

APPROVED James O. Williams

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### I. GENERAL

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) may utilize a variety of social media outlets to provide information to the public related to Borough Government and its activities. The use of social media technology will be used to increase transparency of government operation, enable rapid broadcast of information, and improve communication with residents by providing various outlets for public information dissemination.

### II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish protocols for using social media as a way to communicate to residents and to convey expectations to employees utilizing social media for work related purposes, rather than to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information. Borough Departments should consider the use of social media formats to reach a broader audience. The FNSB supports the use of social media to further the communication goals and mission of its Departments where appropriate and in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

### III. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Department directors shall ensure that their department staff follows the procedure set forth in this policy.
- B. Digital Services will enforce this policy.
- C. Human Resources shall maintain this policy.

### IV. POLICY

- A. All official FNSB presences on social media or services are considered an extension of the FNSB's information network and must comply with all Borough policies and work rules, including the Borough's Computer Use Policy, Use of Borough Equipment and Assets, Ethics Code, etc.
- B. The designated Public Information Officer or Director of Digital Services will review department requests to use social media sites, prior to granting authorization. The decision to use social media technology must be made considering a department's mission, objectives, capabilities and potential benefit.
  - 1. Social media usage will be authorized provided that the use of the technology enhances communications in support of the Department's mission; and does not jeopardize the professionalism of Borough operations and accuracy of information. The best use of social media is as a channel for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (such as an emergency) or as marketing/promoting FNSB services by broadcasting to the widest possible audience.

2. The official FNSB website will remain FNSB's primary internet presence and information disseminated through social media should also be made available on the website. Whenever possible, content posted on social media sites should contain links directing users back to FNSB's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or other online services necessary to conduct business with FNSB.
- C. Departments and staff authorized to use social media are responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state, and other governing laws or regulations. This includes adherence to established laws, and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Public Records Act, First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies necessary to conduct business with the FNSB.
- D. Digital Services shall be the originator of all social media sites/accounts, and will maintain copies of all passwords used in Borough social media. Digital Services will be advised of any necessary staff changes so passwords can be changed/reset as needed.
- E. All social network sites and entries shall clearly indicate that all content posted or submitted, including private messages, chats or other communications, is subject to disclosure in accordance with the Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to FNSB business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The Department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media. Content should be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and other content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure. All content maintained on a borough social media site will be maintained in accordance with the department's retention schedule and may not be transitory in nature according to established retention periods for those records.
- F. Employees Using Social Media as an agent of the Borough:
1. Employees representing the FNSB via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as official representatives of the FNSB. The use of social media technology follows the same standards of professional practice as using email and other communication methods. If you identify yourself as a FNSB employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as a FNSB professional. Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to loss of social media privileges and possible disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
  2. Employees must be respectful when using social media in their official capacity. Employees may not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to another person, FNSB or other entity.
  3. When utilizing social media, employees need to ensure they do not write or post any content that involves or are related to the following:

- a. Items involved in litigation or that reasonably could be in the future
  - b. Non-public information of any kind
  - c. Illegal or banned substances and narcotics
  - d. Pornography or other offensive illegal material
  - e. Defamatory, libelous, offensive or demeaning material
  - f. Private/personal matters of yourself or others
  - g. Disparaging/threatening comments
  - h. Personal, sensitive or confidential information of any kind
  - i. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns, ballot measures or other political actions.
4. The Department Director or his/her designee shall monitor the content of their department's social media sites to ensure adherence to this policy and for appropriate use and message content.
5. The designated Public Information Officer, Mayor's Office designee, Digital Services Director and/or Human Resources Director may monitor content on each of the Departments social media sites and Digital Services has the ability to remove information, including department pages from social media outlets if deemed necessary. Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between FNSB departments and members of the public. The following postings shall not be allowed:
- a. To the extent prohibited by APOC, comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures or other political actions;
  - b. Profane language or content;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic;
  - d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - e. Solicitations of commerce;
  - f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

These guidelines must be displayed publically or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed by the Borough, based on these guidelines, must be retained, including the time, date and social media account information of the poster, when available.

6. FNSB employees who are not approved to use social media under this policy are not allowed to publish or comment via social media as a representative of the Borough, while in work status or use work facilities/equipment, or in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with FNSB. FNSB employees who are approved to use social media are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.
7. Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the FNSB website.

G. Using Social Media as an individual:

1. When utilizing social media tools you must consider whether your personal thoughts may be misunderstood or taken by the reader as your official capacity with the FNSB. By virtue of identifying yourself as a Borough Employee within a social media network, you are tying your employment status with the Borough to your social media activities.
2. You should assume that the posting will be read by employees, media, the public etc. Managers should not use a public blog or other social media tool to communicate policies, workplace issues etc. to employees. Assume your thoughts are in the public domain and can be published or discussed in all forms of media. You should have no expectation of privacy.
3. Social media identities, logon IDs, and user names may not use or contain the name of the Fairbanks North Star Borough or FNSB without prior approval of the designated Public Information Officer.
4. Employees may not use Employer provided email addresses to register for non-work related social media sites, unless approval by the designated Public Information Officer has been obtained.
5. Employees are prohibited from using social networks to post or display comments about co-workers or supervisors or the FNSB that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or a violation of the FNSB's workplace policies against discrimination, harassment, or hostility on account of age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, or other protected class, status, or characteristic.

V. PROCEDURE

- A. Each Department should evaluate their communication strategy to determine if there is value to including some form of social media into this strategy. The evaluation should include, at a minimum:
  1. What am I trying to communicate?
  2. Who is the media meant to reach?
  3. What are you attempting to communicate? Can it be effectively communicated using this social media?
  4. Who is responsible for managing the content? (The number of staff

authorized should be limited). Will the person assigned to manage the content represent the FNSB appropriately? Are they trained, or do they need training?

5. Is there appropriate backup trained to keep content current and updated during staff absences?
  6. How can we meet the responsibility regarding collection and records retention including preservation of social media content? What does the retention schedule require for these records? Have you contacted the Records Coordinator to update your department's records retention schedule?
- B. If a social media need is identified, the Department Director should make the request for access and usage to the designated Public Information Officer by completing the Social Media application form.
1. If applicable, access will be authorized and the social media will be used in accordance with this policy and any applicable guidelines issues by the PIO or Digital Services Director. Approval will be based upon criteria in Section I and Section IV.B. of this policy.
  2. New tools and technologies will come into use; the same standards contained herein apply.
  3. Should the need for social media change, the Department Director will seek approval, following this same procedure prior to making the change.
- C. The Public Information Officer and/or Digital Services Department can provide guidance and expertise to help Departments implement social media options.
- D. Issues identified as a result of social media will be reviewed and addressed on a case by case basis, in accordance with other applicable Borough policies.

## VI. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

### A. References –

1. FNSB Policy 40.01 Computer Use Policy
2. FNSB Policy 01.03 Inappropriate Use of Borough Equipment & Resources Policy
3. FNSB Borough Ethics Code 6.32
4. FNSB Policy 65.01 Employee Discipline Policy
5. FNSB Policy 65.08 Harassment Policy
6. FNSB Policy 65.09 EEO Policy
7. FNSB Policy 75.01 Public Records Act

### B. Definitions –

1. Blog – Short for “Web Log” a site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with

online audiences.

2. Podcast – A collection of digital media files distributed over the Internet, often using syndication feeds, for playback on portable media players and personal computers.
3. Post – comment made to a user’s social networking page or site. For example, Facebook users can post to another user’s “wall.”
4. Record – data or information in a fixed form that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside (preserved) as evidence of that activity for future reference. A record has a fixed content, structure, and context. (Society of American Archivists Glossary)
5. RSS Feeds or Syndication feeds – a family of different formats used to publish updated content such as blog entries, news headlines, or podcasts and “feed” this information to subscribers via an RSS reader. This enables users to keep up with their favorite Web sites in an automated manner that’s easier than checking them manually (known colloquially as “really simple syndication”).
6. Social Media – are on-line collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences. Includes but not limited to blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, Wikis, RSS feeds, video sharing, and social networks like MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.
7. Social Networking – the use of a variety of Web sites that allow users to share content, interact, and develop communities around similar interests.
8. Wiki – allows users to create, edit, and like Web pages easily; often used to create collaborative Web sites (called “Wikis”) and to power community Web sites.

C. Attachments – NONE

D. Revision History

Supersedes Policy No.	Effective Dates
40.04	10/15/13
40.04	01/15/20