

# **VILLAGE OF NORTH AURORA SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

## **FOR THE PUBLIC USE OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTH AURORA'S SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **SUMMARY AND PURPOSE**

The Village of North Aurora understands that Social media outlets provide a platform that allows for instant communication and promotes further sharing of information and have become a common form of communication in the workplace and among residents, media outlets and other stakeholders. Engaging in communications via online social networking provides the Village of North Aurora with additional internet-based media for public outreach. The Village has made a commitment to transparency and communication with residents, business owners, and other governmental entities, many of which are increasingly using social media platforms as a method of receiving and sharing information.

Using this technology, the Village has the ability to publish news releases, positive media coverage, highlight events, and provide information that supports the goals and mission statement of the Village. The goal of the Village's social media communications is to serve as an online information source focused on Village issues, projects, news, and events. The purpose for use of social media sites is to disseminate useful information about the Village relating to the Village mission, meetings, activities, current issues, Village sponsored-events, public safety, economic development, and the promotion and marketing of the Village. The Village's social media accounts are limited public forums. The Village does not make its social media accounts available for general public discussion, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on the social media accounts.

The Village of North Aurora's social media sites shall comply with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Village business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, may be considered a public record.

### **DEFINITIONS**

"Social media account" shall mean any of the Village of North Aurora's accounts on online services that allow for content creation and social interaction with Village residents, including but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc.

"Social networks" are online communities of people or organizations that share interests and/or activities and use a wide variety of technology to make the interaction a prolific and resourceful experience; while fostering openness and transparency.

"Posts" or "postings" refer to the original content created by the Village that is uploaded to a social media site.

A "comment" is a response submitted by a commenter to a posting.

A "commenter" is a member of the public who submits a statement of observation based on a Village posting.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATOR**

The Social Media Administrator(s) shall be appointed by the Village Administrator and will be responsible for the creation, administration, and monitoring of official Village of North Aurora accounts on social media sites in accordance with adopted guidelines. The Social Media Administrator(s) will monitor social media use and postings, and will review content for appropriateness, quality, and consistency with overall Village messages, branding, priority, etc. The social media administrator has the right to delete or remove inappropriate and/or offensive postings or comments as outlined in the Content Restrictions portion of this policy.

Information from all Village Departments may appear on an official Village social media site. Individual departments that wish to post a notice on the Village's social media sites may do so through the Social Media Administrator(s) with approval from the Village Administrator.

Postings on Village social media sites may only be made through official Village accounts that are recognizable as being affiliated with the Village.

Wherever possible, Village social media sites shall link back to the Village of North Aurora website for additional information.

## **POLICY NOTIFICATION**

Users and visitors to the Village's social media accounts shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication of Village news, services and events and that it is a limited public forum. A comment posted by the member of the public on any Village of North Aurora social media site is the opinion of the commenter only and publication of a public comment does not imply endorsement, nor reflect the opinions or policies of, the Village of North Aurora. The Village of North Aurora's social media sites shall contain a disclaimer outlining the Village's acceptable use policies.

## **CONTENT RESTRICTIONS**

Because communication via social media constitutes a limited public forum, the Village reserves the right to manage, restrict or remove any content, public comments, or other postings that is deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law. [Content that is deemed prohibited based on the criteria defined below, shall be retained pursuant to the records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content was deleted.] Village of North Aurora's social media account content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting and any such inappropriate comments will be deleted:

1. Slanderous, libelous, malicious, offensive, threatening, obscene, profane, uncivil, or insulting language. References to the personality of individuals, defamatory or personal attacks will not be permitted.

2. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
3. Sexual content or links to sexual content.
4. Solicitations, advertisements, or promotions of any kind for individuals, businesses, nonprofits and organizations.
5. Personally identifiable information, such as a name, address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information, including naming a specific employee or Village official.
6. Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
7. Links to outside websites or other social media accounts.
8. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns, ballot measures, referendums or any organized political activity or political links.
9. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity or the promotion of the use of illegal or banned substances and narcotics.
10. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
11. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law.

If it is found that comments from an individual are repetitive and continuous, the employee should not take up staff time by continuing to respond to comments made, instead employees should ask them to contact a department head, specific to their needs, through phone or e-mail.

Social media site “followers” may be “blocked” from the Village’s social media page if comments or links violate the Village’s list of prohibited postings.

## **INTERACTIVITY**

The nature of social networking promotes a great deal of interactivity, whereby users or organizations “like” or “follow” each other online. Official Village social media sites may “like” or “follow” the social media sites of local, state, and federal government organizations, generally recognized community and/or not-for-profit organizations, and organizations that provide public safety, promote tourism, industry, and economic welfare within the community, and businesses located within the corporate limits of North Aurora.