

**CITY OF OAKWOOD
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

POLICY NO. 20

SUBJECT: CITY FACEBOOK AND SOCIAL MEDIA

DATE: OCTOBER 7, 2011

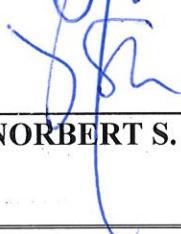
REVISED: SEPTEMBER 24, 2021, AUGUST 8, 2023

RECOMMENDED BY: 

LORI STACEL, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

CONCURRED IN BY: 

ROBERT JACQUES, LAW DIRECTOR

APPROVED BY: 

NORBERT S. KLOPSCH, CITY MANAGER

POLICY: This policy establishes a protocol for creating, operating, and maintaining the city's Facebook.com social media account, as well as possible future use of other social media accounts.

PURPOSE: This policy is intended to further the goals of citizen communication and education, where appropriate, through the use of Facebook.com and, as appropriate in the future, other social media services.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Consistent with the provisions below, the City Manager's Administrative Assistant is responsible for the implementation of this policy, subject to the oversight and approval of the City Manager.

GENERAL PROVISIONS: Effective this date, a "Facebook and Social Media" policy is hereby established to provide guidance and procedures to city of Oakwood employees, officials, and/or volunteers that use electronic and/or computer resources to create, maintain, and/or post to the city's Facebook account.

Facebook and Social Media Policy

1. OBJECTIVE

In an effort to address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the city will consider participating in various social media sites to reach a broad audience. The city encourages the use of social media to further the goals of citizen communication and education where appropriate. The use of social media can help the city of Oakwood to:

- a. Achieve organizational goals.
- b. Monitor and respond to hot topics and emerging issues quickly.
- c. Proactively address current issues and projects.
- d. Expand communication tools with a vast, low-cost distribution system for content, while broadening and engaging new audiences.
- e. Increase transparency of government.

At this time, the city has established and operates a Facebook.com account, and will continue to examine other social media opportunities as they may become appropriate to the city's needs and purposes.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a. "Social media sites" are external websites or social network services on non-city servers. Most social media sites provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as email, linking, posting, and instant messaging services. Examples of current popular social media sites are Facebook, X (formerly Twitter,) and LinkedIn.
- b. "Facebook" is a specific external social media or social networking website operated by Facebook.com on non-city servers, which allows users to create individual accounts or profiles, post a variety of information within that profile, and link that profile to other users' profiles in a variety of ways.
- c. Generally, a "Content Manager" is an individual responsible for maintaining information on a city social media site account or profile. For purposes of this policy, there are two (2) appointed Facebook Content Managers acting under the direction of the City Manager: the Director of Leisure Services (as to content pertaining to the OCC, Gardner Pool, city parks, recreational programming, and other offerings of the Leisure Services Department), and the City Manager's Administrative Assistant (as to content pertaining to city administration and other non-Leisure Services Departments).

- d. "Posting" refers to the publishing of information on social media sites.
- e. "Blogs" refers to any type of website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video, which is typically (but not always) organized by date, topic, or content tags.

3. SELECTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- a. Facebook is the only approved social media site for the establishment of a city account or profile. However, the city is aware that the internet landscape can change rapidly and users can gravitate to different social media fora, and is also aware that social media sites vary in content and use. Therefore, any proposed shift of the city's social media presence from Facebook to another social media site, or any proposed expansion either within or in addition to the city's Facebook account or profile, will be addressed as follows:
 - 1. The Content Manager(s), under direction of the City Manager, will review a site before a city account is created based on its need, purpose and audience. City accounts shall only be established by the Content Manager(s), under the direction of the City Manager. No other employee of the city of Oakwood is authorized to establish any city of Oakwood account on any social media site.
 - 2. Prior to establishing any city account, the Content Manager(s) will submit any proposed social media site to the city's Information Technology contractor and/or to MVCC (collectively, the city's "IT support") for review, to ensure it is technically compatible with the city's network environment, browsers, and security requirements.
 - 3. The Content Manager(s) will determine whether the social media site allows comments or posts to be turned off. It will be at the discretion of the city whether a site or platform will be used in the event that the particular format will not allow the city to turn off the comments or posts feature.
 - 4. The Content Manager(s) will review the concept, audience, and marketing plan for any social media site.
 - 5. The Content Manager(s), in coordination with the city's IT support as needed, will set up the main administration account for the site, using a city email address.
- b. If the city elects to use any site or platform that will not allow comments or posts to be turned off, the city reserves the right to implement the controls set out in subparagraph 4(b) under "USAGE POLICY OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES" hereinafter, and in all events, the city disclaims responsibility and liability to the fullest extent allowed by law for any inappropriate content or posting on any network site or platform.

4. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- a. Any social media site used for official city business must be approved by the City Manager.
- b. If a social media site or any other web-based platform used by the city allows for comments to be posted by the public, the Content Manager reserves the right to edit or remove content based on the criteria listed below, and for any other appropriate reason. The city also reserves the right to turn off the ability of third parties to post or comment. The city's intent is not to create a public forum, but to maintain a moderated online discussion directly relating to topics posted by the city, with language that is appropriate for citizens (including minors) to read. The following content shall be considered inconsistent with the intent of this policy and is subject to editing and/or removal:
 1. Comments not topically related to the particular post being commented upon;
 2. Profane language or content;
 3. Threatening or harassing content, including but not limited to so-called "doxing" content;
 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;
 5. Nudity, sexual content, or links to sexual content;
 6. Solicitations of commerce;
 7. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 8. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 9. Content that violates a copyright, trademark, or other legal ownership interest of any other party; or
 10. Accusations made that imply that a particular individual is guilty of any criminal conduct or immoral activity. Defamatory and/or derogatory material will not be permitted. If a person believes that there is a legitimate basis to make a complaint against the city, any of its employees, or any third party, then appropriate alternative means of registering the complaint must be utilized, and these social media sites designed solely for the communication of information determined to be relevant by the city will not be an appropriate forum for registering allegations of criminal activity or other accusations against any individual or entity.

- c. This use of social media sites shall be for the purpose of allowing the city to distribute information regarding topics determined by the city. If any platform allows for posting comments by third parties, then third party comments may be allowed by the city in its sole discretion subject to the right of the Content Manager(s) to remove inappropriate content that is determined to be inappropriate in violation of one or more of the standards enumerated in this policy, or for any other appropriate and lawful reason. To the extent the city permits a social media site to be utilized as a limited forum for expression, the only content that will be permitted will be responses or postings that are relevant to the city-initiated topics and discussion, and under circumstances where such comments and postings are consistent with the standards of appropriate communication available to all citizens (including minors) as set forth in this policy.
- d. Social media sites may be used to promote the city, city services, city job opportunities, and city events.
- e. City use of social media sites will comply with all provisions of Ohio law, ordinances of the city of Oakwood, and policies issued by the City Manager.
- f. All social media sites shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the city of Oakwood and shall have city of Oakwood contact information available on the site.
- g. No personal e-mail addresses or contact information of any person, including but not limited to any city employee, official, resident, or guest, should be posted on these sites. Social media sites may not be used to provide any personal information pertaining to city employees, officials, residents, or guests. Group photographs or video may be posted at the Content Manager(s)'s discretion, subject to any other city policy regarding the same, but no individual photographs or video may be posted on a city social media site without prior notification and approval by the affected individual.
- h. Notwithstanding any other provision hereof, the city's website may link to the city's official page on a social media site, and vice versa, at the city's discretion.
- i. Social media sites that may be established pursuant to this policy will not be appropriate places where a person may request public records. Social media sites established pursuant to this policy will not be monitored for public records requests. The city staff responsible for the implementation of this Policy and for providing services on behalf of the city with respect to social media sites implemented pursuant to this policy, are not custodians of general public records. Any person communicating by means of a social media site is not in communication with a custodian of public records generally. Requests for public records should be directed to the city's Clerk of Council or another appropriate records custodian.
- j. Social media sites and other network applications established pursuant to this policy will not generally be an appropriate forum by which citizens may ask questions or request information or records of the city. Citizens are requested to go to the official city of

Oakwood website at oakwoodohio.gov and link to the place established on that website for general inquiries directed to the city. Questions posted on a social media site established pursuant to this policy may not receive an answer because the site will not be monitored for this purpose.

- k. The city is aware that city employees may have and use their own social media accounts, *i.e.*, Facebook pages, blogs, and the like, during breaks or outside their normal hours of employment. Employees are reminded that any confidentiality agreements they have signed as a condition of their employment with the city apply to their personal online postings. Employees are further reminded that they are personally responsible for content they may publish on any blogs and sites and could be subject to legal liability for information deemed disparaging, threatening, offensive, demeaning, defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous to the city of Oakwood or any other entity. Furthermore, if any of an employee's published views untruthfully and negatively comment upon the reputation, integrity, character or morals of the officials, employees or management of the city of Oakwood, or any affiliates, or if it is counter to any other policy of the city of Oakwood, that employee may be disciplined up to and including termination. Employees may not discuss work-related issues and complaints via any social media site affiliated with the city, including but not limited to any posting that originates from the Employee's personal social media account. Suspected violations of the above policy should be immediately reported to the City Manager.

5. CONTENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- a. The city of Oakwood's website, oakwoodohio.gov, will remain the official location for content regarding official city business, services and events. When possible, links within social media sites will direct users back the city's website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the city of Oakwood.
- b. For any social media platform, it is preferred that the city have a single, unified site or page. Individual city departments and individual staff members may not establish their own official city of Oakwood social media sites or pages without express authorization from the City Manager. Individual departments wanting to add content to an official city social media account should submit requests to the Content Manager(s) with responsibility for a particular account.
- c. The Content Manager(s) will review all city-related information prior to posting on social media sites.
- d. The Content Manager(s) may disable functions on the social media site or applications that are not needed or desired in the sole discretion of the city. No rights are created in any third party with respect to how the city may utilize the applications and features on social media or web application sites, and the decisions on which features to maintain or disable will be at the sole discretion of the city. Similarly, the decision on whether to allow posting or responses by third parties and the deletion of any such responses or

postings shall be in the sole discretion of the city and outside parties do not have any authority or right to control content or the length of time content may be posted.

- e. The city of Oakwood reserves the right to temporarily or permanently suspend access to official city social media site at any time.
- f. All information posted by the city on external sites may be subject to the Ohio Public Records Act and the Sunshine Law. The Content Manager(s), in coordination with the city's Information Technology contractor and/or MVCC, shall maintain an archive of all information posted to the site to the extent feasible, which archive shall be maintained consistent with the city's Records Retention Schedule, in the event it cannot be retrieved from the actual site itself.
- g. The Content Manager(s) will review the social media sites on a routine basis to ensure they are updated and that information is being posted in a timely manner.
- h. The City Manager and other staff responsible for development and maintenance of the Records Retention Schedule of the city of Oakwood will develop categories of record retention that will permit the disposal of transitory electronic communications received from third parties on such social media and external website facilities that are subject to this Policy on the shortest time frame reasonably allowable. Official materials posted by the city of Oakwood or authorized staff will be scheduled for disposal on the records retention schedule in accordance with the content of such items.

6. ELECTED OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

City elected officials and members of all subsidiary boards and commissions of the city of Oakwood should not engage in online discussions concerning matters which may foreseeably come before them for City Council or other Board or Committee action. All members of official bodies, agencies and committees of the city of Oakwood, including the City Council, the Planning Commission, and other committees and agencies of the city, are subject to the Public Records Act and the Sunshine Law. Members of such committees are encouraged to consult with the City Manager and the City Director of Law if they have any questions concerning appropriate compliance with these laws. The Attorney General in AGO 2009-19 (dated April 23, 2009) opined that these types of websites and social media may be subject to the Sunshine Law as well as the Public Records Act. Accordingly, elected officials and members of all advisory, elected and appointed boards and commissions of the city of Oakwood are encouraged to refrain from making any comment on social media or external internet facility on the web related to a matter of public business that may be pending before the body of which the person is a member or any matter that may reasonably be understood to potentially come up before such body or authority in the future.