

## **Village of Wellington Social Media Policy**

### **General Purpose**

The Village of Wellington is implementing this social media policy (“Policy”) to provide procedures for maintaining village sponsored social media accounts. The Village recognizes that social media accounts, when properly used, can be an excellent way to communicate with residential and business citizens. The Village manager will appoint employees and, at times, a third-party entity to maintain village social media accounts. All employees and contracted third-party entities are expected to adhere to this Policy. This Policy may be changed by the Village Manager from time to time.

### **Definitions**

Social media is any form of online publication or presence that allows employees and/or citizens to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content on an internet-based application. Examples of social media include Facebook, Myspace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, Next Door and various blogs.

### **Policy**

To ensure that all employees providing media services are responsible, productive network users who are protecting the Village’s public image, the following procedures have been established.

The Village may use social media for the purpose of facilitating communications with the community. In addition, social media allows the Village to:

- Help achieve strategic goals
- Monitor and respond to hot topics and emerging issues quickly
- Proactively share stories to address current issues and projects
- Expand communication tools with a vast distribution system for content, while broadening and engaging new audiences
- Open up government to encourage citizen participation, strengthen democracy, and support a civic culture
- Increase transparency of government

### **Comments**

For purposes of this Policy, “comments” include information, statements, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on a social media site. During the use of, or when establishing a Village presence on social media, the following procedures should be followed:

- All official Village presences on social media are considered an extension of the Village’s information networks and are governed by these policies.
- The Village will have a general account. Other divisions or departments may establish separate accounts with the approval of the Village Manager.
- Certain staff members, as appointed by the Village Manager will serve as “points of contact” for the accounts and will retain the authority to monitor content on each of the social media sites to ensure adherence to this Policy for appropriate use, message and branding consistent with the mission and values of the Village. A list of the points of contact will be maintained by the office of the Village manager.
- To maintain consistency, the points of contact will be the only staff members that can post to Village social media accounts. Points of contact should be knowledgeable and able to answer questions about content that may be posted.
- Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the Village’s official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the Village.

- Employees representing the Village via social media must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Village. Employees who fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to the Village's disciplinary procedures.
- In their roles as points of contact, employees are connecting and responding to the inquirer or commenter in an official capacity. The Village's social media connection is not to be used for personal gain or non-village purposes. All of the Village's posts on a Village social media site shall be in the name of the "Village/Department" and not a particular individual.
- Employees should remember that even though social media contact information from third parties may constitute a public record, using such information for personal gain shall be considered a violation of this policy and of the employee's responsibility to act or respond in a professional manner. Employees who fail to comply with these rules and standards are subject to disciplinary action.

Village social media accounts, including lists of subscribers and posted communication, will be managed consistent with Ohio's Public records Act. Content related to Village business shall be maintained in an accessible format and so that it can be readily produced in response to a request. Such accounts shall clearly indicate that any articles, comments, and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Deleted comments or postings or pages shall be retained pursuant to the Village's retention schedule.

The social media accounts will be managed consistent with Ohio's Sunshine Laws. Members of the Village Council, Boards and Commissions, and any other public body of the Village, should not respond to any published message, or use the account to respond to, blog or otherwise discuss, deliberate or express opinions in any manner that violates the Sunshine Laws.

Employees are not permitted to publish any content or postings that include or are related to the following:

- Harassing statements
- Anything which a person of reasonable sensitivities may find to be offensive
- Matters of litigation, potential litigation or otherwise in dispute involving the village.
- Non-public information of any kind.
- References illegal and banned substances and narcotics unless for public educational purposes.
- Pornographic, sexually-oriented, otherwise offensive or illegal materials.
- Defamatory, libelous, offensive, or demeaning material.
- Solicitation of business.
- Comments supporting/opposing political parties, campaigns or candidates. (Comments supporting a Village levy or other ballot issues may be posted with Village Manager's approval)
- Information that might compromise the safety or security of public buildings or activities.
- Disparaging/threatening comments about or related to anyone.
- Personal, sensitive or confidential information of any kind.

### **Public Comment Policy**

The Village's social media accounts may permit public posting of comments upon the express consent of the Village Manager. The Village reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or comments that are offensive to a person with reasonable sensitivity or target or disparage age, race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sexual preference, handicapped or disabled, genetic information, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran of the U.S. armed forces. The Village reserves the right to delete comments that:

- Are spam or include links to other sites;
- Are clearly off topic;

- Advocate illegal activity;
- Are pornographic, sexually-oriented, otherwise offensive or illegal'
- Promote or oppose particular services, products, political organizations or candidates; or
- May infringe on copyrights or trademarks.

Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to the Village business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure.

Comments posted are subject to the rules and regulations of the social media provider.

Social media accounts that are maintained by the Village that have been approved for public comment shall display a link to the public comment policy as follows:

***Thank you for visiting the Village of Wellington's social media site. The purpose of this site is to share photos, video and information of public interest in the Village with residents, business and visitors. It is not the intent to create a public forum.***

***Please note if you post a comment, the Village reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or comments that are offensive to a person with reasonable sensitivity or target or disparage age, race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sexual preference, handicapped or disabled, genetic information, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran of the U.S. armed forces. The Village reserves the right to delete comments that:***

- ***Are spam or include links to other sites;***
- ***Are clearly off topic;***
- ***Advocate illegal activity;***
- ***Are pornographic, sexually-oriented, otherwise offensive or illegal'***
- ***Promote or oppose particular services, products, political organizations or candidates; or***
- ***May infringe on copyrights or trademarks.***

***Please note that the comments expressed on this site, other than those posted by the Village of Wellington, do not reflect the opinion or positions of The Village of Wellington or its officers and employees.***

***Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to the Village business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure.***

***Comments posted are subject to the rules and regulations of the social media provider.***

***If you have any questions or concerns about the Village of Wellington's social media policy, to report incorrect information, or if you are seeking to obtain permission that fall outside of the guidelines above, please contact the Village Manager's office at (440) 647-3827 or email [sdupee@villageofwellington.com](mailto:sdupee@villageofwellington.com).***