life, property, or public peace. The City Council may adopt one or more ordinances, but such ordinances may not levy taxes, grant, renew or extend a franchise, or authorize the borrowing of money except as provided in the Charter. The ordinance shall be plainly designated as an emergency ordinance and shall contain, after the enacting clause, a declaration stating that the emergency exists and describing it in clear and specific terms.

5. Deadlines: The agenda shall close the Wednesday before such meeting and shall be made public. All item commentaries and supporting documentation for Council meetings must be turned in by 3:00 p.m. the Wednesday before the scheduled meeting, so that the agenda and packets can be prepared and ready to go prior to 4:00 p.m. on Thursday.

RULE 20. SIGNING OF CITY DOCUMENTS

The Mayor shall sign all Resolutions and Special Entertainment permits. The City Administrator shall sign all contracts, other necessary or legal documents, and those documents which have been adopted by the City Council and require an official signature. The Clerk shall sign all ordinances and other various licenses and permits as required by the Charter.

RULE 21. QUORUM

Four-sevenths of the Council members (4 of 7) constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

RULE 22. QUESTIONS TO STAFF

A Council member may, after recognition by the Mayor, address questions directly to a department head or designated staff member. If a Council member has questions related to an item on the agenda, that Councilor should contact the City Administrator prior to the meeting in order to allow staff time to research a response/answer for the meeting.

RULE 23. COMMENTS FOR THE RECORD

If a Councilor desires for a comment to be included in the minutes, it is their responsibility to indicate that the statement is "for the record" before making the comments.

RULE 24. OBTAINING THE FLOOR

A member of the City Council or staff shall first address the Mayor and gain recognition. Comments and questions should be limited to the issue before the Council. A Council member who has the floor shall not be interrupted unless deemed necessary to call that member to order. Until the question of order is determined, the Council member must cease speaking unless permitted to explain. If the Council member is determined to be in order, he/she may proceed. The Mayor will have the right to cut off discussion that is too personal, loud or offensive.

RULE 25. DISCUSSION LIMIT

A Councilor should not speak more than once on a particular subject until every other Council member has had the opportunity to speak. Council members are encouraged to discuss items during the decision-making process and may ask staff to respond when appropriate. The Mayor should allow other members to speak first and then give their own views and summarize.

RULE 26. MOVE THE QUESTION

The purpose of moving the question is to disallow further debate and put an issue to an immediate vote. A Councilor may "move the question" on an item which is being considered. The motion requires a second, is not debatable, and must pass by a four-sevenths vote. If the

motion carries, the item is no longer debatable, and the City Council must vote on the issue at hand in a separate vote.

RULE 27. QUESTIONS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Council members are encouraged to submit their questions on agenda items to the City Administrator as far in advance of the meeting as possible so that staff can be prepared to respond at the Council meeting. In order to focus the Council meetings on consideration of policy issues and to maintain an open forum for public discussion, questions which focus on the policy aspects of agenda items should be discussed at the Council meeting. Any clarifications or technical questions that can be readily answered can be handled before the Council meeting.

RULE 28. ABSTENTION FROM VOTING

If a conflict of interest shall be determined, and in compliance with State Law, the affected Councilor will not participate in the discussion or vote on the item and should remove themselves from the dais while the item is on the floor. If a Councilor abstains because of a legal conflict, the Councilor must briefly state on the record the nature of the conflict. The Clerk will register an "Abstained" vote in the minutes.

RULE 29. VOTING PROCEDURE

When present, all Councilors are to vote, unless they exercise their right of abstention. Failure of a seated member to orally express a vote constitutes an affirmative vote. Voting shall be open roll call, and the Yeas and Nays shall be recorded in the minutes. Pursuant to Charter 2.08(c), no action of the City Council, except a vote of adjournment shall be passed or become effective without an affirmative vote of at least four (4) Councilors. Council members may declare consensus at the discretion of the Mayor, if there are no negative votes or objections. Upon the request of any Councilor, a roll call vote will be taken and recorded.

1. Tie Vote: The Mayor votes to break the tie.
2. Courtesy Vote: At times, a member will be absent from a meeting. Issues will arise that would pass if that member were present. Another Councilor who is present, yet planning to vote against an item, may sometimes alter their vote to an affirmative vote in recognition that the measure would have passed if the absent member attended.

RULE 30. MOTIONS

There are a number of types of motions, each of which must meet certain requirements before a vote can be taken.

- Councilors wanting to make a motion should be recognized by the Mayor.
- Before a motion can be considered or debated it must be seconded.
- Once the motion has been properly made and seconded, the Mayor shall open the matter for discussion offering the first opportunity to the moving party and, thereafter, to any Councilor properly recognized by the Mayor.
- Once the matter has been fully discussed and the Mayor calls for a vote, no further discussion will be allowed, provided, however, before the call for the vote, Councilors may be allowed to explain their vote. After the first vote is cast, explanations must wait until all votes are cast.

- Executive Session: The Maine Freedom of Access Law, 1 MRSA 405, states that “Executive sessions may be called only by a public, recorded vote of 3/5 of the members present and voting. ... A motion to go into executive session must indicate the precise nature of the business of the executive session and include a citation of one or more sources of statutory or other authority that permits an executive session for that business.” Subject to Charter Section 2.08(c), the following vote tally shall apply:

Members Present and Voting	Affirmative Votes Required
7	5
6	4
5	4
4	4

RULE 31. AMENDMENTS

When a motion is on the floor, and an amendment is offered and seconded, the amendment should be acted upon prior to acting on the main motion.

RULE 32. CONTINUANCE OF HEARINGS

Any hearing being held, noticed, or ordered to be held by the Council at any meeting of the Council may be continued or re-continued to any subsequent meeting.

RULE 33. PUBLIC DISCUSSION AT HEARINGS

When a matter for public hearing comes before the Council, the Mayor will open the public hearing. Upon opening the public hearing and before any motion is adopted related to the merits of the issue to be heard, the Mayor shall inquire if there are any persons who desire to speak on the matter which is to be heard or to present evidence respecting the matter.

RULE 34. MATERIALS FOR PUBLIC RECORD

All persons interested in the matter being heard by the Council shall be entitled to submit written evidence or remarks, as well as other graphic evidence. All such evidence presented will be retained by the City Clerk as part of the Clerk’s record of hearing and will be accessible on the City’s website or in person, unless otherwise directed.

RULE 35. GERMANE COMMENTS

No person will be permitted during the hearing to speak about matters or present evidence, which is not germane to the matter being considered. A determination of relevance shall be made by the Mayor but may upon motion by a Councilor be appealed to the full Council.

RULE 36. COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Written communications and petitions concerning the subject matter of the hearing will be noted, read aloud, or summarized as determined by the Mayor. A reading in full shall take place if requested by any member of the Council.

RULE 37. EMERGENCY MEETINGS

Emergency meetings may be called without notification due to the disruption or threatened disruption of public facilities. Only work stoppages, significant public security threats or crippling disasters that impair the public health and/or safety, shall constitute basis for the holding of an emergency meeting, The Council shall make a full and public report of the Emergency Meeting at the very next public Council meeting.

RULE 38. RESOLUTION

The term is usually employed to denote the subject matter of which would not properly constitute an ordinance, such as a mere expression of opinion, a vote of thanks or of censure, etc. Such is not law but merely a form in which the City Council expresses an opinion, will, or intent. A motion adopts a resolve after one reading.

The chief distinction between a “resolution” and an “order” is that the former is used whenever the City Council wishes merely to express an opinion as to some given matter or thing, while by an “order” it is intended to direct and control matters applying to persons or things in general.

Ordinance distinguished. “Resolution” denotes something less formal than “ordinance”; generally, it is mere expression of opinion or mind of City Council concerning some matter of administration, within its official cognizance.

RULE 39. PARLIAMENTARIAN

At the first meeting in January, the City Council shall elect from its body a Parliamentarian to serve for one year. The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor would be excluded from serving in the role as Parliamentarian.

RULE 40. ENFORCEMENT

Council members have the primary responsibility to ensure that these guidelines are understood and followed, so that the public can have full confidence in the integrity of their local government. These guidelines are intended to be self-enforcing, thereby requiring an ongoing commitment by Council members, staff and the public.

RULE 41. BUDGET AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

All amendments to the adopted budget shall follow the process described in Section 6.09 of the City Charter. Additionally, it is a policy of the City Council that all budget amendments will follow a two-meeting process. A First Reading followed by a Second Reading that is held at least 7 days later.

RULE 42. ROLE OF ADVISORY BODY

Members of the Council are assigned to serve in a liaison capacity with one or more City boards, committees, or commissions. The purpose of the liaison assignment is to facilitate communication between the City Council and the advisory body. The liaison also helps to increase the Council's familiarity with the membership, programs, and issues of the advisory body. In fulfilling their liaison assignment, members may elect to attend advisory body meetings periodically to observe the activities of the advisory body or simply maintain

communication with the advisory body on a regular basis. In interacting with advisory bodies, Council members are to reflect the views of the Council as a body. Assignments to advisory body liaison positions made at the beginning of a Council term. The Mayor will request liaison assignments which are desired by each member and will submit recommendations to the full Council of the various advisory bodies, which City Council members will represent as a liaison. A vote of the Council will be taken to confirm all appointments. Council Liaisons are non-voting members of the advisory bodies and do not count towards a quorum unless specifically stated otherwise in the City of Saco Charter or Codes of Ordinances. The City Charter (Section 2.07) allows for the Mayor to serve as a non-voting member of all municipal boards, committees, and commissions, except where prohibited by law.

Social Media Policy

Approved February 8, 2017

Amended July 13, 2020

Review and comment by counsel (June 10, 2020)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to create a procedure for using social media. This will ensure effectiveness, shared understanding, and consistency of using social media to enhance the operations of the City of Saco (City). The City endorses appropriate and secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy is intended to provide guidance for all staff and official city representatives on the protocol for official use of social media on behalf of the City and expectations for personal use of social media. This policy also establishes the City's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is meant to address all forms of social media, which may include various online platforms, applications, or technologies enabling the sharing of user-generated or promoted content. The policy is intended to apply to social media in general, including new and modified forms that may arise as technology develops and new tools emerge.

Background Information

Technology's role in the City's governance is ever expanding due to new platforms. Social media is a way to promote the City in a positive way. It also allows the City to share information with segments of the population that may not be reached through traditional media sources.

Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to text, images, and videos. Details can be found in Appendix A.

All communications with the public are considered public record and therefore must be compliant with all federal, state, and local laws.

Roles and Responsibilities

The City Administration approves the process. The Communications Department manages the policy, access to social media, archives/records, and social media training for authorized users. All city staff must comply with this policy.

Timeline

The policy will be effective 30 days from approval date. Any posts that violate the policy should be removed during this grace period.

Using Social Media for Work Purposes

Social media is a communication tool that allows the City to promote itself in a positive manner. Information can be distributed to residents quickly. Residents can easily access information about the City from any device connected to the Internet. It is important that the City engages in the social media space effectively.

The Communications Department will maintain the official “City of Saco Government” accounts. The Saco Police Department and Saco Parks and Recreation Department pages are authorized City affiliated pages. All other departments must send content to the Communications Department to be posted to the City of Saco Government pages or receive permission from the Communications Director to host a separate social media page.

The authorized department pages must have two points of contact (one primary and one backup contact). The department head will email the Communications Director the names of the point of contact for the department. The department head must also inform the Communications Director if there are changes to who is in the roles.

The point of contact is the manager of the department’s social media accounts. Only the assigned point of contacts may post content to social media pages. Automated login options should not be used on social media pages, such as Facebook’s “Keep me logged in” feature. This will prevent unauthorized access to City social media pages should a computer or digital device be compromised or stolen.

Content on social media as it relates to City business is considered a public record. Not all residents may be aware of this, therefore, a statement like the following is recommended for the department’s page or where applicable: “The City of Saco is a government entity and all content on this page should be presumed to be a public record and may be subject to public disclosure.”

The Communications Department must have access to each of the authorized pages to manage content or record retention. All information and content on a City social media site that is required to be retained under state and local retention policies and guidelines shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the metadata of the original record. Prior approval of the retention format and procedures for each City social media tool being used shall be received from the Communication Department.

Posts should not include anything that could be considered:

- Potentially libelous
- Obscene or explicit
- Hateful or malicious

- Personal attacking, insulting, or threatening language
- Plagiarized material, or material that violates intellectual property rights
- Private, personal information, including photos, published without consent
- Violation of federal, state, or local laws

This list is not exhaustive. The Communications Director or designee reserves the right to remove any content that is determined to be inappropriate. Content that is removed will be documented and archived.

The City welcomes comments from community members. Social media helps us promote events and clarify information. Each authorized city page must include a term of use statement, such as the 'City of Saco reserves the right to remove posts that include threatening language and those which violate a copyright, trademark, or Facebook's Terms of Service' or "Obscene or foul language, threats against others, bullying, racist, and rude comments will be reviewed for possible removal. Comments should be related to the posts and topics being shared. Attempts to flood the page with posts regarding commercial enterprises or entities are not allowed or acceptable" on the page itself. This notifies residents that City staff will filter out any post with inappropriate content.

Furthermore, comments are subject to public disclosure laws; therefore, they will be screened for:

- Potentially libelous comments
- Obscene or explicit comments
- Hateful or malicious comments
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Plagiarized material, or material that violates intellectual property rights
- Private, personal information, including photos, published without consent
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Comments that are off-topic or that link to material that is off-topic
- Comments that embed images from external sources

Social media pages are becoming an increasingly popular avenue for residents to communicate with City staff. Comments should be treated the same as emails to the City, therefore, do require a response. In responding, an employee should direct the person to the proper department or resource. Private messages must be archived but are not the preferred means of communication with a resident.

Using Social Media for Personal Purposes

An employee may access personal social media accounts at work on personal devices only for limited communications. It cannot interfere with completing their tasks. Break times are considered appropriate times.

If using personal social media accounts during working hours, employees should not be using it for personal profit or business interests. Also, employees should not engage in political activity during working hours.

Employees may not use their City email address to create social media accounts for personal purposes. If an employee identifies himself or herself as working for the City, the employee should make it clear that comments and opinions are personal and individual and not those of the City. Sample statements are 'tweets are my own' or 'While I work for the City, anything I publish is my opinion, not necessarily the opinion of the City.' Being an employee of the City may mean that communications are a public record unless the employee is clear that the posts are his or her own and not made in the role of a City employee.

City of Saco employees who are not authorized to use the social media tools are not allowed to publish or comment as an official representative of the City via social media. All uses of social media shall follow the same ethical standards that City of Saco employees must otherwise follow.

The City expects its employees to be truthful, courteous, and respectful to each other. Employees must refrain from posting the following kinds of things on personal pages if they could be attributed to the City:

- Potentially libelous comments
- Obscene or explicit comments
- Hateful or malicious comments
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Confidential or proprietary information obtained while at work

Photos or videos of City related business that are confidential by law or otherwise propriety in nature should not be shared on personal pages. Examples are, but not limited to:

- Accidents
- Crime scenes
- Fires
- Executive session materials

An employee may share a department's status or re-tweet what a department tweeted. This would be considered approved content.

Inappropriate use of social media is grounds for corrective action, including disciplinary action.

Social Media Archives and Record Retention

The Maine Freedom of Access Act governs citizen access to public records in Maine. The Act includes any "written, printed or graphic matter" or "electronic data" in possession of a public agency as a public record. Therefore, social media records in Maine can be considered a public record under the Law.

The City of Saco social media sites are subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City of Saco business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting may be a public record subject to public disclosure. Even Citizen supplied media content posted to any City social media or site is considered "public" and will likely be subject to full disclosure under Maine's FOAA law.

Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Saco may be removed. Any removed comments will be included in the archive.

Elected Officials Use of Social Media

City Council Members may choose to post and/or comment on various social media sites using their personal accounts but are strongly encouraged to use pages that are specific to City Council business, rather than personal pages. In these instances, it is recommended that the content and tenor of online comments and information should model the same decorum displayed during City Council meetings. All Council members are required to complete training on ethical standards and conduct for public officials to guide their use of social media.

The following statement must be included on the City Councilor's social media pages: "Opinions on this account are my own and do not reflect the opinions of the City of Saco."

Please refer to the Communications section of the Council Rules and Order of Business for procedures and best practices.

Appointed Officials Use of Social Media

Commission and/or Board Members may choose to post and/or comment on various social media sites using their personal accounts. In these instances, it is recommended that the content and tenor of online comments and information posts should model the same decorum displayed during Commission, Board, and community meetings. If Boards and Committees would like to share announcements or information on social media, they must send it to the Communications Department for consideration for posting on an official city channel.

Appendix A

Definitions

Social media: forms of electronic communication (as websites for social networking and micro-blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content, such as videos (source: Merriam-Webster). Examples are, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Disciplinary action: if it has been determined that inappropriate content was posted, the following will take place. The severity and nature of each incident will be considered by the team (Communications, Human Resources, and City Administration) when deciding which type of action will occur. Actions do not need to be imposed in sequence and will depend on the nature of the conduct.

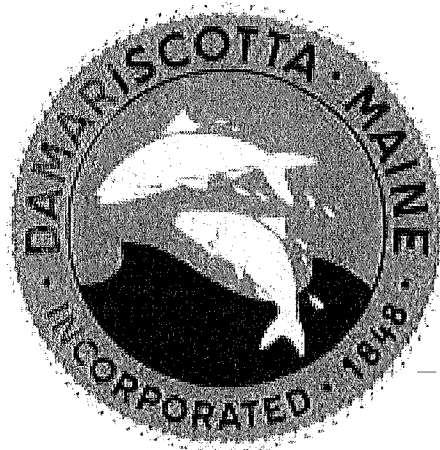
1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Corrective action and/or demotion
4. Termination

For union employees, please see union contracts. Police Department employees must adhere to the Police Department's Social Media Standard Operating Procedure.

DEVELOPED 2025



DAMARISCOTTA
**COMMUNICATION
STRATEGY**

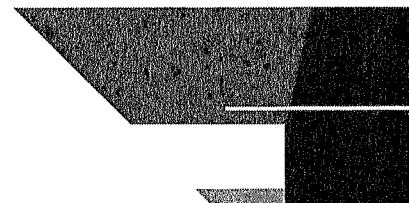




PURPOSE

The purpose of this Communication Strategy is to **create a universal, accessible, and adaptable roadmap for all communications** undertaken by the Town of Damariscotta.

The Strategy will be centered in the goals of Damariscotta's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans, and **aims to more closely align community activity and information with the goals of the Town.**





GOALS

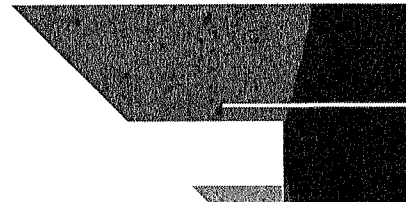
If this Strategy is successful, it will:

- **Increase the frequency and consistency of communications** between the Town Administration and the community of Damariscotta
- **Establish a methodology of communication for Damariscotta** - a collection of tangible methods for how communication will be released to the public, and how feedback or other comments will be received
- **Establish several primary sources of information** that residents can interact with on a regular basis for knowledge about Town happenings



AUDIENCE

- **The community of Damariscotta,** including but not limited to: year-round residents, seasonal residents, property owners, renters, commuters, business leaders, community organizations, and media outlets
- **The Town of Damariscotta administrative staff** who will be executing this policy, including but not limited to: Town Manager, Town Planner, Town Clerks, Town Treasurer, Code Enforcement Officer, Assessor, additional Town Staff, and public safety officers





TACTICS & TOOLS

Tactics and tools will help give us direction on how to create and implement the communication projects outlined in this strategy. They include:

Tactic: Community engagement and outreach

- The external communications created by the Town of Damariscotta, available in both the short and long-term for community members. These often include opportunities for two-way communication and feedback.

• **Tools:**

- Physical communications
- Digital communications
- Email and text tools
- Emergency alerts
- Special events/town programming



TACTICS & TOOLS

Tactic: Advertising

- One-way communications from the Town to the community, made visible with the help of local media outlets
- **Tools:**
 - Media Relations

Tactic: Internal Processing

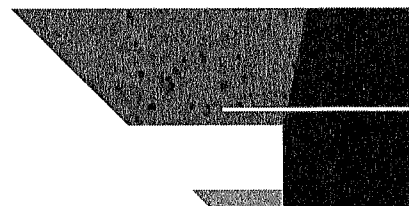
- Working with staff and administration personnel to examine how our communication can work more effectively
- **Tools:**
 - Evaluation tools (surveys, social media analytics, staff review sessions)



METRICS

Having established our communication tactics, and the tools for enacting them, the question remains: **how do we measure our progress**, and make sure that our communication is effective?

The following metrics, subject to change, are suggested in the table on the next page. The strategy suggests the **frequency of communications, content**, and a **metric of success** for each tool.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

TACTIC	TOOL	FREQUENCY	CONTENT	SUCCESS METRIC	
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH	Physical Communication				
	Posters	as needed	Upcoming events, QR codes for surveys, feedback opportunities	How many deployed? In how many locations?	
	Tabling events	as needed	Feedback opportunities, in-person surveys, educational materials	How many people engaged with?	
	Take-home materials	at least one constant	QR codes for surveys, feedback opportunities, educational materials	How many deployed?	
	Stationary materials	as needed	QR codes for surveys, feedback opportunities	How many deployed? In how many locations?	
	Digital Communication				
	Website	as needed	Centralized hub/landing page for the town. To include links to 311, notifications, town updates, active surveys, and board agendas & minutes	Google analytics - what pages are being opened the most?	
	Facebook	Min. 1x/week	Upcoming events, links to surveys, board meeting notices, photos from events	How many "reactions?" (likes, comments, views, reshares)	
	Instagram	Min. 1x/week	Upcoming events, links to surveys, board meeting notices, photos from events	"	
	Youtube	Min. 1x/month	Recordings of board meetings	"	
	Email/Text Tools				
	NotifyMe	Min. 1x/week	Tangible progress markers; short messages	How many subscriptions (baseline, and gained)?	
	RSS Feed	Min. 1x/week	Website updates	"	
	iCalendar	Min. 1x/week	Town events, board meetings	"	
	Project Updates	as needed	Tangible progress markers; short messages	"	
	Emergency				
	Code Red	as needed	Short, clear directives from Lincoln County		
	Mass text alerts	as needed	Short, clear directives from Town Office	How many sent?	
	Special Events				
	Pumpkinfest	Begin sharing materials 2-3 weeks prior; share photos & recaps for 1 week after	Shared on platforms: pertinent information, parking info, maps, timelines, photos, advertisements; shared during: current initiatives, surveys, updates, resources	# attendees, # info pieces shared (posts, surveys, etc.), # of people interacted with day-of	
Memorial Day Parade	Share materials 1 week prior; share photos & recaps for 1 week after	"	"		
Pride Parade	"	"	"		
YMCA Events (i.e. Healthy Lincoln County Day)	Take direction from org	Work with org to see what resources are necessary; share info to social media platforms	also work with org to determine best metrics		
Lincoln Academy Homecoming Parade	"	Work with org to see what resources are necessary; share info to social media platforms	"		

ADVERTISING	Media Relations				
		Press Releases	as needed	Short, concise info about upcoming occurrences	How many released?
		Print Media	as needed; column should be printed minimum quarterly	Info about upcoming events, longer progress updates for ongoing projects. Also include job postings and RFPs. Creation of a "From the Town Office" column	How many columns/mentions published? How many public interactions based on info gained from the newspaper?
		TV	as needed	Short blurbs about upcoming events/initialives	How many ads run?

INTERNAL PROCESSING	Evaluations Tools				
		Staff Review Sessions (General)	1x / month at prior meetings	Discussion/impressions of general communications; define areas/departments for future efforts; what worked and what didn't	How many accomplished?
		Survey Results	as needed	Find and analyze trends; identify paths forward; where does this information live?	How many respondents? Change over time?
		Social Media Analytics	1x / quarter	Look at increases in follower/viewership; come up with ways to boost if needed	How many followers, etc? Change over time?



CITY OF MADISON
HUMAN RESOURCES

2023

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

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Introduction

The Human Resources (HR) Department at the City of Madison strives to:

1. **Attract** a talented and diverse workforce.
2. **Retain** an engaged and diverse workforce where all employees feel they belong.
3. **Develop** our employees and organization to be an inclusive and high performing City.
4. **Implement** innovative and progressive Human Resources practices.

In order for HR to achieve these goals, it is imperative that we lead the charge in the creation and adherence to an Internal Communication Strategy (ICS) that promotes transparency and collaboration to inform, engage, and improve our City of Madison.

This HR ICS provides a framework for clear, consistent, and timely communication within the HR department, as we report out to the various agencies, stakeholders, and 3,000+ employees, no matter their title or position. By implementing this strategy, the Department of Human Resources aims to foster a culture of collaboration, engagement, and efficiency, ultimately leading to better service deliver and improved outcomes for our internal customers.

Goal and Objectives

Goal

To develop and implement a clear, accessible, inclusive, and consistent communication strategy which guides Team HR in providing vital Human Resources communications to all staff.

Objective(s)

1. **To set expectations:** For all HR Staff to understand, apply, and demonstrate accessible and inclusive communications best-practices in alignment with our Human Resources Customer Service Framework. (*Through our Attitudes, Actions, and Accountability tools*).
2. **To provide support and resources:** For HR Staff to become communications professionals, and to utilize easily located, user-friendly templates and resources for efficient and consistent communications.
3. **To enhance information flow:** Ensuring timely and accurate dissemination of information to employees, enabling them to stay informed about updates, policies, and initiatives.
4. **To foster collaboration:** Encouraging cross-unit/departmental communication and cooperation to facilitate knowledge sharing and problem-solving.
5. **To improve employee engagement:** Promoting a culture of open communication, feedback, and recognition to increase employee satisfaction and productivity.
6. **To enhance organizational culture:** Reinforcing the organization's mission, vision, values, and service promise through consistent and staff-centered communication.
7. **To establish a reliable communication protocol for our four main communications "buckets":**
 1. Customer Service
 2. Quarterly Newsletters
 3. Urgent

4. Initiatives/Projects/Programs that Team HR Leads or Co-Leads

- *Example: HR Management System with IT*

Scope

The scope of this Internal Communication Strategy encompasses all aspects of communications within and distributed out by the Human Resources department. It is designed to address the needs of employees at all levels and across all 31 departments, ensuring the information flows efficiently, collaboration is promoted, and a positive organizational culture is cultivated. The strategy aims to create a communication framework that aligns with the goals of Team HR and values of the City of Madison while keeping the workforce informed, engaged, and continually improving.

More specifically, the scope of this ICS includes the following:

1. **Internal Stakeholders:** This strategy covers all employees within the City of Madison, from top-level department heads to field staff, regardless of their job duties or departments.
2. **Communication Channels:** It includes the various communication channels within the City of Madison, including email newsletters, departmental meetings, collaboration tools, digital screens, print media, and EmployeeNet.
3. **Information Distribution:** How information is shared with employees, including HR updates, policies, initiatives, and other relevant news.
4. **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** Promotes cross-unit/departmental communication and knowledge sharing to foster collaboration and problem-solving.
5. **Employee Engagement:** This strategy focuses on engaging employees through open communication, feedback mechanisms, and recognition to improve job satisfaction and productivity.
6. **Organizational Culture:** This strategy reinforces the organization's mission, vision, values, and service promises, along the data-informed culture of inquiry through consistent messaging and communication efforts.
7. **Urgent/Special Communication:** This strategy outlines protocols and procedures for communication during emergencies and urgent situations to ensure a coordinated and timely response.
8. **Communication Protocols:** This aligns with the *Actions: We are Strong Communicators* guidelines set in our HR Customer Service Framework for response times, escalation procedures, confidentiality, and consistent messaging.
9. **Feedback Mechanisms:** The strategy includes methods for gathering employee feedback, such as surveys, suggestion boxes, and open-door policies.
10. **Training and Development:** This addresses communication skills resources and communication training to enhance communication capabilities throughout all of Team HR.
11. **Monitoring & Evaluation:** The strategy aligns with our HR Customer Service Framework to measure the impact of our services through key feedback mechanisms, and the use of a customer service survey readily available to all we serve to allow for continuous improvement.

The scope of the strategy is comprehensive, ensuring that best communication practices are integrated and aligned with the HR department's objectives. By addressing all of these aspects, the strategy aims to create a cohesive and well-informed workplace, leading to improved operational efficiency, employee satisfaction, and ultimately, better public service delivery by the City of Madison.

Key Metrics

In line with our HR Customer Service Framework, we will use accountability tools to help us ensure alignment between our attitudes, actions, and our organizational values and goals.

1. **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Track the effectiveness of the ICS – I.E. Employee Engagement, Response Times. Primary performance indicators are included in the HR Customer Service Survey that will be attached to our email signatures, is available by QR code at the front desk, and is sent out with each recruitment we complete.
 - a. **HR Customer Service Framework Communication and Response Time Expectations:**
 - i. We respond in a timely manner. Phone calls and emails receive acknowledgement within 2 business days, with a timeline for further follow up as needed when possible.
 - ii. We share knowledge and best practices, leveraging technology for efficiency
 - iii. We strive for accuracy by ensuring the correct response gets back to the customer.
 - iv. Any errors are used as a learning experience, and we attempt to mitigate any unintended impact on customers.
 - v. We check for plain and gender-neutral language in communications
 - vi. We respond to email inquiries:
 1. Unless an out of office message is turned on, we standardly respond to emails within 1-2 days. If more time is needed for response, an initial response will at least provide acknowledgement of receipt of the correspondence with an anticipated timeline of follow-up.
 2. We incorporate our customer services survey in communications
 - vii. We answer phones:
 1. City of Madison Human Resources, this is (NAME). How can I help you?
 2. We return business calls to our main line within 24-48 hours of receipt.
 - viii. We set out of office messages: Staff proactively set an out of office Outlook message on vacation or when they are not able to be reached. This includes an alternate contact when possible. Employee's supervisor is first line alternate.
 - b. View more details in our HR Customer Service Framework Overview.
2. **Feedback Analysis:** Regularly analyze feedback received through surveys to identify trends and area for improvement.
 - a. Surveys include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Pulse Surveys
 - ii. Exit Surveys
 - iii. Customer Service Surveys
 - iv. OD Consult and Training Evaluation Surveys
3. Accountability for internal HR folks to start using the (Confidentiality, Accessibility, etc.) best-practices with a three-month ramp up time once this strategy is implemented. Conversations with their managers would follow if individuals are not using these best practices by that to be determined date.

Continuous Improvement: Based on the feedback and evaluation results, regularly update and refine the ICS to meet the changing needs of the City of Madison and its employees.

Communications Buckets

After analyzing key communication areas, HR staff identified four communication “buckets” that would be the most efficient way to divide the types of communications the HR team most frequently sends out. Those four are the following: Customer Service, Quarterly Newsletters, Urgent, and Initiatives/Projects/Programs.

1. Customer Service

- **What this includes:** Any daily or routine communications. Guidance on style, inclusion and accessibility best practices, timeliness for responses, and a focus on customer service is needed.
 - **Examples:** Organizational Development weekly e-Blasts (Tuesdays), course highlights as needed (Wednesdays as needed), periodic benefits related email announcements (i.e. during Open Enrollment, flexible spending periods, and with other key benefit changes), and Supervisor Monthly emails (third Thursday of each month).
- **Level of review*:** Depends on the audience and content of the communication. Refer to the “Level of Review” section following the buckets for details.
- **Who this is sent by:** Any/all HR Team members
- Refer to our [HR Customer Service Framework](#) referenced throughout this document to ensure consistency and alignment.

2. Quarterly Newsletter

- **What this includes:** One quarterly newsletter from the Human Resources department will be sent out with unit-specific information.
 - Includes items and topics that staff need to be aware of around: Benefits, Changes, Policy & Procedures, Expectations, and General Important Information that impacts all staff.
- **Level of review*:** HR Unit Manager and HR Director
- **Who this is sent by:** To be determined, from HR@cityofmadison.com
- [Quarterly Newsletter Drafting Workflow \(SOP\)](#)

3. Urgent

- **What this includes:** Time sensitive information that must go out to all City Staff due to the nature of the content.
 - **Examples:**
 - COVID Updates
 - Inclement weather
 - Heat advisories
 - Urgent policy changes
 - Time specific updates on key HR projects
- **Level of review*:** HR Unit Manager and HR Director
- **Who this is sent by:** HR Director

4. Initiatives/Projects/Programs

- **What this includes:** Any efforts led or co-led by HR that are organizational-wide/multi-agency.
 - **Expectations:**
 - Develop and utilize a *Communication Plan* for all initiatives/projects/programs.
 - Wrap key initiative updates into quarterly newsletters wherever possible to eliminate excess emails and notices.
- **Level of review*:** Project Lead, HR Unit Manager (if unit specific), and HR Director
- **Who this is sent by:** Sent by individual/inbox determined in the communication plan for the initiative/project/program.
 - Sending Initiatives/Projects/Programs Communications Workflow (SOP)

*Levels of Review

You'll notice each bucket includes a "**Level of Review**" line above. While the specified parties above should be generally followed, each communication's requirements for review may vary. When in doubt, ask your HR Unit Manager for guidance.

The two main factors that influence the level of review required are the **receiving audience** and **content of the communication**.

- **Receiving Audience:**
 - **Organization-Wide Communications:** Must be reviewed by your HR Unit Manager and HR Director prior to sending out.
 - **Communications for Employee Sub-Groups:** Must be reviewed by your HR Unit Manager.
 - **Mayor or Mayor's Management Team (MMT):** Must be reviewed and approved by your HR Unit Manager and the HR Director. The HR Director would then introduce the information to the Mayor/MMT. Direct communications to the Mayor should only be sent after approval from the HR Director, or as a function of a pre-approved process.
- **Communication Content:**
 - **Free Flowing, Newly Developed Content:** Must be reviewed by HR Unit Manager and HR Director prior to sending out.
 - I.e., Supervisor Monthly Emails, New Benefits Information, Special Events (Conferences, Forums, Agency-Specific Offerings), Newsletters.
 - **Pre-Written, Template Content:** does not need to be reviewed by HR Unit Manager or HR Director. As with all communications though, a second set of eyes on the communication is recommended prior to sending.
 - I.e., OD e-Blasts, Course Highlights.

Audience

Audience will vary depending on which bucket the communication of focus is tied to.

- All Employees
- Supervisors & Managers
- Department/Division Heads
- Impacted Groups
- Employee Sub-Groups
- General Madison Community
- Project Sponsors
- Public Information Officers (PIO's)
- Initiative/Project/Program Work Group

Communication Channels

1. **Email Newsletters:** Send a quarterly newsletter to All Email Users to share important updates, achievements, and upcoming events from all three sub-units of the HR Department. (Quarterly Newsletter).
 - a. Ensure emails are printed/posted for staff without access to email.
 - b. This would include past benefits newsletter information.
2. **Collaboration Tools:** Implement collaborative tools to facilitate real-time communication and teamwork when possible (i.e. Microsoft 365, and Teams future state).
3. **Digital Screens:** Display important announcements and organizational updates on digital screens in the Madison Municipal Building, and across City of Madison facilities.
 - a. **Facilities that currently have digital screen signage which HR has access to editing:**
 - i. Fleet Service, with an estimated 41 staff
 - ii. Madison Municipal Building, with an estimated 493 staff
 - iii. Metro, with an estimated 446 staff
4. **Printed Flyers and Posters:** Utilize print media with QR codes and short URL's when referencing to online information throughout City of Madison facilities to ensure those without a city email have access to information.
5. **EmployeeNet Announcements & Webpage Postings:** Maintain up-to-date internal and public-facing HR webpages, and EmployeeNet announcements as a secondary source of accurate information, documents, and resources accessible to all employees.
6. **HR Team Meetings:** Continue to conduct these regular meetings within HR to discuss projects, goals, and resolve challenges.
 - a. Unit Meetings, Management Meetings, All HR-Staff Meetings, and 1-on-1's between HR Managers & Staff

Communication Protocols

1. **Customer Service:** Follow our [HR Customer Service Framework](#) when planning for, creating, and sending communications.
2. **Response Times:** Follow the response time expectations found in our [HR Customer Service Framework](#) for emails and messages to ensure timely communication. *See [Key Metrics section](#) for response time details.*
3. **Workflow and Escalation:** Establish a clear workflow for communication and escalation procedures for urgent matters.

- a. Who drafts, who sends? What if HR Director is out for Urgent communications?
4. **Confidentiality:** Remind employees of the importance of confidentiality, especially when dealing with sensitive information.
5. **Consistency of Messaging:** Ensure that all official communications align with the organization's values and messaging and utilize ICS templates and resources for uniformity.
 - a. **Communications Templates:** Communications templates can be found in the HR Common > Internal Communications Strategy > Communications Templates folder. Utilize these when constructing your communications for consistency.
 - b. **Resource Access:** Hyperlink resources in all digital communications for ease of access.
6. **Multilingual Communication:** Accommodate employees who speak different languages by providing translations when necessary.
7. **Accessibility Standards:** Accommodate employees who have access needs for written communications by utilizing the *Accessibility Best Practices Tip Sheet* that goes along with this strategy.

What's Next?

1. **Develop an Implementation Team:** To implement this strategy, build out the implementation timeline, workflows, and to determine resources, training, and materials that are needed.
 - a. Suggest OD Coordinator lead implementation.
 - b. Suggest one person per HR unit at a minimum, designated by HR Unit Managers.
 - c. Define roles and responsibilities once team is determined.
2. **Utilize the Customer Service Framework** in tandem with this Internal Communications Strategy.
 - a. **Define Metrics:** KPI's & Feedback Mechanisms.
 - b. **Define Standards:** For all HR to adhere to regarding customer service.

Future Implementation Team Actions

1. **Develop Workflow Protocols** for Urgent Communications
2. **Ensure all HR Staff have OneNote access for Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)**
 - a. **Create Customer Service SOP OneNote**
 - i. DRAFT: Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) (with communication workflows)
3. **Provide Best Practices, Resources, and Tools**
 - a. **Create Resources (*hyperlinked drafts*):**
 - i. Customer Service Framework
 - ii. Confidentiality Best Practices – Tip Sheet
 - iii. Accessibility Best Practices – Tip Sheet
 - iv. Social Media Best Practices – Tip Sheet
 - b. **Share Resources:** Once developed and require folks to utilize these when developing communications and providing customer service.
4. **Provide Training and Development Resources**
 - a. **Communication Resources:** Communications best-practices resources can be found in the HR Common>Internal Communications Strategy>Communications Resources folder. It's important that all Team HR gets familiar with these to become communications professionals.
 - b. **Communication Training:** Provide training for all HR Staff to ensure they effectively communicate and lead by example.
 - i. Partner with the Language Access Program (LAP) and other departments to learn from SME's within our organization regarding communications, confidentiality, language access, and customer service.
5. **Design and Implement Feedback Mechanisms**
 - a. **Employee Surveys:** Conduct periodic surveys to gather feedback on internal communication effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
 - b. **Suggestion Box:** Set up a digital suggestion box to encourage employees to share ideas and suggestions anonymously.
 - c. **Open-Door Policy:** Encourage managers to have an open-door policy, allowing employees to discuss concerns and feedback in a safe environment.
 - d. **Anonymous Reporting:** Establish a confidential reporting mechanism for employees to report any misconduct or ethical concerns.

Deliverables Already Created

Communications Inventory

- In 2023, ICS core team developed an HR Internal Communications Inventory as a resource for all Team HR to access and become familiar with the communications currently led by folks within the department.
- Refer to this inventory for opportunities to get involved in these communications.
- It's expected that folks maintain this inventory by adding to this each time a new Initiative, Project, or Program is created or joined.

Communications Plan Template & Example

- A Communications Plan Template was created as a resource for all of Team HR to utilize. A template should be used for each Initiative, Project, and/or Program that Team HR leads or co-leads.
- A Sample Communication Plan was also created as a guide for how to use the Communications Plan Template.

Quarterly Newsletter Template

- A Quarterly Newsletter email template was created as an outline for Team HR to utilize and adapt as we move forward with the review and implementation of this ICS.

Course or Event Highlight Template

- A Course Highlight email template has been in use by HR-OD for a few years now. This template was refined and updated to be used to highlight Upcoming Courses or Events.