

BOS Policy No.

Title: Social Media Policy

Accepted/approved on: 2/25/2020

Applicability

The Town of Charlton has a need to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media channels. The use of social media presents opportunity and risk to the Town and individual Town departments. In general, the Board of Selectmen supports the use of social media to further Town and department missions and goals, subject to certain caveats, conditions and safeguards.

The Board of Selectmen endorses the secure use of social media technology to: (a) enhance communication, collaboration and exchange of information; (b) streamline processes; and (c) foster productivity improvements. However, such use must not compromise data, confidentiality or integrity. The same standard of conduct, principles and guidelines that apply to Town of Charlton employees in the performance of their assigned duties generally also apply to employee social media technology use. This document establishes townwide social media use policies, protocols and procedures intended to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology.

Policy

Use of social media technology by any town official or employee, subject to applicable law, shall conform to the policies, standards, protocols and procedures contained, or referenced, herein.

1.0 Definitions

1.1 Social Media

The term “social media” includes the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation. Through social media, individuals or groups can create, organize, edit, comment on, combine and share content. Social media encompasses many technologies and forms, including social-networking, blogs, wikis, photo-sharing, video-sharing, podcast, social bookmarking, mash-ups, widgets, virtual worlds, microblogs, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and more. Not all forms of social media may be appropriate for use by a Town official or employee.

1.2 Official Town Email Account

An email account provided by the Town and to be used for town business or a Town-approved mailbox to be used for official Town business.

1.3 Approved Town Social Networking Site

Approved Town social networking site refers to social networks that the Town Administrator (TA) with consultation from the Information Services Technician (IT) have assessed and approved for use by Town officials, employees or departments. Any such wishing to create and manage a social media account must request and receive permission from the Town Administrator.

1.4 User

A User is a member of the public that interacts with a town sponsored social media page.

1.5 Post

A message/blog in the form of, but not necessarily limited to, text, videos, photographs, graphics, links (hyperlinks), documents, computer applications, etc.

1.6 Comment

A user submitted response to an administrator post.

2.0 Responsibility

2.1 Town Administrator

The Town Administrator is responsible for regulating and facilitating the terms of this policy in compliance with established rules and protocols. This includes responsibility and concomitant authority to audit use of social media and to enforce policy compliance.

2.2 Department Head

Within the terms of this policy, Department Heads have authority to determine and establish social media activity at the departmental level subject to prior review and approval of the Town Administrator.

2.3 Social Media Coordinator

The Social Media Coordinator is appointed by the Department Head and vested with authority to use social media on behalf of the department and responsibility to ensure the appropriateness of content. This individual acts as the “official spokesperson” for the department through social media.

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Town Social Media Technology Use

Use of social media shall conform to the policies, protocols and procedures contained, or referenced, herein, including, but not limited to, that all such shall:

- A. Comply with all applicable federal, state, and town statutes, bylaws, rules, regulations and policies. This includes, but is not limited to, adherence to all laws and policies regarding copyright, trademark, records retention, , Massachusetts Public Records Law, U.S. Constitution First Amendment, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), privacy laws, employment related laws, and Town established Policies such as, but not limited to, those regarding Professional Conduct, Sexual Harassment, and Electronic Communication and Data Security Policy.

3.2 Requirements for Departments Using Social Media

Departments who choose to utilize social media shall designate and identify for the Town Administrator in writing, in advance, a Social Media Coordinator responsible for overseeing the department’s social media activity, policy compliance, and security protection.

3.3 Authorized Use

Department Heads are responsible for designating appropriate levels of use relative to the use of Social Media sites utilized by their department.

1. Social media network usage shall be limited only to those with a clear Town business purpose to use the forum.
2. Appropriate usage levels include identifying what sites the individual is approved to use, as well as defining approved capability: publish, edit, comment or view only.
3. Only individuals designated by the Department Head and approved by the Town Administrator and Department Heads themselves, shall be considered authorized users and have permission to publish, edit and respond on behalf of the Town.
4. Each authorized user before commencing any such use shall review the Town's social media policies and procedures and acknowledge their understanding and acceptance of their scope of responsibility and limitations via signing an acknowledgement form and submitting same to the Town Administrator.

3.4 User Behavior

The same standards, requirements, policies, principles and guidelines that apply to Town of Charlton employees in the performance of their public duties or employment apply to use of social media technology use.

1. Authorized users shall do so only within the scope defined by their respective department head per section 3.3 and in compliance with this and all Town policies, practices and provider user agreements and guidelines.
2. Violations of this policy shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may result in appropriate disciplinary actions.
3. This policy is not intended to infringe upon an individual's right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow employees on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of the employee's job duties. Additionally, this policy shall not supersede any collectively bargained labor agreements. However, when you speak via social networking sites or tools on matters concerning your work, you are speaking as an employee and not as a citizen, and certain restrictions apply to your freedom to express yourself. Those restrictions are intended to preserve the public's safety and confidentiality, and to maintain your status as an employee who should: (a) receive the respect of the public, (b) be able to perform your duties in a professional manner and (c) remain objective with respect to the public.

3.5 Authenticity Establishment

Town department social media sites shall be created and maintained with identifiable characteristics of an official Town site that distinguishes them from non-professional or personal uses.

1. Town social media network accounts shall be created using an official Town email account.
2. Contact information should display an official Town email address, include something about being the “official Town account”, and provide a link to the Town or department website.
3. The name “Town of Charlton” or the official Town seal or department logo must be displayed.
4. Link (hyperlink) to section 3.6.3: Town of Charlton Social Media User Responsibility Guideline must be displayed.

3.6 Site Content

Departments are responsible for establishing and maintaining content posted to their social media sites.

1. Social Media Coordinators shall review site activity regularly for exploitation or misuse.
2. Contents posted on Town social media sites may be considered public records subject to disclosure under Massachusetts Public Record Law. Requests for the production of posts on a Town social media site shall be referred to the Town Administrator’s Office as Records Access Officer for review and response. The IT Technician and Town Administrator may implement social media archival software. All Town Social Media accounts shall be appropriately archived in accordance with the procedure set forth.
3. Following forms of content posted by external and authorized users are subject to removal if they contain:
 - A. Profane language or content;
 - B. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination of protected classes;
 - C. Sexual harassment content;
 - D. Solicitations of commerce or advertisements including promotion or endorsement;
 - E. Conduct constituting, or encouragement of, illegal activity;
 - F. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - G. Content more likely than not having the effect of defaming, any person, group or organization;
 - H. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as trademark or copyright infringement;
 - I. Making or publishing of false, vicious or malicious statements concerning any employee of the Town;
 - J. Violent or threatening content;
 - K. Disclosure of confidential, sensitive or proprietary information.

4. The Town Administrator, after consultation with the Department Head, shall make the final determination with respect to possible violations and any corrective action, if any, to be taken with respect to same. Content in violation of the standards set forth in paragraph no. 3 immediately above may be removed. See section 3.7 concerning content management and deletion.
5. Departments, with the assistance and advice of the IT Department, shall have preventative measures in place against potential destructive technical incidents. See section 3.8 on network security.

3.7 Records Management

Each Department shall document and maintain in an easily accessible format its and its employees' use of social media that tracks account information. Subject to review and approval by the Town Administrator:

1. Each Department is responsible for the creation, administration and deactivation of social media accounts.
2. All content is to be fully accessible to any person requesting documents from the social media site.
3. Content deemed inappropriate per section 3.6.3 or technically destructive shall be promptly documented, saved pursuant to policies and procedures regarding record retention, and then removed immediately.
4. Individuals (e.g., friends, fans or followers) who continue to post inappropriate content shall be removed.

3.8 Network Security

Each Department, with the assistance and advice of the IT Department, shall have security controls in place to protect Town information and technology assets against potential destructive technical incidents.

- Perceived or known compromises to the Town's internal network shall be promptly reported to IT Technician.
- Computers, laptops and mobile devices used to administer Town social media sites shall have up-to-date software to protect against destructive technical incidents, including but not limited to, cyber, virus and spyware/adware attacks.