CITY OF JOHNSON CITY

# Social Media Policy

**1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**: The use of social media by individuals as well as governments has grown significantly in the past several years. With our community relying more and more on social media and other forms of communication to obtain news and information, the City of Johnson City has incorporated social media into the existing communication tools to expand and enhance the City’s efforts to provide timely, pertinent government information.

The primary benefits of the City’s social media are that it: provides rapid disbursement of emergency information enabling the City to respond to situations or post information instantaneously; expands the City’s communications to a greater number of citizens; and directs users to the City website where more complete, detailed information can be obtained, and comments can be registered.

**2.0 EMPLOYEE ACCESS:** This social media policy is subject to and complements the

City’s “Technology Use Agreement”, in addition to any existing or future City policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email communications, and internet.

**3.0 ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT:** Prior to posting on the City-approved social media pages, City employees must submit an application to the Communications and Marketing Department, and receive the appropriate Department Director’s approval for permission to maintain and or post on the Department’s page.

3.1 The Communications and Marketing designee will periodically review the social media page and those that do not meet the City’s intended standards or guidelines may be removed at any time by the Communications and Marketing Department or the Department Director.

3.2 The Communications and Marketing Department will be responsible for monitoring posts on the City’s social media pages, maintaining a list of all social networking application domain names and all employee administrators of these accounts, and removing inappropriate or unacceptable posts on the City’s page.

3.3 All social media pages must be established by the Communications and Marketing designee in the City’s name, and the log-in name, password for access will be controlled by the Communications and Marketing Department. Each approved Departmental Representative will be responsible for maintaining their respective page.

**4.0 ACCEPTABLE USE:** Employees shall follow regulations and policies according to the City’s “Technology Use Agreement.” It is the responsibility of each employee to use all aspects of communication in an ethical, values-based, and legal manner.

**5.0 CONTENT:** It will be the responsibility of the department representative (as appointed by the Department Director and Communications and Marketing Department) to maintain the content of their respective social media accounts. The Communications and Marketing Department will monitor to ensure a consistent citywide message is being conveyed and adherence to the “Social Media Policy”. The Communications and Marketing Department may also direct departments to modify social media content based on best practices and industry norms.

City Employees posting content must follow these guiding principles:

5.1 Maintain transparency by using your real name and job title, and by being clear about your role regarding the subject.

5.2 Write and post only about your area of expertise, and if such posting is related to the City and your assignments.

5.3 Keep postings factual and accurate; no personal opinions are allowed.

5.4 Post meaningful, respectful entries that are on topic.

5.5 Pause and think before posting. If you are about to post something that makes you even slightly uncomfortable, do not post it. Understand that postings are widely accessible, not easily retractable, and will be around for a long time, so consider content carefully. All posts are the property of the City of Johnson City.

**6.0 LEGAL ISSUES:** All City of Johnson City social networking sites shall adhere to applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including all Information Technology and Records Management City policies and other applicable City policies.

6.1 Tennessee’s Public Records Act (T.C.A. § 10-7-101, *et seq.*) and Open Meetings Act (T.C.A. § 8-44-101, *et seq.*) apply to social media content and therefore content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.

6.2 Relevant City of Johnson City and State of Tennessee records retention schedules apply to social networking content. Records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the approved City platforms and tools.

6.3 All social network sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.

6.4 Content submitted for posting that is not topically related or appropriate for the particular social networking site objective, or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria in this policy, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.

**7.0 CITIZEN CONDUCT:** Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between City departments and members of the public. City of Johnson City social media sites and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed (these guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink):

7.1 Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article;

7.2 Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;

7.3 Profane language or content;

7.4 Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;

7.5 Sexual content or links to sexual content;

7.6 Solicitations of commerce;

7.7 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;

7.8 Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or

7.9 Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

1. **PERSONAL ACCOUNT USE – PRECAUTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS**

Barring state law, City personnel shall abide by the following when using social media sites which includes their own personal accounts:

8.1 City personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships within the City for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the City.

8.2 As public employees, City personnel are cautioned that speech on or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties (i.e. owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities) is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the City. City personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and the City.

8.3 When using social media, City personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, City personnel are prohibited from the following:

* Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals; or
* Speech involving themselves or other City personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.

8.4 City employees may not make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of the City without express authorization.

* 1. City personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for:
* publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation);
* publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
* using someone else’s name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person’s permission for an exploitative purpose; or
* publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
  1. City personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly

in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.

* 1. City personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded,

exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the City at any time

without prior notice.

* 1. Reporting violations - Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting

or of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy

shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.

**9.0 DISCLAIMER:** The City of Johnson City social media networking use is subject to the privacy

policy and disclaimer contained on the City’s website [www.johnsoncitytn.org.](http://www.johnsoncitytn.org/)

**10.0 RESPONSIBIITY:** The policy applies to all city employees. Any violation of the policy is

subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination in accordance with the City’s

Personnel Policies.

APPROVED:

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M. Denis Peterson

City Manager

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