City of Brownsdale, Minnesota
Social Media Policy

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 Brownsdale's social media sites by its representatives.

The City has limited control of social media accounts with third parties (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.). At the same time, there is a general expectation by the public that this City have 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 is through the social media account(s).

The City of Brownsdale 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.

Policy

The City of Brownsdale 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.

City of Brownsdale 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 websites 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 Brownsdale, including a link to the City's official website. The City of Brownsdale does not create or maintain social media accounts for its elected officials, or proposed social media websites sponsored, established, registered, or authorized by the City of Brownsdale. The City's social media accounts are exclusively the following:

1. Brownsdale Grace Gillette Public Library, website(brownsdale.lib.mn.us) and Facebook
2. City of Brownsdale's website, (brownsdalemn.com)

3. 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 Council.

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, video, 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 includes, but is 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 council members.

"Social media manager" 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.

Rules of Use

City social media managers are responsible for managing City social media accounts or websites.

Facilities or departments wishing to have a new social media presence must initially submit a request to Council 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 Brownsdale site and will be linked with the official City website (www. Brownsdalemn.com). 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 websites will 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 managers 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 manager to disclose private or confidential information. No social media website should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential, or sensitive, contact the City Council .

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.

City of Brownsdale's social media managers 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:

- Obscene or pornographic content
- Direct threats to people 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
- 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.

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.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The purpose of the City of Brownsdale'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:

- 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 City Council 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 council in writing and explain the basis for the challenge in detail.

If you have any other questions about the City of Brownsdale's social media page, contact City Council.

By accessing, using, or posting to this City of Brownsdale's social media page, you acknowledge you have been advised of the foregoing.