

# City of Middleton Social Media Policy

Common Council approved March 20, 2012

## I. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines and procedures to the City of Middleton in determining the proper utilization of social media. Social media consists of networks and online publications that enable individuals and groups to communicate between one another for different purposes. Some examples of these online tools include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs and several others. The City of Middleton plans to use these social media sites in order to reach out to the public and educate individuals on certain events, activities, awards, and other news releases. Social media will help the City and its departments to connect with other organizations and businesses in the community. This policy outlines the proper content and uses for social media since the City has a significant interest and expectation in determining the content that is posted on their sites.

## II. General Policy

- A.) In order for any city department or division to establish a social media site, the request must first be approved by the City Administrator and Information Services Director. Requests for social media sites must include a plan that assigns certain individuals (department head or designees) to update and monitor the sites. The request must also include ways that the department plans to utilize their social media site.
- B.) All social media sites must be monitored and updated on a daily basis.
- C.) Each site must clearly state that it is city-operated and maintained by city staff. Sites must also include the City of Middleton logo as well as any other branding or logos that identify the involved party.
- D.) All social media sites should include a link back to the City of Middleton website:  
<http://www.ci.middleton.wi.us/>.
- E.) All City of Middleton staff must adhere to the Electronic Communication & Information Systems Policy along with any other related federal, state, or local regulations.
- F.) The City reserves the right to take down any abusive or inappropriate posts that violates this policy. Any post that is taken down from the site must be documented by the department responsible for the social media site. Documentation must include a copy of the post, time of post, date of post, name of the individual responsible for the content, and any other information that is relevant to the situation.
- G.) City of Middleton social media sites are subject to State of Wisconsin public record laws. Any content on these sites related to City business is considered public record. Content can range from messages, list of subscribers, images, and any other content that exists. The department responsible for their social media site is responsible for responding to any public records request. If possible, all social media sites should remind its viewers through a disclaimer that content on its site is considered public record.
- H.) Employees maintaining social media sites on behalf of the City of Middleton must conduct themselves as representatives of the City. All posts by employees must be completed in a professional manner that is strictly used for informative purposes related to the City. Employees who fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner can be subject to disciplinary action.

- I.) The City of Middleton encourages all departments and staff to adopt and use the following disclaimer for their social media sites:

*“The City of Middleton encourages all viewers to use proper content. Any abusive or inappropriate content that violates the City of Middleton Social Media Policy will be removed from the site. All information posted on the site is subject to public record.”*

### III. Comment Policy

- A.) Any comment posted by a resident or member of the public is solely ~~their~~ **an individual’s** opinion. No posts by the public imply the views or opinions of the City of Middleton. Comments and posts created by the City of Middleton will only provide information regarding City business.
- B.) The City of Middleton reserves the right to remove any inappropriate or abusive content. This content includes:
- 1) Content that discriminates others based on race, creed, color, sex, gender, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, marital status, or a mental or physical disability;
  - 2) Threats made towards an individual or organization;
  - 3) Comments that support or oppose a political campaign or ballot measures;
  - 4) Solicitation of commerce;
  - 5) Conduct that violates any federal, state, or local law;
  - 6) Encouragement of illegal activity;
  - 7) Sexual content (including links);
  - 8) Profane or abusive language (may also include images);
  - 9) Content that violates legal ownership interest (such as copyright) of any party; or,
  - 10) Any other comments that do not relate to the original topic.
- C.) The City reserves the right to remove or block any repeated violators of this policy.
- D.) If content is removed, City staff must document the violation while notifying the involved party / individual that their content was removed. The following message should be sent out to any members of the public that violate the policy:
- “The City of Middleton removed your recent content from its social media site because it was in violation of the City of Middleton Social Media Policy. Please avoid from posting any inappropriate content in the future. If you do not refrain, the City of Middleton reserves the right to remove you as a member of this group. Thank you for your cooperation.”*
- E.) All sites must have one or more staff designated to update content on the site, respond to any requests or questions asked by the public, and monitor content posted on their social media sites.