



**POLICY NO. 69
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1** It shall be the policy of the Municipality to provide clarity and direction respecting the use of social media for employees, elected officials, volunteers and contractors.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1** The purpose of this policy is to provide clear standards for the use of social media by the Municipality to:
- 2.1.1** Enhance communication and engagement with residents, businesses, and stakeholders;
 - 2.1.2** Promote municipal programs, services, and events;
 - 2.1.3** Protect the municipality's reputation and ensure consistency in messaging;
 - 2.1.4** Reduce legal and operational risks.

3.0 SCOPE

- 3.1** This Policy applies to:
- 3.1.1** All official social media accounts created and managed by the Municipality;
 - 3.1.2** Municipal employees, elected officials, and contractors who are authorized to post or engage on behalf of the municipality.
- 3.2** This policy does not govern personal use of social media by employees or elected officials, except where personal use impacts the municipality's operations or reputation.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 “CAO” means a person appointed as Chief Administrative Officer by Council or the person designated by the Chief Administrative Officer to carry out a particular duty.
- 4.2 “Communications Officer” means an employee appointed by the CAO to coordinate media relations and communications on behalf of the Municipality.
- 4.3 “Content” means text posts, images, videos, stories, polls, comments, shares, direct messages, and any other type of communication shared through social media platforms.
- 4.4 “Councillor” means a Councillor currently serving the Municipality of the District of Barrington.
- 4.5 “Committee Member” means any person currently appointed to a Committee of Council.
- 4.6 “Employee” means any full-time, part-time, casual and temporary staff member, including summer students.
- 4.7 “Municipality” means the Municipality of the District of Barrington.
- 4.8 “Official Account” means social media accounts created and maintained by the Municipality for municipal purposes.
- 4.9 “Social Media” means platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok and other interactive online platforms.

5.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 5.1 The Chief Administrative Officer, or a person designated by the CAO, holds overall responsibility for the administration of this policy and oversight of all official municipal social media activities. This includes approving the creation of new social media accounts to ensure they serve a legitimate municipal purpose, can be managed with available resources, and align with broader communication strategies.

- 5.2 Staff designated by the CAO will be responsible for managing these accounts on a day-to-day basis. This involves preparing and publishing content, responding to questions from the public, monitoring discussions, and moderating comments that do not meet the Municipality's standards.
- 5.3 The Municipality's social media channels will generally be updated and monitored during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. Posts will typically be published during the workweek, except in cases where emergency or time-sensitive information needs to be shared outside of these hours.
- 5.4 Messages and comments received through social media will be responded to during regular operating hours and within a reasonable timeframe. While staff will make every effort to provide timely replies, residents should be aware that response times may vary depending on the nature of the inquiry. In emergency situations, updates may be posted outside of regular hours, but social media should not be used as a substitute for calling 911 or contacting the appropriate emergency services.
- 5.5 Council members may share official posts on their own personal pages to help disseminate information but are not permitted to manage official accounts unless expressly authorized.

6.0 CONTENT STANDARDS

- 6.1 Official municipal social media accounts will be used to share timely and relevant information about the Municipality's programs, services, facilities, projects, and events. They will also be used to announce meetings, highlight Council decisions, publish notices required by law, and provide updates on matters that affect the community, including emergencies.
- 6.2 The Municipality's social media presence should reflect a professional, clear, and consistent voice that supports transparency and trust in local government.
- 6.3 Information shared must be verified to ensure it is factual and accurate.
- 6.4 Content should be written in plain language that is accessible and inclusive, while avoiding technical jargon whenever possible.

- 6.5 Posts must not promote or oppose any political party, candidate, or position in an election. Similarly, confidential or sensitive municipal matters, such as personnel issues, legal advice, or negotiations not yet public, must never be posted.
- 6.6 The Municipality will also ensure that personal information is not shared without proper authority or consent in line with privacy requirements under FOIPOP.

7.0 PUBLIC INTERACTION AND MODERATION

- 7.1 The Municipality welcomes comments, questions, and respectful discussion on its official social media platforms, recognizing that two-way engagement helps build stronger connections with residents and fosters a more informed community.
- 7.2 The Municipality will actively monitor comments and other user-generated content and may hide or remove any posts that contain offensive language, personal attacks, threats, discriminatory remarks, or statements that defame individuals or groups.
- 7.3 Comments that violate the privacy of others, promote commercial products or services unrelated to municipal partnerships, or amount to repeated off-topic or spam postings may also be removed.
- 7.4 In cases of repeated or serious violations, the Municipality may block users from interacting on its platforms.
- 7.5 The Municipality also reserves the right to disable or limit comments on particular posts or for specified periods of time if warranted by the topic or the situation. This may be necessary, for example, during sensitive issues or when comment threads are at risk of becoming unmanageable, misleading, or disruptive to civil discussion.
- 7.6 Each official social media page will include a public statement explaining that it is managed by the Municipality for the purpose of sharing municipal information and that comments will be moderated or limited in line with these standards.

8.0 CRISIS AND EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- 8.1** During emergencies, social media may become one of the Municipality's primary tools for issuing timely updates, warnings, and instructions to the public. In such circumstances, only staff explicitly authorized by the CAO or designate will be permitted to post on behalf of the Municipality to ensure that information is accurate, coordinated with emergency management partners, and consistent across all platforms.
- 8.2** Posts made during emergencies will clearly indicate the nature of the situation and direct residents to trusted additional sources, such as official municipal websites or provincial emergency channels. The use of social media in emergencies will supplement, not replace, other established methods of emergency communication.


9.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- 9.1** All posts, comments, messages, and other content created or received through official municipal social media accounts are considered public records under the Municipal Government Act and may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- 9.2** Designated staff managing social media accounts will ensure that significant communications, such as official notices, public engagement records, or emergency alerts, are properly captured and preserved in accordance with the Municipality's records management policies. This may involve taking screenshots, exporting data, or using archiving tools.

10.0 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 10.1** Employees and elected officials of the Municipality are encouraged to use social media responsibly in their personal lives.
- 10.2** When posting opinions on matters related to municipal business, they should clearly indicate that they are speaking in a personal capacity and not on behalf of the Municipality.
- 10.3** Employees and officials must avoid disclosing confidential or privileged information gained through their roles with the Municipality.

- 10.4 Employees and elected officials should recognize that even personal posts can reflect on the Municipality’s reputation and should not engage in online conduct that damages the reputation or interests of the Municipality.
- 10.5 Conduct on personal social media accounts that violates confidentiality, privacy, or respectful workplace principles, or otherwise undermines public confidence in the Municipality, may be addressed under applicable codes of conduct, human resources policies, or Council’s own accountability frameworks.

Municipal Clerk’s Annotation for Official Policy Book	
Date of Notice to Council members of Intent to Consider	September 9, 2025
Date of Passage of current Policy	September 23, 2025
I certify that this Policy No. 69 “Social Media Policy” was adopted by Council as indicated above.	
 _____ Debbie Mader Municipal Clerk	_____ Sept 23/25 Date

VERSION LOG

Version Number	Amendment Description	Approved By	Approval Date
1	Approved Policy of Council	Council	September 23, 2025

DMC
2025