



CHESTERMERE

Policy Name: Council Social Media Policy

Policy Number: 808

Effective Date: September 10, 2024	Approved By: Mayor and Council
Policies Amended / Rescinded: Policy 808 – Council Social Media Policy	Policy Type: Council Policy

I. Purpose and Intent

1. The City of Chestermere (City) recognizes that online communication and engagement platforms are valuable for municipal organizations and their elected representatives to connect with the public and share information. This policy offers guidance for communication via social media channels for Councillors and their stakeholders. It is a Councillor's personal decision whether they choose to create or participate in social media activities and forms of online publishing or discussion. Council online communications and engagement may include but is not limited to:
 - a. Council decisions and direction;
 - b. City progress on initiatives;
 - c. Community events and personal participation in them;
 - d. Soliciting public opinions and comments;
 - e. Correcting misinformation using official statements and/or links; and
 - f. Controversial or emerging issues.

2. The Council Code of Conduct applies to online activities, including social media channels and other forms of online publishing. The City fully respects the rights of Councillors to engage in constructive online dialogue and debate about issues



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5. **“Mayor”** means the Member of Council duly elected as the Chief Elected Official and the head of Council. The Mayor is the Chair of all Council Meetings unless otherwise specified.
6. **“Official City Content”** means publicly available online content created and made public by the City, accessible through its organizational website;
7. **“Post”** means to display, publish, or place content in a social media channel;
8. **“Social media”** means the collective of social media channels that enable users to create and share content or to participate in online discussions;
9. **“Social media account”** means a personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual. Social networking channels allow users to sign up for their own social media account, which they can use to collaborate, interact and share content and status updates;
10. **“Social media channels”** means blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or any other existing or emerging communications platform;
11. **“Organizational”** means social media channels that reside in a City-owned domain and are managed by the Administration;
12. **“Personal”** means social media channels that are not located in a City-owned domain and are fully managed by an individual (e.g. Councillor);
13. **“Social media content”** means blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audio recordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. The actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel;



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- a. During an emergency or crisis, Councillors must adhere to the City's process for emergency and crisis management communications;
- b. If Councillors use social media to communicate Council or City-related information, they should identify themselves as Councillors;
- c. Councillors who are not designated spokespeople may share their opinions regarding City-related topics via social media channels if they include a disclaimer acknowledging that their personal opinions do not reflect the opinions of the Council or the organization; and
- d. When Councillors see misrepresentations about the City, they may use social media channels to correct misinformation by directing stakeholders to official content, providing links to information, or reinforcing key messages.

V. Privacy, Disclosure and Legal

1. Councillors may use social media to engage the public about City-related matters but may not disclose information about:
 - a. Active investigations (criminal, regulatory or otherwise);
 - b. Emergencies (unless supporting City-approved messages);
 - c. Private, confidential, or legal matters (refer to the FOIP Act;)
 - d. Closed Session agenda items;
 - e. Decisions before they are officially announced;
 - f. Any police matter; and
 - g. Private sales/development.
2. Individuals, including City staff, have a right to their personal privacy. Councillors shall not share anything via social media channels that could violate another person's privacy, including pictures, video, or audio without the permission of the individual.
3. If publishing an image of an individual for City-related purposes (if it was not obtained at a public event), Councillors must obtain the individual's express consent before posting it.



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3. Harassment, bullying, threats, intimidation, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, racial or religious intolerance and any other form of negative/derogatory behavior will not be tolerated via social media channels.
4. Councillors are encouraged to keep opposing comments on their personal social media channels but shall remove posts that contain negative behaviours and/or personal attacks.
5. Social media should not be used to participate in unhealthy debates or arguments. When appropriate, Councillors are encouraged to offer in-person, phone, or private message conversations to address stakeholder concerns or questions. Private messages should adhere to the terms of this policy.

Adopted by Council: September 10, 2024

Resolution Number: 240910-23

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