



**CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** July 18, 2017

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**From:** B. Francis, City Manager

**Subject:** Social Media Policy

**Background:** The Council directed that a Social Media Policy be developed to establish guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Belle Isle ("City") of social media sites as a means of conveying information to members of the public.

The intended purpose of City social media sites is to disseminate information from the City about the City's mission, meetings, activities, and current issues to members of the public. This Policy is intended to clearly identify prohibited activities, expectations, and requirements regarding the use of social media sites.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information posted on its social media sites and the content that is attributed to the City and its officials. This Policy ensures use of appropriate discretion so as not to discredit the City or violate policies and procedures related to standards of conduct, computer usage, ethics, or any other applicable City policies or procedures. All City employees must be aware of the negative impact that inappropriate postings can have upon the City and the City's relationship with the residents and others in the community.

It is also very important for elected officials to review this policy so they do not violate the Florida Sunshine Laws, be called into question on their postings on "restricted group" websites, or that the public perceives that the elected official is speaking in an official capacity for the City Council. Although elected officials want to embrace social media to better communicate with constituents, some posts may be "not the best" social media judgment.

**Staff Recommendation:** Review the policy and if no changes are necessary, adopt the policy

**Suggested Motion:** (For Adoption): I move we adopt the Social Media Policy

**Alternatives:** Do not adopt the policy but provide further direction to the staff.

**Fiscal Impact:** If followed, there should be no fiscal impact to the City.

**Attachments:** Social Media Policy Draft



# CITY OF BELLE ISLE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Effective: July 1, 2017

## **1. Purpose**

This Social Media Policy ("Policy") establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Belle Isle ("City") of social media sites as a means of conveying information to members of the public.

The intended purpose of City social media sites is to disseminate information from the City about the City's mission, meetings, activities, and current issues to members of the public. This Policy is intended to clearly identify prohibited activities, expectations, and requirements regarding the use of social media sites.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information posted on its social media sites and the content that is attributed to the City and its officials. This Policy ensures use of appropriate discretion so as not to discredit the City or violate policies and procedures related to standards of conduct, computer usage, ethics, or any other applicable City policies or procedures. All City employees must be aware of the negative impact that inappropriate postings can have upon the City and the City's relationship with the residents and others in the community.

## **2. Definitions**

"Authorized City of Belle Isle Officials" means employees, public officers (whether elected or appointed) and volunteers of the City of Belle Isle, Florida.

"Social media sites" means content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the internet. Examples of social media applications include but are not limited to Facebook, MySpace, Google and Yahoo Groups, Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn, and news media comment-sharing/blogging.

"City social media sites" means social media sites which the City establishes and maintains, and over which it has control over all postings, except for advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners. City social media sites shall supplement, and not replace, the City's required notices and standard methods of communication.

"Posts" or "postings" mean information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on a City social media site.

### **3. General Policy**

3.1. The City's official website at [www.cityofbelleislefl.org](http://www.cityofbelleislefl.org) (or any domain owned by the City) will remain the City's primary means of internet communication.

3.2. The establishment of City social media sites is subject to approval by the City Manager or his/her designee. Upon approval, City social media sites shall bear the name and/or official logo of the City.

3.3. All content on City social media sites shall be reviewed, approved, and administered by the City Manager or his/her designee.

3.4. City social media sites shall clearly state that such sites are maintained by the City and that the sites comply with the City's Social Media Policy.

3.5. City social media sites shall link back to the City's official website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City.

3.6. The City Manager or his/her designee shall monitor content on City social media sites to ensure adherence to both the City's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the City. The City Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for authorizing, establishing, and maintaining content posted on behalf of the City and shall develop and implement measures to prevent inappropriate, confidential, offensive, or damaging information from being shared or disseminated.

3.7. City social media sites shall be managed consistent with the Open Meetings Act. Members of the City Council, Commissions and/or Boards shall not comment on any published postings, or use the City owned site to respond to, blog or engage in serial meetings, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Additionally, elected officials should be aware that posting to a private social media site when discussing any City business or topic regarding the City is a public record according to the Public Records Act and could also violate the Florida Sunshine Laws (See Section 5.1 of this policy)

3.8. The City reserves the right to terminate any City social media site at any time without notice.

3.9. City social media sites shall comply with usage rules and regulations required by the site provider, including privacy policies.

3.10. The City's Social Media Policy shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.

3.11. All City social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.

3.12. City social media sites are subject to the Florida Public Records Act. Any content maintained on a City social media site that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be considered a public record and subject to public disclosure. All postings on City social media sites shall be sent to an official City email account and maintained consistent with the Public Records Act.

3.13. Employees representing the City on City social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative of the City and in accordance with all City policies.

3.14. All City social media sites shall utilize authorized City contact information for account set-up, monitoring and access. The use of personal email accounts or phone numbers by any City employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting-up, monitoring, or accessing a City social media site.

3.15. City social media sites may contain content, including but not limited to, advertisements or hyperlinks over which the City has no control. The City does not endorse any hyperlink or advertisement placed on City social media sites by the social media site's owners, vendors, or partners.

3.16. The City Manager or his/her designee shall regularly monitor City social media sites used by the City and take corrective action if an issue arises that places, or has the potential to place, the City at risk.

3.17. The City reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time.

#### **4. Content Guidelines**

4.1. The content of City social media sites shall only pertain to City-sponsored or City-endorsed programs, services, and events. Content includes, but is not limited to, information, photographs, videos, and hyperlinks.

4.2. Content posted to the City's social media sites must contain hyperlinks directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Belle Isle, whenever possible.

4.3. The City shall have full permission or rights to any content posted by the City, including photographs and videos.

4.4. Postings shall be made during normal business hours. After-hours or weekend postings shall only be made with approval of the City Manager or his/her designee.

4.5. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the City's social media sites shall review, be familiar with, and comply with this policy and the social media site's use policies and terms and conditions.

4.6. Any employee authorized to post items on any of the City's social media sites shall not express his or her own personal views or concerns through such postings. Instead, postings on any of the City's social media sites by an authorized City employee shall only reflect the views of the City.

4.7. Postings must contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by any City policy or state or federal law.

4.8. Postings may NOT contain any personal information, except for the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public.

4.9. Postings to City social media sites shall NOT contain any of the following:

4.9.1. Comments that are not topically related to the particular posting being commented upon;

4.9.2. Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns, candidates or ballot measures;

4.9.3. Profane language or content;

4.9.4. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws;

4.9.5. Sexual content or links to sexual content;

4.9.6. Solicitations of commerce;

4.9.7. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;

4.9.8. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or

4.9.9. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

4.10. These guidelines shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink on all City social media sites. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.

4.11. The City reserves the right to implement or remove any functionality of its social media site, when deemed appropriate by the City Manager or his/her designee. This includes, but is not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication that is posted on a City social media site.

4.12. Except as expressly provided in this Policy, accessing any social media site shall comply with all applicable City policies pertaining to communications and the use of the internet by employees, including email content.

4.13. All of the content on City social media sites must be provided to the City Manager or his/her designee for review, approval and subsequent posting to the social media site.

4.14. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment in compliance with the City's personnel policy.

## **5. Elected or Appointed Officials**

5.1. Elected or appointed officials who are members of City Council, boards or committees that individually wish to utilize City social media sites or to create or utilize their own or others website or social networking internet website, which pertains to or allows for communications relating to City matters, should be aware of the risks and requirements as set forth in Florida law, including but not limited to Florida Attorney General Opinions, the Sunshine Law, and the Public Records Law, prior to the establishment of such a site or activities thereon. Extreme caution and care should be exercised by such officials and anyone acting on their behalf in posting or uploading any content to a website or social networking internet website, to avoid the appearance of impropriety, violations of the Sunshine Law or the Public Records law, violations of Florida's ethics rules, or violations of Florida's Election Code.

5.2. Elected officials found in violation of this policy may be subject to private or public admonishment and/or may be asked to resign their office.

**Addendum A: Acknowledgement of Official Use by Authorized City of Belle Isle Officials**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that:  
*(Print Name)*

A. I received a copy of the City of Belle Isle’s social media policy on \_\_\_\_\_;  
*(Date)*

B. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about said policy and I have been provided with information in response to my questions;

C. I understand the language used in this policy;

D. I acknowledge that the City of Belle Isle reserves the right to add, amend or discontinue any of the provisions of this policy for any reason or none at all, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice;

F. I acknowledge that I understand this policy and I agree that I will comply with all of its provisions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City Official’s Signature* *Date*