

## THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA POLICY

|            |                           |             |                                     |
|------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Department | Communications Department | Subject     | <b>Employee Social Media Policy</b> |
| Division   | Office of the Mayor       | Prepared by | Susan Broussard                     |

### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Whether or not a City of Alexandria employee chooses to create or participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. This policy is designed to offer practical guidance for responsible, constructive communications via social media channels for City of Alexandria employees.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all employees who work for the City, and the same principles and guidelines applying to the activities of City of Alexandria employees in general, as outlined in the City's Workplace Conduct Policy and Civil Service Rules and Regulations apply to City of Alexandria employees' activities in social media channels and any other form of online publishing.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1. Social Media Channels - Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or any other existing or emerging communications platform.
- 2.2. Social Media Account – A personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual.
- 2.3. Social Media Disclosures - Blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audio recordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. Social media disclosures are the actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel, usually by means of their social media account.
- 2.4. Profile Page – Social media account holders can customize the information about themselves which is available to others on their profile page.
- 2.5. Copyrights – Copyrights protect the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted material through social media channels without the permission of the copyright owner.
- 2.6. Hosted Content – Text, pictures, audio, video or other information in digital form that are uploaded and reside in the social media account of the author of a social media disclosure. If you download content from the Internet, and then upload it to your social media account, you are hosting that content. This distinction is important because it is generally illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

### **3. Objectives**

- 3.1. Establish practical, reasonable and enforceable guidelines by which City employees can conduct responsible, constructive social media engagement. in their unofficial capacities.
- 3.2. Protect the City and its employees from violating Municipal, State or Federal rules, regulations, or laws through social media channels.

### **4. Guiding Principles**

- 4.1. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects other employees or members of the public may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 4.2. Carefully read this policy, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- 4.3. Always remember that anything you post through social media is public, even if you post to a so-called “private” group or restricted page. Everything on the internet is public, and everything you post is digitally archived and permanently available. Think before you post. Anything you post in violation of this policy could result in disciplinary action, even if you believed the content was “private.”
- 4.4. Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees and members of the public. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our open-door policy than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Although you have a right to discuss public issues as a citizen, you do not have a right to air personal individualize workplace grievances on social media and doing so can disrupt the business of the City and its employees.
- 4.5. Whenever you post on social media, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage employees or other members of the public, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone’s reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion, age, or any other status protected by law or by the City.
- 4.6. Remember that you are a public servant, and anything you post could reflect on the City and the services it provides. The City is committed to treating citizens equally and promoting justice and fairness for each and every citizen, resident, or visitor to the City. Posts that indicate discriminatory or harassing attitudes or conduct may undermine the public trust and adversely affect your ability to do your job effectively. This includes any jokes, memes, or other content displaying

discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful attitudes toward groups or members of the public. Such posts may result in disciplinary action.

- 4.7. Whenever your social media posts adversely affects your ability to do your job, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 4.8. Depending on your job, you may have access to personal information of other employees or members of the public. Certain types of information, including personnel data, are legally protected and confidential. Any disclosure of legally protected, confidential information, whether through social media or otherwise, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. It is your responsibility to be aware of whether information is legally protected, confidential information.
- 4.9. Ensure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the City, fellow employees, or members of the public.
- 4.10. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the City, unless specifically authorized to do so by the Mayor or an authorized representative of the Mayor.
- 4.11. Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your supervisor. If you do make work-related social media posts, you must abide by the guidelines set by the Office of the Mayor. Official City social media accounts are not an appropriate way for you to express personal opinions. If you wish to express personal opinions, you must do so on your own time and using your own account. Do not use City email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
- 4.12. The City prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- 4.13. Only those officially designated can use social media to speak on behalf of the City, though employees may use social media to speak for themselves, individually, while not at work for the City. In other words, personal use of social media during working hours with the City is strictly prohibited.
- 4.14. Employees are responsible for making sure that their online activities do not interfere with properly fulfilling the employee's job requirements and/or their commitments to the City's customers.

## **5. Penalties**

- 5.1. Failure to comply with the above-listed social media policies may result in withdrawal, without notice, of access to information and/or information resources; or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

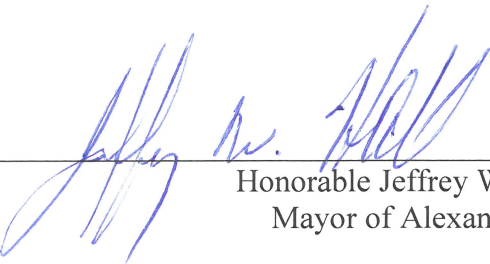
## 6. Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received, read, and understand this Social Media Policy. I understand, I am required to abide by the provisions, rules, and directives in this Social Media Policy and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This policy was approved on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2019  
by the Appointing Authority.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Honorable Jeffrey W. Hall  
Mayor of Alexandria