



AGENDA

**Baxter City Council Work Session
January 2, 2018
6:15 p.m.**

1. Closed Session, Minnesota Statute 13D.05, subd. 3(a), Performance Evaluation
2. Social Media Policy



Council Memorandum

To: Mayor & Council

From: GIS/IT Director DeBoer and Assistant City Administrator Steele

Date: January 2, 2018

Subject: Social Media

Staff has developed a social media policy with the intent of establishing additional social media sites for the City. The proposed social media policy would cover all city social media sites, including the existing police department Facebook page. The proposed social media policy has been reviewed by Chief Exsted.

After receiving council feedback on the proposed social media policy, staff intends to add the social media policy to the January 16, 2018 council agenda for council consideration of adoption. After council adoption of the social media policy, staff will begin using Facebook and Twitter for routine notices and announcements.

The council has previously discussed the establishment of a communications commission or task force to review the methods the City utilizes for communications. At this time, staff is proposing to solicit feedback on city communications through a survey, to reach the maximum number of residents. The survey can provide more details on what material and information citizens would like to receive, how best to distribute that information, and website content/layout improvements. The 2018 budget includes funding for upgrades to the City's website. Staff is currently reviewing website hosting vendors. After selecting a website vendor, the input received from the public will be used to help guide the design, development and content of the new site, social media and print platforms.

Council Direction:

1. Does the Council propose any changes to the social media policy?
2. Does the Council concur with staff's recommendation to engage residents on communication?

Attachment:

1. Social Media Policy

City of Baxter, Minnesota

Social Media Policy

Purpose

Social networking in government serves two primary functions: to communicate and deliver messages directly to citizens and to encourage citizen involvement, interaction, and feedback. Information which is distributed via social networking must be accurate, consistent, and timely and meet the information needs of the City's customers. Since social media is used for social networking, this policy seeks to ensure proper use of the City of Baxter's social media sites by its representatives.

The City of Baxter wishes to establish a positive and informative social media presence. The City of Baxter will use social media platforms, as appropriate, to distribute time-sensitive information and news to the public about its programs, events and services. However, the city's official website, www.baxtermn.gov, will remain the city's primary online medium for communicating information to the public.

City representatives have the responsibility to use the City's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing City and departmental policies. This policy also provides guidelines and standards for city representatives regarding the use of social media for communication with residents, colleagues and all other followers.

Policy

The City of Baxter will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy. City social media sites may be modified or removed by the City at any time and without notice, as described in this document.

City of Baxter social media accounts are considered a City asset and administrator access to these accounts must be securely administered in accordance with the City's Computer Use policy. The City reserves the right to shut down any of its social media sites or accounts for any reason without notice.

All social media web sites created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to the City of Baxter, including a link to the City's official web site.

Scope

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media web sites sponsored, established, registered or authorized by the City of Baxter. This policy also covers the private use of the City's social media accounts by all City representatives, including its employees and agents, Council members, appointed board or commission members and all public safety volunteers to the extent it affects the City. Questions regarding the scope of this policy should be directed to the Assistant City Administrator.

Definition

Social media are internet and mobile-based applications, websites and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, video, comments and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to as “user-generated content” or “consumer-generated media.”

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and online dating services/mobile apps
- Blogs
- Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
- Video and photo sharing sites such as YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, and Flickr
- Wikis, or shared encyclopedias such as Wikipedia
- An ever emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above

As used in this policy, “employees and agents” means all City representatives, including its employees and other agents of the city, such as independent contractors, commission members, or Council members.

Rules of Use

City employees and agents with administrator access are responsible for managing social media websites. Administrator access is assigned by the Assistant City Administrator. Facilities or departments wishing to have a new social media presence must initially submit a request to the Assistant City Administrator in order to ensure social media accounts are kept to a sustainable number and policies are followed. All approved sites will be clearly marked as the City of Baxter site and will be linked with the official City website (www.baxtermn.gov). No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of the City unless authorized in accordance with this policy

Administration of all social media web sites must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies as well as proper business etiquette.

City social media accounts accessed and utilized during the course and scope of an employee’s performance of his/her job duties may not be used for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.

No social media website may be used by the City or any City employee or agent to disclose private or confidential information. No social media web site should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential or sensitive, contact the Assistant City Administrator.

When using social media sites as a representative of the City, employees and agents will act in a professional manner. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Adhere to all City personnel and Computer Use policies
- Use only appropriate language

Be aware that content will not only reflect on the writer but also on the City of Baxter as a whole, including elected officials and other city employees and agents. Make sure information is accurate and free of grammatical errors.

- Not providing private or confidential information, including names, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not negatively commenting on community partners or their services, or using such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not providing information related to pending decisions that would compromise negotiations.
- Be aware that all content added to a site is subject to open records/right to know laws and discovery in legal cases.
- Always keep in mind the appropriateness of content.
- Comply with any existing code of ethical behavior established by the City.

The City of Baxter will make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information provided on its social media pages. However, several factors that are beyond the City's control (including unauthorized modification of electronic data, transmission errors, browser incompatibilities, information that has been cached on the local computer or storage device, or other aspects of electronic communication in an evolving and time-sensitive environment) can affect the quality of the information displayed on the site. For that reason, the City does not guarantee the accuracy of the information provided on its social media page and is not liable for reliance on this information.

Where moderation of comments is an available option, comments from the public will be moderated by City staff, with administrative rights, before posting. Where moderation prior to posting is not an option, sites will be regularly monitored by City staff. The City's timeliness about posts and responses to comments may vary based on staff availability. Therefore, a disclaimer appropriate for the individual site shall be posted on any social media site, such as:

This social media page is intended to get information out to a wide number of people quickly, not as an in-depth or complete source of information, but as an evolving supplement to the City of Baxter's website (www.baxtermn.gov/), newsletter, press releases, and in-person communications. Staff will post or respond to comments within office hours (Monday-Friday, 8 am-4:30 pm) and within the varying perimeters of staff availability. For these reasons, staff may not respond to every comment or question posted on the social media site.

Disclaimer/Content Removal

Wherever possible, the following disclaimer should be posted on social media sites maintained by the city:

The purpose of the site is to share information about City of Baxter news, events, services and programs with our many residents, businesses and visitors. This is not a public forum.

The City of Baxter reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments, including those that:

- *Are not topically related to the particular posting*
- *Contain offensive or vulgar language or photos*
- *Are associated with unlawful activity*
- *Personal attacks*
- *Threaten or defame any person or organization*
- *Violate the legal ownership interest of another party*
- *Contain political endorsements or oppositions of any kind*
- *Contain links to outside websites or are spam*
- *Are commercial advertisements or solicitation*
- *Are harassing*
- *Target or disparage any group protected by anti-discrimination laws*

In addition, all content or comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed.

The City of Baxter has the right to reproduce any pictures or videos posted to this site in any of its publications or websites or any other media outlets. The City of Baxter has the right to quote any comments or suggestions left by users. The city will not accept requests to post events, videos or photos on any of the city's social networking sites.

The City of Baxter does not endorse any product, service, company or organization advertising on its social media pages. Please note that comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the City of Baxter or its elected officials and employees. The City of Baxter does not share information gathered through this site with third parties for promotional purposes. However, any information you provide to the city is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public on request.

If you have any questions concerning the operation of this site, please email cityhall@baxtermn.gov.

The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

Often commentators will police themselves; therefore, comments should be removed by the City only as a last resort.

If a post or comment on one of the city's social media platforms is deemed inappropriate based on the standards stated above, the information will be collected and saved and then the post or comment will be removed. In its place, an explanation for the removal will be provided.

Personal Social Media Use

The City of Baxter respects employees and agents' rights to post and maintain personal websites, blogs and social media pages and to use and enjoy social media on their own personal devices during non-work hours. The City requires employees and agents to act in a prudent manner with regard to website and internet postings that reference the City of Baxter, its personnel, its operation or its property. Employees and agents and others affiliated with the City may not use a city brand, logo or other city identifiers on their personal sites, nor post information that purports to be the position of the City without prior authorization.

City employees and agents are discouraged from identifying themselves as city employees when responding to or commenting on social media sites with personal opinions or views. If an employee chooses to identify him or herself as a City of Baxter employee, and posts a statement on a matter related to City business, a disclaimer similar to the following must be used:

“These are my own opinions and do not represent those of the City.”

Occasional access to personal social media websites during work hours is permitted, but employees and agents must adhere to the guidelines outlined in the City's Computer Use policy. Employees and agents should also review the Data Ownership section of this policy (below).

There may be times when personal use of social media (even if it is off-duty or using the employee's own equipment) may spill over into the workplace and become the basis for employee coaching or discipline. Examples of situations where this might occur include:

- Friendships, dating or romance between co-workers
- Cyber-bullying, stalking or harassment
- Release of confidential or private data; if there are questions about what constitute confidential or private data, contact the Assistant City Administrator.
- Unlawful activities
- Misuse of city-owned social media
- Inappropriate use of the city's name, logo or the employee's position or title
- Using city-owned equipment or city-time for extensive personal social media use

Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are complex. If you have any questions about what types of activities might result in discipline, please discuss the type of usage with the Assistant City Administrator.

Data Ownership

All social media communications or messages composed, sent, or received on city equipment in an official capacity are the property of the City and will be subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. The City of Baxter also maintains the sole property rights to any image, video or audio captured while a City employee is representing the City in any capacity.

The City retains the right to monitor employee's social media use on city equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users should have no expectation of privacy. Social media is not a secure means of communication.

Policy Violations

Violations of the Policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment.

Whereupon, said Policy is hereby declared adopted on this 16th day of January, 2018.

Darrel Olson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelly Steele, Assistant City Administrator/Clerk

City Seal