

## **TOWN OF NORTH STONINGTON SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **I. Purpose.**

This Town of North Stonington (the "Town") policy establishes guidelines for the creation and use by the Town of North Stonington, CT, its departments, offices, boards, commissions, committees and/or employees of the Town's social media sites for work-related purposes (including but not limited to Facebook and Twitter) as a means of conveying Town information to its citizens.

The intended purpose behind establishing Town of North Stonington social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens.

The Town has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the Town on the Town's social media sites.

For purposes of this policy, "Social Media" is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of Social Media include Facebook, Twitter, Google+, blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Flickr. For purposes of the policy, "Content" includes comment, information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on Town Social Media sites.

### **II. General Policy.**

- A. The establishment and use by any Town department, office, board, commission, committee or employee of Town Social Media sites are subject to approval by the First Selectman and the Information Technology Manager. Town Social Media sites shall be administered and monitored by individual site administrators approved by the First Selectman and the Information Technology Manager.
- B. Town Social Media sites should make clear that they are maintained by the Town and that they follow the Town's Social Media Policy.
- C. Wherever possible, Town Social Media sites should link back to the official Town website or department web pages for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town.
- D. The First Selectman will occasionally monitor Content on the Town Social Media sites to ensure adherence to the Town's Social Media Policy and the interests and goals of the Town.
- E. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any Content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable laws, rules, regulations or policies. Any Content removed based on this Social Media Policy should be

retained by the site administrator who removed it for a reasonable period of time, as well as information about the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available.

- F. This Social Media Policy must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink at [www.northstoningtonct.gov/SocialMedia](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov/SocialMedia).
- G. The Town's website at [www.northstoningtonct.gov](http://www.northstoningtonct.gov) will remain the Town's primary and predominant Internet presence.
- H. All Town Social Media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations and policies.
- I. Town Social Media sites are subject to Connecticut public records and retention laws, rules, regulations and policies. Any Content maintained in a Social Media format that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure. The site administrator will maintain records in accordance with Connecticut public records and records retention laws, rules, regulations and policies.
- J. Comments or other Content on topics or issues not related to Town business or within the jurisdictional purview of the Town may be removed.
- K. Site administrators representing the Town via Town Social Media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Town in accordance with all Town rules, regulations and policies.
- L. This Social Media Policy may be updated from time to time and amended at the discretion of the First Selectman.

### **III. Content Policy.**

- A. As a public entity, the Town should abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
- B. Content perceived as containing any of the following, but not limited to, inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Town Social Media sites and is subject to removal and/or restriction by site administrators, the Information Technology Manager, the First Selectman, or their designees:
  - 1. Content not related to the original topic or to the business of the Town, including random or unintelligible comments;

2. Profane, obscene, violent or pornographic content and/or language;
  3. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, physical and mental disability, sexual orientation, religion, age, family status, military status, or source of income;
  4. Defamatory or personal attacks;
  5. Threats to any person or organization;
  6. Content in support of, or opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
  7. Solicitation or commerce, including but not limited to the advertising of any business or product for sale;
  8. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law, rule or regulation;
  9. Encouragement of illegal activity;
  10. Information that may tend to compromise safety or security of the public or public systems;
  11. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as, but not limited to a copyright, of any party; or
  12. Any other Content deemed inappropriate by the Town.
- C. Content posted by a member of the public on any Town Social Media site shall be the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of Content does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town, nor does such Content necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town.
- D. The Town reserves the right to deny access to Town Social Media sites to any person who violates the Town's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
- E. Site administrators shall monitor Town Social Media sites for Content requesting responses from the Town. Site administrators may direct such requests to the appropriate Town department or office for response.
- F. Site administrators shall monitor Content posted of Town Social Media sites for Content in violation of this Social Media Policy.
- G. When a Town employee responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a town employee, the employee should do so in the name of the department, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees except as required for Town business.
- H. Content posted to any Town Social Media site must comply with that site's terms and conditions, and the Town reserves the right to report any violation of those terms to the site administrator so the site administrator may take appropriate and reasonable responsive action.

