

Executive Summary for Poplar Grove Board

Social Media Archiving Solution

Subject: Social media compliance requirements and associated risks

Purpose: To recommend that the Village of Poplar Grove adopt CivicPlus (formerly ArchiveSocial) as its dedicated social media archiving solution to ensure compliance with Illinois FOIA, and mitigate legal and reputational risks.

Need for Action

Public Records Compliance

Under the Illinois FOIA, all public records—including “**electronic communications...and all other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics**”—must be retained and accessible for their full retention period. Social media posts, comments, replies, messages, and other interactions related to public business are considered public records and must be preserved.

Social media creates unique challenges:

- Content can be deleted, altered, or hidden without notice.
- Platforms have no obligation to retain or manage records for government entities.
- Distinguishing between public business and transitory content can be complex.

The [Illinois Secretary of State](#) guidance reinforces that social media communications are subject to FOIA and must be managed accordingly. Here are some excerpts:

- *When an agency chooses to use the social media platform as a two-way communication forum, then records are being created and will **require management**.*
- *When an agency elects to open a page to receive comments from the public, then the original posting, along with all comments associated with it, is a record. This record is managed under an existing record series such as “General Correspondence” or the creation of a new record series for social media postings.*
- *When the time period of the posting ends that the agency sets in their policy, the entire post is copied into another application, such as a word processing program. The post is then **saved in its entirety for the retention period** required by the records series, and a Disposal Certificate for the records will be required before disposing of it.*

It's also important to note that pages being managed by elected officials can be subject to FOIA as well:

- *“...[when a public official] used the Facebook page as a tool of governance, [and] swathed it “in the trappings of her office” [they are controlling the page as a government actor]....”*
- *When this is the case, then a public record is created and is subject to either the State or Local Records Acts.*

Risk Management

Without an automated archiving solution, the Village risks:

- Legal exposure from FOIA violations
- First Amendment disputes over content moderation
- Reputational harm if records are missing or incomplete
- Operational gaps in documenting threats, harassment, or defamation

Proposed Solution

The CivicPlus Social Media Archiving platform delivers:

- Automated, real-time capture of all social media interactions (including deleted or edited content)
- Secure, tamper-proof storage with advanced search capabilities
- Easy retrieval of records for FOIA requests and legal needs

Cost: The annual cost is **\$3,559.90** with a one-time \$500 activation fee. This includes a 15% price adjustment from our list price of \$4,188 per year.

Proven Track Record in Illinois

CivicPlus is the nation's leading social media archiving provider, trusted by thousands of local and state agencies. Prominent adopters include **Chicago** and **Cook County**, and additional local adopters include the **Clinton PD, South Beloit, Fontana-On-Geneva Lake, McHenry County, Woodstock, Kingston, Lake Geneva, Davis Junction, Huntley, Richmond** and many more around Illinois.