



# Corporate Policy

## 08. Media and Public Relations

### 08.2 Social Media Policy

|              |          |            |                   |
|--------------|----------|------------|-------------------|
| Approved by: | Council  | on         | October 6, 2015   |
| Report No.:  | CL-15-15 | Effective: | October 6, 2015   |
| Reviewed:    | N/A      | Amended:   | N/A               |
| Next Review: | N/A      | Note(s):   | By-law 90 of 2015 |

### Purpose:

The purpose of the Township of Warwick's Social Media Policy is to:

- Establish the principles expected of all staff members when engaging on the Township's behalf on the social web.
- Set standard guidelines for the creation, use and maintenance of social media communications tools.
- Outline the process for requests from the public and community groups for advertising community events, etc.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all members of staff of the Township of Warwick.

### Goals:

The Township of Warwick's goals in using social media are:

- To spread awareness of Township information and community events.
- To function as a central hub for information for Warwick residents and business owners, and
- To provide emergency information in a timely manner.

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## Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

| Term                               | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Community Events                   | Events available to the whole community, benefitting the whole community and run by a community group. Includes church and religious functions, customer appreciation days for local businesses, and sponsorship of public events (public skating). Does not include events that benefit only one business or person (i.e. sales, etc.) |
| Messages                           | Includes online communications such as posts, blog posts, wall posts, tweets, document posting, video posting, comments, replies, direct messages, events, invitations, etc.                                                                                                                                                            |
| Social Media and Social Networking | E-technologies and practices that are used to share opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships online. There are thousands of different platforms and formats within social media including networking sites, information sharing sites and blogging or personal publishing sites.                            |

## Principles:

### Application

1. Social media applications shall be executed following the same guidelines as other Township communication applications, including electronic signage (unpaid). Information on the following will be permitted:
  - a. Township sponsored events and activities.
  - b. Township services.

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- c. Public Health and Safety (i.e. road closures, inclement weather, etc.)
  - d. Emergency Services.
  - e. Community events, community group events, etc.
2. Social networking applications will be utilized with the goal of providing a central hub for community businesses and residents for localized information. They will not function to further local businesses or business interests.
  3. Paid advertising in specific facilities (i.e. Watford Arena television screens, ice surface boards) which can be purchased, falls outside the application of this policy.

### **General Policy Principles**

1. The Administrator/Clerk and/or designate(s) will monitor content on Township social media sites to ensure adherence to both the Township's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Township of Warwick.
2. The Township reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the Administrator/Clerk for a reasonable period of time, including the date, time and identity of poster, when available.
3. Policy Principles 1 and 2 must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.

### **Posting Guidelines**

1. Content, comments or links containing any of the following will not be allowed on Township Social Media sites.
  - a. Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article;
  - b. Slanderous or defamatory remarks, obscene language or sexual content;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard

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- to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- d. Promotion of commercial services or products other than significant sponsors, affiliations, or business partnership;
  - e. Promotion of political candidates;
  - f. Promotion of illegal activity;
  - g. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
  - h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
2. The following guidelines should be observed when posting photos to Township of Warwick Social Media and Networking sites. Photos that do not comply with these guidelines may be removed by the site administrator(s).
- a. All photos posted to the Township of Warwick pages should follow the guidelines of this policy and be suitable for a community audience (i.e. no pornography, etc.)
  - b. Posting of photos should be completed to supplement information provided.
  - c. No photos related to emergency situations should be taken or published; all staff is explicitly forbidden to take photos at emergency response scenes.
  - d. Positive photos of community members, community events, etc. may be posted with verbal consent from the person(s) photographed and/or their parent/guardian.
  - e. When possible, a consent statement will be included as part of registration forms for children under 18 years of age participating in Township of Warwick programs.

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## Comment Policy

1. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Township of Warwick social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the Administrator/Clerk or designate(s):
  - a. Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;
  - b. Profane, obscene, violent or pornographic content and/or language;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, colour, age religion, gender, or national origin;
  - d. Defamatory to personal attacks, including posts about Township employees and/or Councillors;
  - e. Threats to any person or organization;
  - f. Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
  - g. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to the advertising of any business or product for sale;
  - h. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
  - i. Encouragement of illegal activity;
  - j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;or
  - k. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, or any party.
2. Notice of all comments or posts as outlined in #1 will be reported to the Administrator/Clerk and, if deemed necessary by him or her, the Mayor and/or Council as well.
3. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Township of Warwick social media site is the opinion of the commentor or poster only, and publication of a

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comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Township of Warwick. Such comments do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Township of Warwick.

4. The Township of Warwick reserves the right to deny access to the Township of Warwick social media sites for any individual, who violates the Township of Warwick's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.

### Requests to Advertise Community Events

- Events can be advertised using the Downtown Community Reader Board, the Township's website and the Township's Facebook and Twitter pages. Community events can be advertised using all other social media and networking outlets as well, once/if formed.
- All media forums will be used to advertise 'community events' only and not business or private events (i.e. business sales, etc.)
- All community event information can be submitted to the Township for posting by e-mail to [whatsup@warwick.ca](mailto:whatsup@warwick.ca). Emails should include event information, name of community group, date, time and any fees applicable.

### Logo/Branding

Only social media sites and communication outlets pre-approved by the Administrator/Clerk or designate may display the Township's logo.

Community groups and/or private interest groups cannot display the Township's logo without permission and may be asked to remove the logo if deemed necessary.

### Privacy Considerations

Township staff will not publish personal information pertaining to themselves or to others on any Township social media or networking platform. Personal information, within the meaning of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, does not include names and business contact particulars of Councillors, Mayor, Administrator/Clerk, Managers or general office administration contact details.

Communication using social media should always be considered public and permanent.

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## Disclaimer

Where possible, each social media site shall contain a disclaimer clearly advising third party users or visitors to the site that third party comments are not official communications with the Township of Warwick.

To this end, the following disclaimer shall be added to each of the Township's social media sites:

*Comments made by members of the public are not official communications of the Corporation of the Township of Warwick and are not reflective of the Corporation's views, opinions and/or policies. Because this site is only periodically monitored offensive materials or commentary may be present for which the Township of Warwick denies all responsibility.*

## Breach

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## Inquiries/More Information

All inquiries on the content of the policy from the public or Township staff members should be directed to the Administrator/Clerk.

## Site Administration

The Administrator/Clerk and/or designate(s) is responsible for administration of the Township of Warwick social media sites and webpage.

The Administrator/Clerk and/or designate(s) will monitor social media sites. Monitoring will occur primarily during business hours from Monday to Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Within these guidelines, efforts will be made to respond to inquiries and posts in as timely a manner as possible.

Township staff wishing to form a new social media site or page will seek approval of the Administrator/Clerk using the form and process prescribed in Appendix A. All new social media sites are required to undergo the prescribed process before being formed. Sites that are formed outside of the prescribed process will be required to be removed.

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## References:

### Other Applicable Township Policies

This policy and the creation, use and maintenance of online social media resources are subject to the following corporate policies:

- a) Warwick Township Policy – Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention
  - b) Warwick Township By-law: 32 of 2004, Records and Retention, as amended
- And all applicable laws, such as:
- a) Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
  - b) Ontario Human Rights Code;
  - c) Canadian Copyright Act.

## Roles:

### Accountable:

Administrator/Clerk

### Responsible:

All Township of Warwick staff



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## Appendix A

### Request for Formation of New Township Social Media Site

Please submit this completed form to the Administrator/Clerk for review. The request will be reviewed by the Administrator/Clerk. If necessary, Council may be involved in the decision making process. You will be consulted with further questions and provided a response to your request by Administrator/Clerk in writing.

#### **Requestor**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Department and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Proposed Details of New Township Social Media Platform\***

*\*Include details on the following in your response: platform to be used, purpose of establishing the site, monitoring details, person(s) responsible for content, justification as to why a new site is needed for this purpose, details on why the Township's corporate site shouldn't be used for this purpose, etc. Please attach another sheet if required.*

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#### **Comments from Administrator/Clerk on request:**

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#### **Check one:**

Request Granted

Request Denied

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed – Clerk/Dep. Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed –Administrator/Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date