



## **CITY OF LINDSBORG**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

---

#### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The City of Lindsborg desires to use social media as an avenue to communicate to residents and reach a broader audience. New and emerging online platforms are offering new ways to collaborate and to engage constituents. The City of Lindsborg encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments where appropriate. But the City Council and City Administrator have an overriding interest and expectation in deciding who may “speak” and what is “spoken” on behalf of the City of Lindsborg on social media sites. The information posted on the City of Lindsborg’s official social media sites is meant to educate and inform residents and visitors to the City of Lindsborg’s services, operations, public policy issues of importance, community businesses, community institutions and community events.

#### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to define the function of the City of Lindsborg’s use of social media sites and to provide direction to City staff in the use of social media.

Objectives include:

- Opening up City government to encourage citizen participation and support a civic culture
- Increase the transparency of City of Lindsborg government
- Enable rapid information dissemination on new and emerging trends
- Listen to residents, customers-enabling the City to improve services
- Respond directly to the community
- Expand the City’s communication tools with vast distribution for content

#### **III. POLICY**

The Governing Body determines the content of the information displayed on the City of Lindsborg social media sites through the guidelines established in this policy. The City Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining the integrity of the content placed on the official social media sites based on the policies and intention outlined by the City Council.

- A. All official City of Lindsborg presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the City’s information networks and are governed by the Email, Internet and Intranet Policy contained in the City of Lindsborg Employee Handbook.
- B. The City of Lindsborg shall utilize one central account with desired social media networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and others). Individual Departments and employees will utilize the central account to convey desired communication.
- C. The City Administrator will review department requests to use social media sites and may delegate this function to an appropriate designee.

- D. Departments that use social media are 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 (FOIA), First Amendments, privacy laws and information security policies established by the City of Lindsborg.
- E. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City's official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Lindsborg.
- F. Employees representing the City government via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Lindsborg. Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures outlined in the City of Lindsborg Employee Handbook and the Email, Internet and Intranet Policy.
- G. The City Administrator or designee shall monitor content on each of the Department social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message and branding consistent with the City of Lindsborg.

#### IV. **GUIDELINES**

- While social media provide an effective forum for building relationships and for conveying small "bites" of information, they do not serve as the City's sole or even primary means of communication with residents, businesses and others. The City of Lindsborg utilizes well-established means (e.g., public meetings, website, newsletter, etc.) to effectively share information with a variety of audiences.
- Social media forums provide an interactive means of sharing information that relates to the City of Lindsborg and of engaging in ongoing conversation. They provide an easy-to-use means of engaging citizens and others.
- Social media can be particularly effective in communicating information in crisis situations when timeliness of the information is crucial.
- Social media is an ineffective tool for communicating about complex issues and for addressing riled emotions. The City will use more appropriate means to communicate detailed information about complex issues and to discuss concerns with citizens and others who post potentially volatile comments.
- Practical and legal considerations may sometimes constrain, prevent or prohibit discussion of certain topics, such as court cases, through this medium.
- We recognize that not everything posted will (or should be) flattering to the City. Posts that offer thoughtful criticism of the organization (not individuals) and City initiatives are welcome and shall not be removed or altered except as provided for in this policy.

#### V. **GUIDELINES AND LIMITATIONS FOR ALL USERS**

- The conversation shall remain civil and respectful always.
- Inaccurate information posted by non-employees may be addressed and corrected, on a factual basis only.

- In an effort to keep the conversation open to all and to limit spam, posts from the same individual or organization shall be limited to no more than three (3) posts per day.
- Personal attacks, vulgar language, discriminatory or inflammatory posts by others are strongly discouraged. If a post is determined to be in violation of this policy, such posts may be removed.
- Elected officials may not post as “City of Lindsborg” and are discouraged from discussing campaigns, issues and other political matter on City accounts.
- Campaigning – on behalf of political candidates or in support or opposition to issues – is discouraged.
- Political candidates are encouraged to establish their own fan pages and social media accounts and are discouraged from using City of Lindsborg accounts, pages, etc.
- Repeated violations to this policy may result in removal of access to the service.
- The Social Media Policy shall be revised as needed. Posts to the City of Lindsborg’s social media accounts shall constitute acceptance of this policy.

*Policy adopted January 4, 2010*