CITY OF JOHNSTOWN

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the creation, management, and use of the City of Johnstown's official social media accounts. The City recognizes that social media is an effective means of communicating timely information regarding municipal services, programs, events, emergencies, and public meetings. This policy is intended to ensure that official social media accounts are used in a consistent, professional, and legally compliant manner.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all City departments, boards, commissions, elected officials, officers, employees, contractors, and volunteers who are authorized to create, manage, or post content on behalf of the City of Johnstown using any official social media account.

III. Official Social Media Accounts

Only social media accounts authorized by the Mayor and/or Common Council may represent the City of Johnstown.

The creation of any official social media account shall require approval by the Mayor and/or Common Council. Account login credentials shall be maintained by the City and shall not be the sole possession of any individual employee.

IV. Administration

The Mayor and/or Common Council shall designate one or more Social Media Administrators responsible for:

- Maintaining account security;
- Managing user access;
- Coordinating postings;
- Ensuring compliance with this policy;
- Maintaining administrative records when appropriate.

V. Purpose of Official Accounts

Official City social media accounts are intended solely to distribute information concerning:

- Public notices pertaining to Press Releases, Council Meetings or Public Hearings;
- Emergency information: road closures, water, sewer, or utility notifications;
- Employment opportunities;
- Community events;
- Department announcements;
- Other official municipal business.

VI. Public Comments

1. The City utilizes its social media platforms primarily as informational resources. Comments, replies, and similar public interaction features may be disabled on official City social media accounts.

2. When comments are disabled, members of the public may contact the City through:
   - Telephone;
   - Email: department specific emails are available on the City's website https://cityofjohnstown.ny.gov/;

- Written correspondence;
- Attendance at public meetings; or
- Other established methods of communication.

3. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as limiting any person's right to communicate with City officials through lawful means.

VII. Comment Moderation (If Enabled)

1. If comments are enabled on any official City social media account, moderation shall be conducted in a viewpoint-neutral manner.

2. Comments may be removed only when they contain:
   - Spam or commercial advertising;
   - Obscene or sexually explicit material;
   - True threats of violence;
   - Provocation to imminent unlawful conduct;
   - Information that is confidential by law;
   - Personal identifiable information;
   - Malware or malicious links;
   - Duplicate or repetitive postings intended to disrupt discussion; or
   - Content prohibited by applicable law.

3. Comments shall not be removed solely because they criticize the City, its officials, employees, or policies.

VIII. Employee Conduct

1. Individuals authorized to post on behalf of the City shall:
   - Conduct themselves professionally;
   - Verify the accuracy of information before posting;
   - Protect confidential information;
   - Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws;
   - Comply with applicable records retention requirements; and
   - Avoid expressing personal opinions while acting in an official capacity.

2. Official social media accounts shall not be used for political campaign or personal business.

IX. Records Retention

1. Content posted to official City social media accounts may constitute government records.

2. Departments shall retain social media records in accordance with applicable New York State records retention requirements and any records management policies adopted by the City.

X. Accessibility

The City shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that information distributed through social media is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Whenever practicable:
- Images should include alternative text;
- Videos should include captions;
- Linked documents should be accessible whenever feasible.

XI. Security

1. Passwords shall be maintained securely and changed whenever personnel with account access leave City employment or no longer require administrative privileges.

2. Multi-factor authentication shall be enabled whenever supported by the platform.

XII. Emergencies

1. Official social media may be used to rapidly disseminate emergency notifications concerning:
   - Public safety;
   - Severe weather;
   - Infrastructure failures;
   - Water system advisories;
   - Road closures; and
   - Other urgent municipal matters.

2. Social media supplements, but does not replace, official emergency notification systems.

XIII. Disclaimer

Official City social media accounts are maintained for informational purposes only. Information provided through social media is intended to supplement, and not replace, official notices, legal advertisements, or postings required by law.

The City reserves the right to modify, suspend, or discontinue any social media account at any time.

XIV. Violations

Failure by an employee or authorized user to comply with this policy may result in revocation of posting privileges and may constitute grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with applicable law, collective bargaining agreements, and City personnel policies.

XV. Effective Date

This policy shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the Common Council of the City of Johnstown and shall remain in effect until amended or repealed.