

CITY OF WAUCHULA



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

City Commission Approval 9/14/15

City of Wauchula Social Media Policy

1. Purpose

To ensure the proper use of the City's social networking sites and to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy establishes the City's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. Publicly posted information on the City's social media sites will be professional and reflect positively on the City of Wauchula, its employees, boards, programs, policies, and services. This policy provides rules and guidelines regarding the use of the City-provided social media by employees and elected officials and shall not be construed or interpreted in any way to infringe upon a person's right to free speech under the Florida or United States Constitution.

2. Definitions

- (1) "Social media" means and includes internet technologies that facilitate and promote interactive communication, participation, and collaboration. Examples of social media included, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Vine, Instagram, Blogger, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Foursquare, YouTube, and the interactive tools and functions they provide to users.
- (2) "City Employee" or "Employee" means a person hired and currently employed by the City of Wauchula. The term does not include the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Board or Committee Members, and independent contractors of the City.
- (3) "City social media sites" means social media sites which the City establishes and maintains, and over which it has control over all postings, except for advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners. City social media sites shall supplement, and not replace, the City's required notices and standard methods of communication.

3. Overview

The intent of social media is informational purposes only. If a user wishes to contact City Commission, Administration, or to request City services, they should visit the City's official website: www.cityofwauchula.com. The City's website will remain the official online location for content regarding City business, services, and events. Whenever possible, links to more information will direct users back to the City's official website.

City employees will check facts, cite sources, acknowledge and correct errors and check spelling and grammar before publishing any posts on City social media sites. Further, employees may be personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs or any other form of user-generated media.

Employees posting content shall comply with this policy. The City of Wauchula reserves the right to update this policy. The City's social media sites will clearly indicate that all content posted is subject to Florida's Public Records Law (Section 119.07, F.S.). Users will be informed that public records requests shall be made by contacting the custodian of records, the City Clerk.

4. Establishing a City Social Media Account

City employees acting in their official capacities on behalf of their City may only create City social media sites and/or post City information on City social media sites after obtaining the prior approval of the City Manager.

Employees who post information or comments in their personal capacity on City social media sites are limited to posting their own opinions and beliefs and not the official views or positions of the City. Where the context of an employee's personal post does not make it clear that the views posted are the employee's views and not the City's, the employee must state in the posting that the views are his or her own and not the views of the City.

5. Terms of Use of City Social Media Sites

City social media sites are not monitored all the time. Do not use social media if you need to report an emergency situation or a time-sensitive issue. All emergencies should be reported by dialing 911.

- (1) City employees and officials may use social media as a function of their employment with the City, when authorized and within their respective delegated areas of employment responsibilities and duties.
- (2) The City may use the social media forum for two-way communications unless otherwise directed by the City Manager. The City reserves the right to edit or remove content at its discretion and based on the criteria listed below. The City's intent is not to create a public forum, but to maintain a forum related to topics posted by the City, with language appropriate for citizens and the general public, (including minors), to read. Inappropriate content includes:
 - A. Comments not topically related to the particular article being commented on.
 - B. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, veteran status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
 - C. Solicitations of commerce.
 - D. Sexual content or links to sexual content.
 - E. Comments to support or oppose political campaigns or ballot measures.
 - F. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
 - G. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 - H. Content posted in violation of copyright, trademark, patent or any other legal ownership interest of any other party.

- I. Accusations that a particular individual is guilty of any criminal conduct or immoral activity.
 - J. Defamatory, false or misleading material.
 - K. Formal complaints against the City and its employees, officials, and contractors. If a person believes 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.
 - L. Harassing and threatening comments.
- (3) The use of City social media sites shall be for the purpose of allowing the City to distribute information regarding topics determined by the City.
- (4) When posting comments on a City social media site, the user shall, as a condition of using any City social media site, be subject to the following disclaimer that will be prominently displayed, in substantial form, on all City social media sites:

IMPORTANT NOTICE UNDER FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE LAW AND PUBLIC RECORDS LAW:

The user of this site understands and agrees that under the Florida Public Records Act (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes), every response and submission to this site may constitute a public record subject to public disclosure. There is no expectation of privacy and confidentiality whatsoever regarding on any matter posted on this site. Posts will remain on the site for as long as the site's host will allow for such item to remain posted. Posts are subject to removal or edit by the City for reasons deemed inappropriate by City Policy including, but not limited to reasons such as using or posting obscene, defamatory, false or misleading, harassing, threatening, sexually explicit, violation of criminal or civil law, a commercial solicitation, information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems, or not topically related to City programs, services, projects, issues, events and activities, or the particular post being commented upon. Any post removed by the City will be temporarily stored by the City offline and may be a public record available for inspection and/or copying to the extent allowed by law. The City does not represent or guarantee that a post or content will remain on a site for any given length of time. As such, posts and content may be removed at the discretion of the City or a third party manager responsible for the site.

- (5) City use of social media sites will comply with all provisions of Florida law, ordinances, resolutions and policies of the City of Wauchula including, but not limited to, the Florida Public Records Act (Chapter 119, Fla. Stat.) and the Standards of Conduct applicable to Public Officials and Employees (Section 112.313, Fla. Stat.).
- (6) All City social media sites must indicate that they are maintained by the City of Wauchula and must have the City of Wauchula's contact information available on the site.

- (7) City Employees and officials may not post a personal email, private phone numbers and addresses, or any personal information to any City social media site.
- (8) City Employees and officials may not remove their name or domain information from postings on the City's social media site nor access the City's social media site anonymously to conceal their identity.
- (9) City officials who are subject to the Sunshine Law including, but not limited to, the mayor, city commissioners, and board and committee members shall not engage in on-line discussions concerning matters which may foreseeably come before them as a governing board for action. Such officials are encouraged to consult with the City Manager and the City Attorney if they have questions concerning compliance with these laws.
- (10) Permission must be obtained by City staff, in writing, before posting photographs of people if the photograph was obtained at a location where the person depicted in the photograph would have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- (11) Social media sites and other network applications established under this policy will not be a forum by which citizens may ask questions of the City. Citizens are requested to go to the official City of Wauchula website at www.cityofwauchula.com and link to the place established on that website for asking questions of the City. City social media sites established under this policy will not be monitored by the City for purposes of answering questions and any user of a City social media site shall have no expectation of receiving a response from the City related to questions presented on the site.
- (12) Passwords for City social media sites should be safeguarded and not shared with anyone other than authorized personnel.

The City retains the right, at its sole and absolute discretion to prohibit a user from accessing the City's Social Media Sites due to a violation, or violations, of this policy. Participation is at your own risk and you are personally responsible for your comments, your username, and any information provided.

6. External Links

The City of Wauchula's social network sites may contain links to other social networking sites or websites that are not owned, regularly reviewed or controlled by the City. The provision of direct links should not be construed as an endorsement or sponsorship of these external sites, their content or their hosts. Links to other social networking sites or websites, which are posted by the City, will be reviewed by the City Manager for approval based on the following criteria:

- (1) Local, regional, state or federal government agencies, hospitals, special purpose districts, scientific or cultural organizations serving the Hardee County community and public educational institutions.
- (2) Community festivals and events that are open to the general public and are sponsored or co-sponsored by the City of Wauchula may be permitted.
- (3) Human service organizations that receive direct support from the City of Wauchula.
- (4) No links will be provided to sites that have content that violate the Terms of Use of this policy or to information not relevant to the City's mission or services.
- (5) No links will be provided to sites that are associated with, sponsored by or serve a candidate for elected office or any political party or organization supporting or seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office or ballot proposal.

7. Responding to Comments

Authorized users will be responsible for responding to comments and messages as appropriate for content. They must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City and accordingly, shall adhere to all City rules, procedures, and standards of conduct.

8. Privacy and Security

The City has the right to monitor employees' social media use on City equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users of the City's social media sites have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication.

9. Violations of Policy

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.