



## MUNICIPALITY OF ARRAN-ELDERSLIE

SUBJECT: **Social Media Policy**

Date: **May 25, 2020**

POLICY NO:

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### **PURPOSE**

To provide rules and guidelines on the acceptable participation in social media sites and networks. This policy is to be read in conjunction with other relevant policies such as but not limited to: Council Code of Conduct and the Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

While the Municipality recognizes the popularity of social networking, certain behaviours must be observed to protect both employees' and the corporation's reputation.

### **SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all employees of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie (including part-time, casual/temporary, full-time employees and volunteer firefighters) as well as to contractors, student co-op placements or internships, consultants, elected officials (Mayor / Council), members of boards and committees, and volunteers.

Participating in social media is considered an official corporate act, and therefore must be viewed in the same way as participating in other media, meetings or public forums.

This policy also applies to members of the public who use, comment or posts on Municipal social media sites and social networks. The policy applies to any and all social media platforms.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **1) Definitions (for the purposes of this policy)**

**Council” or “Councillor”** means the Council of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie and any individual elected member of the Council of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

**Employee** means an individual performing work for the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie, including full time, part-time, casual/temporary, and volunteer firefighters, as well as contractors, student co-op placements, consultants, board members and volunteers.



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**Follow** means to subscribe to a social media account of another user and receive their posts as updates.

**Municipal Social Media Sites** means social media sites created and managed by municipal staff.

**Political material** means comments or posts made by politicians, supporters or otherwise, for the purpose of political gain or to drive a political agenda.

**Social media** means the web-based technologies and sites and includes blogging, microblogging (Twitter), photo-sharing (Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat), video sharing or webcasting (YouTube, Facebook Live), and social networking (LinkedIn, Facebook, blogs, discussion boards) which allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, photographs and interests.

**Social Media Moderator** means municipal staff tasked with posting and reviewing content on municipal Social Media sites.

### 2) Purpose and Use of Social Media

Social media should be used as a communications tool for the intent of enhancing communication from the Municipality to the public about programs and services for the following purposes:

- Raising awareness and sharing information.
- Recruiting volunteers and employees.
- Promoting Municipal events, programs, and services.
- Increasing access to information for specific audiences.
- Promoting opportunities for public involvement and comment on the Municipality's online engagement platform.
- Where possible, Municipal social media accounts should link back to the Municipal website for the purpose of downloading forms, documents, and providing specific or additional information.



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### 3) Creating a Municipal Social Media Site

- Departments wishing to use social media sites should work with the CAO/Clerk to discuss specific goals and objectives and identify specific sites and platforms.
- Login and password information will be provided to the CAO/Clerk and Social Media Moderator.

### 4) Administering Municipal Social Media Sites

- All Municipal Social Media Sites are administered by Municipal employees named as Social Media Moderator(s) by the department head or the CAO/Clerk.
- When a Social Media Moderator and/or the CAO/Clerk leaves Municipal employment, all passwords should be changed for those Social Media Sites to which they had access.
- An appropriate disclaimer or other terms and conditions, as approved by the CAO, should be accessible from each Municipal Social Media site.
- Content of Municipal Social Media Sites will be monitored by Social Media Moderators who are responsible for:
  - Correcting misinformation and ensuring content is up-to-date.
  - Ensuring responses to posts, in-box messages and discussion comments are made in a timely manner.
  - Removing any post that is considered to be false, defamatory, abusive, hateful, obscene, racist, sexually-oriented, threatening or discriminatory.
  - Denying access to, or blocking users, who continue to post inappropriate or offensive comments.



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### 5) Personal Use of Social Media by Councillors and Employees

The Municipality expects all Employees and Councillors who use social media to do so without breaching their duties to the Municipality and adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct and Polices.

Employees and Councillors should consider the following:

- Even if you do not explicitly identify yourself as a Municipal Employee or Councillor, others may identify you as an Employee or Councillor by your name, your place of work, a photograph, or by the content you post.
- Identifiable Municipal Employees should make it clear that their position does not officially represent the Municipality's position. Use phrases such as "in my personal view" or "Personally..." to communicate that you are expressing personal views.
- Do not use visual cues that suggest you represent the Municipality. Do not post Municipally owned logos, photographs, graphics or other media without the Municipality's authorization.
- Do not circulate any organizational or confidential information, such as internal deliberations about how decisions are made, personal information, such as client or employee information, or negative comments about the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie, Councillors, Employees or residents.
- Do not disparage or embarrass the Municipality, individual Councillors, Employees, and others associated with the Municipality.
- Do not engage in workplace discrimination or harassment, or activity that includes inappropriate comments, photographs, links, etc.

Overall, Employees and Councillors are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on and off-duty. Even when an Employee does not publicly associate themselves with the Municipality on social media, all materials associated with their page may be perceived to reflect upon the Municipality.



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Further, Employees and Councillors should not expect confidentiality or privacy in relation to their online activities as they pertain to the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie. The traditional legal view is that posting content on social media sites about an employer is considered a publication and not private activity. Councillors and Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online as it relates to the Municipality.

Municipal employees who violate the terms of this policy with social media use, including personal social media use, may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for cause.

### **a. Municipal Councillor and Other Government Accounts**

If a Councillor, MP, or MPP representing Arran-Elderslie, Bruce County, or the Grey/Bruce riding, has a social media account, the Municipality's social media accounts are permitted to like/follow the account.

Accounts belonging to Municipal Councillors must be created and maintained by the Councillor and not municipal employees.

The Municipality's social media accounts are permitted to share/re-post content from posts belonging a Municipal Councillor, MP, or MPP representing Arran-Elderslie, Bruce County, or the Grey/Bruce, riding if the content does not clearly promote or criticize a political party, candidate, or ideology. Appropriate sharable content includes, but is not limited to, community events, funding announcements, bill/law announcements, etc. Overall, Social Media Account Moderators should use their best judgement when sharing/re-posting content belonging to a Municipal Councillor, MP, or MPP.

Effective January 1st of an election year (the beginning of the Nomination Period), all links, likes/follows, and sharing of content with a Councillor, MP, or MPP site shall be stopped and blocked or removed until the Inaugural Meeting of the newly elected Council or Legislature is complete.

## **6) Citizen Conduct**

The Municipality reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts and comments) from social media accounts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant,



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inaccurate or unproductive content, the Municipality may ban/block the user from the site at the discretion of staff.

The Municipality's social media accounts/pages that citizen conduct criteria applies to, are those that fall under the definition of Social Media. In this policy. For example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts, websites, blogs, etc.

Comments, posts, or articles containing the following content will not be allowed:

- Comments not topically related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon.
- Account spamming, trolling or overposting.
- Posts that are meant to solicit sales, products, or goods and services.
- Profane, aggressive, hateful, defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive or violent language or content.
- Content that includes or includes links to objectionable material, as defined in this policy.
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Information that may compromise the privacy, safety or security of the Municipality, public, or public systems.
- Comments or posts that includes inaccurate material or misrepresent facts as known by the Corporation.
- Comments or posts that impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, Municipal staff or Municipal officials.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie is not responsible for any comments or use of material posted by users.

### **ATTACHMENT**



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NONE



THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARRAN-ELDERSLIE

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519-363-3039 Fax: 519-363-2203

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I acknowledge having received a copy of the "Social Media Policy" and acknowledge that I have read and understand the information that was contained in this document.

Name (please print):

Date:

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Signature