

To: Common Council
From: John Weidl, City Manager
Date: 4/30/2025
Re: Disabling Public Comments on City of Whitewater Social Media Platforms Effective June 1, 2025

Dear Council Members,

This memo is to inform you that, effective June 1, public commenting will be disabled on the City's official social media platforms. This includes the Facebook and Instagram pages for the City of Whitewater, Whitewater Parks & Recreation, Whitewater Aquatic & Fitness Center, and the Whitewater Dementia Friendly Community.

Please note that this change does not apply to the Irvin L. Young Memorial Library and the Whitewater Police Department. As independent government agencies, these departments maintain their own social media policies and will continue to manage their platforms accordingly.

City Attorney Timothy Brovold has reviewed this matter and confirmed that the City is not legally required to accept public comments on its social media platforms. Based on relevant state and federal case law, a governmental entity may disable all public comments without violating the First Amendment. However, if a public entity allows comments, it cannot engage in selective moderation or viewpoint discrimination. Disabling comments across all posts helps the City maintain compliance with these legal standards.

Residents and community members are still encouraged to engage with the City and share feedback. To contact the City or submit a concern, please visit our website at www.whitewater-wi.gov and use the "Report a Concern" tool available at <https://www.whitewater-wi.gov/RequestTracker.aspx>. Alternatively, you may email the City Manager directly at citymanager@whitewater-wi.gov. These communications are monitored and managed by the City Manager's Office to ensure prompt and appropriate responses.

Please reach out if you have any questions or require further clarification.

Best,



John S. Weidl, City Manager