



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Purpose

Social networking in government serves two primary functions: to communicate and deliver messages directly to citizens and to encourage citizen involvement, interaction, and feedback. Information which is distributed via social networking must be accurate, consistent, and timely and meet the information needs of the City's intended audience. Social media is used for social networking and this policy seeks to ensure proper administration of the City of Owatonna's social media sites by its representatives.

The City has limited control of social media accounts with third parties (e.g., Facebook Twitter, etc.). At the same time, there is a general expectation by the public that the City of Owatonna has a social media presence by which to share information about current City projects and City business. For municipal purposes, the City's social media accounts will be used for incidental, non-vital communication and general information only. It is not the purpose of the City's social media accounts to be a medium for transactions of City business. The one exception is in the case of a natural or man-made disaster, if it is determined by the City that the best means of communicating with the public through the social media account(s).

The City of Owatonna wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. City representatives have the responsibility to use the City's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing City policies.

2. Policy

The City of Owatonna will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy.

The City of Owatonna's social media accounts are considered a City asset and administrator access to these accounts will be securely administered in accordance with the City's Computer Use policy. The City reserves the right to shut down any of its social media sites or accounts for any reason without notice.

All social media accounts created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to the City of Owatonna including a link to the City's official website. The City of Owatonna does not create or maintain social media accounts for elected officials.

3. Scope

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media accounts sponsored, established, registered, or authorized by the City of Owatonna. The City's social media accounts that are in effect as of the date of the adoption of this Policy are listed in the attached Appendix A. The City may, from time to time, add, delete, or amend the accounts listed in the Appendix.

The City does not create, collect, disseminate, or regulate use of any other social media accounts, including the personal accounts of its elected officials and staff. Questions regarding the scope of this policy should be directed to the City Administrator or the Communications Manager.

4. Definition

Social media are internet and mobile-based applications, websites, and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, videos, comments and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to as "user-generated content" or "consumer-generated media."

Social media include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites and apps such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Nextdoor
- Blogs
- Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
- Video and photo sharing sites and apps such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and Flickr
- Wikis or shared encyclopedias such as Wikipedia
- An ever-emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above

As used in this policy, "employees and agents" means all City representatives including its employees and other agents of the City such as independent contractors or councilmembers. "Communications Manager" is the City employee who implements and manages the City's Social Media Policy. "Social Media Agent" means any City employee or agent with administrator access who, when posting or responding to a post, appears to be the City social media account owner.

5. Rules of Use

The City's Social Media Agents are responsible for managing the City's social media accounts. Facilities or departments wishing to have a new social media presence must initially submit a request to the Communications Manager who will consult with the City Administrator in order to ensure social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. All approved sites will be clearly marked as the City of Owatonna's site and will be linked to the official City website (www.owatonna.gov or www.ci.owatonna.mn.us). The website displays icons linking to the City's official social media sites. No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of the City unless authorized in accordance with this policy.

The City's social media page must conspicuously display or link to a public notice that informs the public of the purpose of the social media presence and the terms one agrees to in accessing, using, or posting to the City's social media page.

Administration of all City social media accounts must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.

City social media accounts covered by this policy will not be used by Social Media Agents for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.

No City social media account may be used by the City or any Social Media Agent to disclose private or confidential information. No social media account should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential or sensitive, contact the City Administrator.

Outside of situations of disaster, no City social media account will be used for transactions of City business. In the event a user initiates a request, application, or question through social media that affects City business or requires another City policy or process to be followed, follow up with that user by phone, email, or other channels. If comments are allowed, in the event of a question of general interest, a response may be given in comments, the initial post may be edited, or a subsequent post may be created to include the information.

The City of Owatonna's Social Media Agents will not edit any posted comments. However, comments posted by members of the public may be removed if they fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Potentially libelous comments
- Obscene or pornographic content
- Direct threats to persons or property
- Material asserted to violate the intellectual property of another person
- Private, personal information about a person published without his/her consent
- Information that compromises a public safety security system
- Statutorily private, confidential or nonpublic data
- Comments totally unrelated to the topic of the forum
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Hyperlinks to material that falls into one of the foregoing categories

A member of the public whose comment is removed may appeal the removal of the comment and seek reconsideration of its removal by contacting the City in writing and explaining how the comment does not fall into one of the categories for removal. A written response should be provided as soon as reasonably possible.

A member of the public who disputes the legality of any portion of this policy may dispute the particular portion in writing. The City should acknowledge the claim promptly and, upon consultation of the City Attorney, respond to the claim concerning legality of the policy portion as soon as reasonably possible under the circumstances.

6. Data Ownership and Retention

All communications or messages within social media accounts covered by this policy composed, sent, or received on City or personal equipment are the property of the City and will be subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. As no transactions of City business shall be conducted through social media accounts (outside of disasters), in accordance with the City's records retention schedule, the City shall retain all social media messages only until read.

7. Adoption

This Social Media Policy shall be effective upon adoption by the Owatonna City Council. The date set in place for the Policy will be May 16, 2023.



PUBLIC NOTICE

May 16, 2023

The purpose of the City of Owatonna's social media presence is to provide members of the community with information in more places and more ways than were traditionally available. All content of this site is public and is subject to disclosure pursuant to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Please be aware that anything you post may survive deletion, whether by you or others. Do not post sensitive or personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers.

Following or "friending" persons or organizations is not an endorsement by the City and is only intended as a means of broadening communication. The City is not responsible for content found at links to third parties, nor the views or opinions expressed by third-party comments.

Please be advised that comments falling into the following category or categories may be removed:

- Potentially libelous
- Obscene or pornographic content
- Direct threats to persons or property
- Material asserted to violate the intellectual property of another person
- Private, personal information about a person published without his/her consent
- Information that endangers the public by compromising a public safety security system
- Statutorily private, confidential, or nonpublic data
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Hyperlinks to material that falls into at least one of the foregoing categories

Should your comment be removed by the City and you believe it does not fall into one of the above categories, contact Deanna Sheely, Communications Manager, in writing to explain how the comment does not fall into one of these categories.

Should you wish to challenge the legality of any portion of this notice or the City's social media policy, you may contact the City Administrator or Communications Manager in writing and explain the basis for the challenge in detail.

If you have any other questions about the City of Owatonna's social media page, contact the City Administrator or Communications Manager. By accessing, using, or posting to the City of Owatonna social media page, you are acknowledging that you have been notified of the City's Social Media Policy.

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Social Media Policy Appendix A

The City of Owatonna's official social media sites are as follows.

Facebook:

- City of Owatonna [City of Owatonna, MN Government | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)
- Owatonna Animal Shelter [\(6\) Owatonna Animal Shelter | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)
- Owatonna Parks and Recreation [Owatonna Parks and Recreation | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)
- Brooktree Golf Course [\(6\) Brooktree Golf Course | Facebook](#)
- River Springs Water Park [River Springs Water Park | Owatonna MN \(facebook.com\)](#)
- Owatonna Dog Park [Owatonna Dog Park | Owatonna MN \(facebook.com\)](#)
- West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center [West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center | Owatonna MN \(facebook.com\)](#)
- West Hills Social Commons [\(3\) West Hills Social Commons | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#) The Owls of Downtown Owatonna [The Owls of Downtown Owatonna \(facebook.com\)](#)
- Owatonna Public Library [Owatonna Public Library | Owatonna MN \(facebook.com\)](#)
- Owatonna Public Library Children's Services [\(3\) Owatonna Public Library Children's Services | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)
- City of Owatonna Public Works [City of Owatonna - Public Works | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)
- Owatonna Fire Department [Owatonna Fire Department | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)
- Owatonna Degner Regional Airport [Owatonna Degner Regional Airport | Owatonna MN | Facebook](#)

Instagram:

- Owatonna Fire Department <https://www.instagram.com/owatonnafire/>
- Owatonna Public Library <https://www.instagram.com/owatonnapubliclibrary/>
- West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center [West Hills Tennis and Fitness Center on Instagram • Photos and videos](#)

Twitter:

- Owatonna Partners for Economic Development @DevelopOwatonna [\(1\) Owatonna Development \(@DevelopOwatonna\) / Twitter](#)
- Owatonna Public Library <https://twitter.com/owatonnalibrary/>