



**City of Elizabeth City
Department of Information Technology
Social Media Policy
December 31, 2019**

I. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a policy and the procedure governing the content on the City of Elizabeth City's public social media accounts as well as the use of personal social media accounts in the workplace. To address the ever-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, City departments may consider using social media formats to reach a broader audience. These tools are simply another way to deliver public information, customer service and E-government to our residents. This policy does not supersede requirements pertaining to the Internet, including, but not limited to State and Federal privacy laws, the Federal Health Insurance Policy and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), and security policies.

II. Definition

"Social Media" includes various forms of discussion and information sharing tools including social networking, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include picture and video sharing, wall postings, e-mail, instant messaging, and music sharing. Examples of Social Media applications include, but are not limited to, Google and Yahoo Groups, Wikipedia, MySpace and Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, and blogging.

"Social Media Moderators" are individuals designated by Departmental Directors who are responsible for all aspects of Departmental social media pages including but not limited to creating original content to educate citizens on Departmental services, staying up to date on current Governmental social media practices and standards, and monitoring social media pages by checking pages daily to ensure pages are compliant with this policy and online visitors are actively engaged.

III. Responsibilities

For social media to be effective, separate City of Elizabeth City Departmental accounts should be created to properly target specific audiences within the City. Doing so allows the creation of content specific accounts for users to quickly access information of interest to them.

The City Clerk and the Department of Information Technologies (henceforth referenced as IT) are responsible for the retention of information required to

support the City government and its constituents. As social media is constantly updated with new records on a 24/7 basis, an account with ArchiveSocial must be in place for each Department that utilizes social media to ensure this continuous retention.

As primary entity for information management, the City Clerk and IT have the right to add or remove any materials on any official City Departmental social media sites which misrepresent the City.

Departments are required to obtain approval from the City Manager or their designee by submitting the form listed in Appendix A before implementing Departmental-specific social media applications. Once approved, it is the responsibility of the Department Director to assign two to three social media moderators to manage the Department's social media platform.

Departmental Directors interested in starting a social media page are responsible for budgeting for ArchiveSocial to manage all public records generated through the account.

Department social media pages should be linked to a department specific email address (i.e. publicutilities@cityofec.com).

Login information, including user IDs and passwords, should be provided to the IT Director and at least one backup within the department. Passwords should be between 8-16 characters in length with a mix of lowercase and uppercase letters, numbers, and symbols to ensure security of the account.

As an extra measure of precaution, all social media should be set up to protect against unauthorized access. Security measures may vary from site to site, however, accounts should generally be set up to notify moderators whenever there is a log in on an unrecognized device.

Should an incident of unauthorized access take place, moderators should immediately follow the steps listed below once they are aware of the breach.

1. All moderators should be connected by email, phone, text, and any other appropriate means of communication should an incident occur after normal business hours.
2. Alert your social media moderator team and Departmental Director.
3. Attempt to change passwords to isolate the incident.

4. Contact the platform companies themselves and IT to help regain control. All content must be approved by the Departmental Director or their designee and meet the criteria listed in Appendix B to ensure consistent and accurate communication of information on the City's social media platforms. In addition, visual elements of social media sites should be designed, as much as possible, to reflect the digital brand of the City of Elizabeth City to ensure visual consistency and credibility.

Content will be posted in accordance with practices for disseminating public information (news releases, department specific educational content, etc.). Typically, this involves obtaining approval from affected departments and divisions (department heads or their designees) and appropriate management in the City Manager's Office. Content posted to social media sites may include approved news releases, photos and videos, agendas, announcements, promotional tools, and similar material.

All content involving photography, audio recording, video recording and its/their release, publication, exhibition, or reproduction to be used for news, web casts, promotional purposes, telecasts, advertising, inclusion on web sites, or for any other purpose(s) of the public must follow the City of Elizabeth City photography and videography procedures listed in item VI Photography and Videography of this policy.

The following types of content are prohibited:

1. Hateful or discriminatory comments regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or political beliefs;
2. Vulgar language or images that are profane such as swear words, allusion of swearing, irreverent toward a deity, and language or images that are pornographic in nature;
3. Potentially libelous statements;
4. Violations of copyright or intellectual property rights;
5. Private, personal information, including home addresses, phone numbers, and medical information;
6. Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion;
7. Commercial promotions or spam;
8. Fundraising activities not sponsored by the City of Elizabeth City;
9. Organized political activity;
10. Discussion of illegal activity; and

11. Online commentary and interactive services in violation of the City's IT Security Policy.

To protect against unwanted tagging exposure, all social media pages should have the tagging feature either set up for tagging review or disabled altogether.

As a moderator of the Departmental social media sites, moderators have the ability to "like" and "feature" other pages on the main Departmental page. Best practices for "liking" other pages as the official City of Elizabeth City Departmental page is to keep official "likes" to a minimum so as not to show favoritism of certain businesses, religious views, or political activities. Page features are encouraged only for other City of Elizabeth City Departmental pages.

Departmental moderators of social media sites are required to follow the metrics of their sites to ensure viability and effectiveness. Moderators are also responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by the City of Elizabeth City.

IV. Comments

All content on City of Elizabeth City social media sites should be considered a Limited or Designated Forum and be regulated as such. With this in mind, a comments policy and purpose statement are necessary. Comments from the public must be allowed on all City managed social media sites. Those sections must be monitored daily by practices specified in previous section during business hours (8am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday with the exception of City observed holidays) to ensure the comments are appropriate and adhere to comments policy specifications outlined below. All information sections of City managed social media sites must link to the following official City of Elizabeth City Social Media Comments Policy:

The purpose of this social media site is to present matters of public interest to the City of Elizabeth City, including its many residents, businesses, and visitors. The comments expressed on the Department's social media sites do not reflect the opinions and position of the City of Elizabeth City government or its officers and employees. Some of the links on this and subsequent pages may lead to

resources outside the City of Elizabeth City municipal government. The presence of these links should not be construed as an endorsement by the City of Elizabeth City of these sites or their content. The City of Elizabeth City is not responsible for the content of any such external links. The City of Elizabeth City disclaims all liability for any claims or damages that may result from providing any of the City of Elizabeth City social media pages or information it contains, including any web sites maintained by third parties and linked to the City of Elizabeth City's social media pages. The responsibility for content rests with the third party organizations that are providing the information.

All information on this platform is subject to applicable public records laws. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact [Department Moderator Contact Name] at [Moderator Email].

The City of Elizabeth City reserves the right to delete inappropriate comments or submissions that contain:

- 1. Hateful or discriminatory comments regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or political beliefs;*
- 2. Vulgar language or images that are profane such as swear words, allusion of swearing, and language or images that are pornographic in nature;*
- 3. Potentially libelous statements;*
- 4. Violations of copyright or intellectual property rights;*
- 5. Private, personal information, including home addresses, phone numbers, and medical information;*
- 6. Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion;*
- 7. Commercial promotions or spam;*
- 8. Fundraising activities not sponsored by the City of Elizabeth City;*
- 9. Organized political activity;*
- 10. Discussion of illegal activity; and*
- 11. Requests for services: all requests for services should be directed through the appropriate channels listed on our website at www.cityofec.com. This social media page is solely for informational and educational purposes.*

This social media platform is not monitored 24/7. If you are experiencing an emergency situation, please dial 9-1-1. Except to the extent required by law, communications made through e-mail and comments posted shall in no way be deemed to constitute legal notice to the City of Elizabeth City or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agencies, or representatives with respect to any existing or potential claim or cause of action against the agencies, officers,

employees, agents, or representatives where notice to the City is required by federal, state, or local law, rule, or regulation.

The enumerated list above is classified as content governed by laws put forth by HIPAA, personal security, and confidentiality law, therefore, are not constitutionally protected free speech and cannot be allowed on governmental department social media sites. Content of this nature is permitted to be removed at any time. Moderators, however, shall not remove or censor comments because they are critical of the Department, City officials, or any other aspect of the municipal government or because a moderator personally disagrees with them.

V. Public Records Law

The City of Elizabeth City's social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Consequently, any communication on the City of Elizabeth City social media sites (whether by a City employee or the general public) is subject to monitoring and disclosure to third parties. Relevant City of Elizabeth City and North Carolina public records retention schedules apply to social networking content.

Like email, communication via government-related social media sites is a public record. This means that both the posts of the employee moderator and any feedback by other employees or nonemployees, including the public, become part of the public record if they are posted on the City of Elizabeth City's Departmental social media sites.

Moderators who receive messages through the private message service offered by some social media sites, including direct messages, shall instruct users to contact the appropriate department or employee using a City-issued email address or website link. Any private messages received through a social media account shall be treated the same as constituent emails and, therefore, as public records. As best practice, moderators or authorized staff members shall reply using their City government email account. If messages are received through social media, moderators shall ensure the message is properly archived and send a copy to the City Clerk who will then keep the record for one year as specified on the City of Elizabeth City's Record Retention Policy.

Original content posted on any of the Department's social media accounts, regardless of who posted it, shall be considered a record of public information as defined under North Carolina's public records law. The exception to this rule are reposts and "likes." There is not, neither shall there be, any expectation of privacy with any social media postings on City Departmental social media sites. All social media moderators are required to assume responsibility for public records and comply with the retention period under the NC General Statutes.

A retention schedule and system will be managed using ArchiveSocial.

VI. Personal Use of Social Media

As previously defined in this policy, "Social Media" includes various forms of discussion and information sharing tools including social networking, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include picture and video sharing, wall postings, e-mail, instant messaging, and music sharing. Examples of Social Media applications include, but are not limited to, Google and Yahoo Groups, Wikipedia, MySpace and Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, and blogging.

City time and equipment shall not be used for updating social media sites, including updating personal pages or profiles. Time spent on social media sites should be limited in the same manner as time spent on the telephone or internet when conducting personal business.

Employees shall not use the City's logo, letterhead or other identifying material including pictures of themselves or co-workers wearing or displaying the City's logo.

Employees shall not post discriminatory, defamatory, libelous or slanderous comments when discussing the City, its governing body, supervisors, and employees.

Employees must comply with City policies and personal sites may be monitored to determine compliance with City policies.

VII. Photography and Videography Policy

All content posted to City of Elizabeth City social media page posting that involve the taking, recording, digitizing, or publication of interviews, photographs,

computer images, video and/or sound recordings of the public must have a photo release (Appendix C) submitted prior to posting said content. This serves as an extra measure of protection for the City against any liability for payment or royalties to individuals in connection with any exhibition, streaming, webcasting, televising, or other publication of these materials.

VIII. Annual Evaluation

This document must be annually evaluated to ensure compliance with relevant Government Social Media and Public Records case law and updated if necessary.

Appendix A



City of Elizabeth City
Department of City Administration and Information Technology
Social Media Application

Department Name	
Moderator Name(s) <i>Please designate 1-3 moderators</i>	
City E-Mail Address <i>To manage social media account Ex. publicutilities@cityofec.com</i>	
Desired Platform(s) <i>Ex. Facebook, Twitter, etc.</i>	
Desired Account Name <i>Format: 'Elizabeth City [Department Name]'</i>	
Desired Profile Photo	
Desired Cover Photo <i>If Applicable</i>	
Sample 'About Me' Text <i>Description you will display on the account; attach additional text if needed</i>	
Social Media and/or Public Information Course(s) Attended <i>Please list the course name(s) and moderator(s) who attended</i>	
1-2 Sample Post(s)	

I have read the City of Elizabeth City Social Media Policy and understand the responsibilities of a City of Elizabeth City Social Media Moderator.

Moderator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Moderator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Moderator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B



City of Elizabeth City Department of City Administration and Information Technology Social Media Post Checklist

Prior to generating post, please check over for any grammatical errors. Additionally, the post must meet the following guidelines:

- Has the post followed the chain of approval and been checked for informational accuracy? Check Yes or No
 - Stage One: Supervisor (Y/N)
 - Stage Two: Superintendent (Y/N)
 - Stage Three: Assistant Director (Y/N)
 - Stage Four: Director (Y/N)
- Could this post be considered discriminatory? (If there is a chance that it could, do not post).
- Does the post meet safe workplace requirements as outlined by OSHA?
- Does this post require a photo release? If so, have all necessary permissions been obtained?
- Is the post on brand for the City of Elizabeth City?

Appendix C



PHOTO RELEASE FORM

I hereby grant permission to the City of Elizabeth City to use photographs and/or video of my likeness in any and all publications for Government or nongovernmental purposes including news releases, online, and in other communications related to the mission of the City of Elizabeth City. I hereby authorize the City of Elizabeth City to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute this photo or video for purposes of publicizing the City of Elizabeth City's programs or for any other lawful purpose.

Signature/Date

Printed Name/Date

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone

If the person signing is under age 18, there must be consent by a parent or guardian, as follows:

I hereby certify that I am the parent or guardian of _____, named above, and do hereby give my consent without reservation to the foregoing on behalf of this person.

Parent or Guardian's Signature/Date

Parent or Guardian's Printed Name/Date

Privacy Act Statement: This information is provided to comply with the Privacy Act (PL 93-579), 5 U.S.C. 301 and 7 CFR 260 authorizing acceptance of the information requested on this form. The data you furnish will be used only to provide the City of Elizabeth City with contact information pertaining to this release form.