

## MEMO

To: Common Council

From: Becky Magestro, Chief of Staff

Date: 9/17/2025

Re: Social Media Update

### Background

Following Council's decision to discontinue allowing public comment on the City's social media platforms, staff created a new City of Whitewater Facebook Group. This step was taken to better control and limit public comments while still maintaining a digital presence for information sharing.

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### Challenges Encountered

Since the transition, a few issues have arisen:

1. **Comment Control** – While Groups allow more limitations, Facebook's design promotes engagement. As a result, it is very difficult to completely shut off comments. We occasionally see comments appear on both the Group and the main Page despite our efforts. Facebook videos in particular are difficult to fully restrict from commenting.
2. **Video Posting Issues** – Videos shared in the Group sometimes link back to the City's Page and automatically post in both locations. Staff will continue monitoring this when uploading videos, but we wanted Council to be aware of this limitation.
3. **Engagement Decline** – Moving from a public Page to a Group has led to a noticeable decrease in the City's overall Facebook engagement. Facebook's algorithms tend to prioritize Pages over Groups for visibility, which has affected our reach.
4. **Page-Group Dependency** – The Group must remain tied to the City's existing Page. Therefore, we cannot fully deactivate or remove the Page, even though our goal is to shift activity to the Group.

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### Next Steps

To address these challenges while adhering to Council's direction, staff propose the following:

- **Group Promotion** – We will continue to promote the City's Facebook Group as the primary source for new content and community updates.
  - **Transition Timeline** – Beginning November 1, all new content will be posted exclusively to the Group.
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- Page Messaging – The existing Facebook Page will remain live but will only display a static post directing residents to the Group for City information and updates.

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### Conclusion

This transition ensures compliance with Council's directive while still maintaining a digital communication channel for residents. While there are inherent limitations within Facebook's platform, staff will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this strategy and adjust as necessary.