

Office of the City Manager

City of Richland Hills, Texas

Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor Bill Agan and members of the Richland Hills City Council
From: Eric Strong, City Manager
Date: June 17, 2014
Subject: Consideration of Social Media Policy

Council Action Requested:

Consider Resolution Adopting Social Media Policy

Background Information:

Social Media can be a great tool for communicating with residents about issues and events that are connected to the functions of the City. Social Media is one of the areas that I want us to be more proactive with. Some of our departments have already been active in social media, and I want to make sure that we have a policy that defines how we will use social media and what our intent needs to be so that we are consistent city wide.

You will note that the resolution authorizes the City Manager to make future changes to this policy as deemed necessary, so it will not need to come back to the City Council for modifications in the future.

Board/Citizen Input: N/A

Financial Impact: N/A

Staff Contacts: Eric Strong
City Manager

estrong@richlandhills.com

Attachments: Resolution
Social Media Policy

RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION OF THE RICHLAND HILLS CITY
COUNCIL FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING A
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY FOR PUBLIC
COMMUNICATIONS**

WHEREAS, the role of technology in the workplace is constantly expanding and now includes social media communication tools that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration and are increasingly important tools for outreach and communication for government entities; and

WHEREAS, to address the way residents communicate and obtain information online, the Richland Hills Municipal Government may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience and encourages the use of social media in accordance with this Policy to further the goals for the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the use of social media tools by the City provides a way to build community and to officially and rapidly communicate directly with stakeholders, partners, the general public and the media as part of online communications; and

WHEREAS, the official City website and its associated functionality remains the primary and predominant public source for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media channels as prescribed in the attached policy; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Richland Hills recognizes that the City Manager may have need to modify this policy from time to time without further action from the City Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF RICHLAND HILLS that the City Council adopts the attached Policy for the use of social media on behalf of the City.

1. POLICY

This policy establishes guidelines on using social media to conduct official city business in order to promote communication, transparency, participation, and collaboration with the citizens of Richland Hills, the general public, and those doing business with the city.

The city supports the use of social media to enhance communication and information exchange in furthering the goals, mission, and overall outreach of the city.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to employees on the acceptable use of social media resources and implement a social media strategy to engage the general public in providing services to residents and businesses in the city.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all users of any of devices utilizing city networks, and those using technologies hosted outside and within the city network. It includes user responsibilities when accessing social media services.

It also applies to all city employees who access social media sites in the course of their city duties, using city networks, or city equipment, or using their official city position or title.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Content - Information that is created and published.
 - 4.2 Internet Service Provider - Company or other entity that runs internet sites that make social media sites available to users.
 - 4.3 Personal Identifying Information - Personal Identifying Information (PII) is any information which can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity such as name, social security number, biometric records, etc., alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information, which is linked or linkable to a specific individual, such as date and place of birth, mother's maiden name.
 - 4.4 Public Information Officer (PIO) or designees- employees charged with providing information to the media and public as required by law and according to the standards of their profession, and city or department policies.
 - 4.5 Site Administrator – Employee designated and authorized to manage the administration of social media site.
 - 4.6 Social Media – A collection of web based technologies to turn communications into interactive dialogues between individual users, groups of users, or communities.
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5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Employees charged with Public Information Officer (PIO) duties shall:

- 5.1.1. Assist city employees in complying with this policy and in managing social media sites.
- 5.1.2. Be responsible for moderating public comments.
- 5.1.3. Ensure that content posted by the City adheres to this social media policy for appropriate use, messages and branding, and such content is consistent with the goals of the city.
- 5.1.4. Ensure that format for the presentation of proposed content on the city's social media sites meet applicable standards and policies.

5.2 The Department Director or designee shall:

- 5.2.1. Develop controls and mechanisms to manage department social media sites and ensure that administrative authority and posting rights on behalf of the city are accessible only by authorized staff. This includes ensuring that content posted by the city does not infringe trademark, service mark or copyright rights and that content posted by the city does not violate any city ordinances, resolutions, administrative directives, or any state or federal laws, rules, or regulations.
- 5.2.2. Develop mechanisms to collect and manage department records following departmental, city and state retention schedules and records management policies. Questions about retention schedules, records management or open records request can be referred to the city secretary, who is responsible for these areas.
- 5.2.3. Develop processes to ensure employees understand the goals and restrictions of social media. This includes ensuring that employees do not misuse city government identity in the posting of content to social media sites, ensuring that employees do not use social media sites to conduct private commercial transactions or private business activities while at work, unless prior approval is provided by the Department Director.
- 5.2.4. Ensure that employees receive and understand this policy, and that employees understand the acceptable uses of social media on city networks.

5.3 The city employees shall:

- 5.3.1. Use social media and social networking to conduct official city business only while at work.

5.3.2 Abide by the city's policies and rules established to govern appropriate behavior, performance and acceptable use of city provided internet and email services when posting to social media or networking sites while conducting official city business.

5.3.3 Violation of this policy may result in:

1. Limitation of access rights;
2. Restriction of computer privileges;
3. Disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment with the city of Richland Hills;
4. Civil and/or criminal charges when appropriate.

6. PROCEDURE

6.1 The city of Richland Hills' website (homepage www.richlandhills.com and sub-sites), will remain the city's primary and predominant internet presence. The best, most appropriate city of Richland Hills uses of social media fall generally into three categories:

- As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible.
- As marketing/promotional channels which increase the city's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
- As channels for encouraging input of contents from the public consistent with this policy regarding city programs or services.

6.2 General Guidelines on Creating and Using Department Social Media Sites

6.2.1 City of Richland Hills departments may utilize social media and social network sites to enhance communications with various stakeholder organizations and the public in support of city goals and objectives.

6.2.2 All content posted by the city of Richland Hills on social media sites shall abide by all applicable state, federal and local laws, regulations and policies including all information technology, city records management policies and other applicable city policies.

6.2.3 Failure to obtain written approval from the requesting department director to establish, use, or maintain a website in the name of the city or of any city department may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

6.3 Register Department Social Network Media Site

- 6.3.1 Departments shall coordinate with the city manager, or designee, as the authority who will oversee and confirm decisions for hosting department social media sites. Department directors will be responsible for maintaining a list of all social networking application domain names in use, the names of all employee administrators of these accounts, as well as the associated user identifications and passwords currently active.
- 6.4.2 Department directors or their designee will register department media sites with appropriate social media networking hosting providers and ensure that the type of site registered for the department is a group registration and not individual registration. Employees with access to any social media site shall have their own identity account with their title and name.

6.4 Manage Department Social Network Media Site

- 6.4.1 Department directors or designees must review contents regularly and update them as new information is generated. Secure the accounts and passwords by changing access passwords regularly using city accounts and passwords policy specified in city policies. Do not use the same passwords used in city production network to logon to department media site(s). Change passwords promptly if an employee is removed as administrator or an employee separates from city employment or if the password to the site has been compromised.
- 6.4.2 Department director or designee must ensure that content posted by the city to city sites represent official city.
- 6.4.3 Department director or designee must maintain and manage a list of social media domains, active account logins and passwords.
- 6.4.4 Department director or designee must ensure that the source of all content and communication are clearly stated.
- 6.4.5 Department director or designee must ensure that content posted by the city does not advocate for or against the election of any candidate for city office, any city cause or proposition.
- 6.4.6 Department director or designee must ensure that content posted by the city to department social media sites complies with applicable laws and rules respecting ethics, conflicts of interest, and electoral campaigning and content does not violate local, state or federal laws.

- 6.4.7 Department director or designee must ensure that entities seek and obtain prior authorization and approval from the city, through the city manager's office before using social media contents owned by the city for commercial gains. Written agreements will be needed.
- 6.4.8 Department director or designee must ensure that content posted by the city does not include or divulge identifying information of non-employees. Wherever possible, department director or designee must ensure that content posted by the city to city social media sites are also available on the city's main website and should contain links directing users back to the city's official websites for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the city.
- 6.4.9 Department director or designee must ensure that users and visitors to city department social media sites are notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between city departments and members of the public in furtherance of city programs and/or services.

Comments on the City of Richland Hills' social media sites must adhere to the following:

- A. Users must comply with the Terms of Use of the social media site;
- B. Individuals who post or comment are legally responsible for their comments and/or posts. Comments and/or posts must not breach any law, confidentiality or copyright.

- 6.4.10 Department director or designee must ensure that the department social media sites are not used by the city as advocacy for or against approval of any item on a Richland Hills city council agenda that has been posted on the city's official website.
- 6.4.11 Department director or designee must ensure that the department social media sites are not used as advocacy for or against a quasi-judicial proceeding pending before the Richland Hills city council or before any city board, or commission, or impeaching or bolstering the credibility of any prospective witness at any such proceeding.
- 6.4.13 Department director or designee must ensure that:
- A. The city has the non-exclusive right to maintain, reproduce, further distribute, delete, and destroy any and all contents posted on the department site, and those who choose to comment are notified that

posting matter on the department site constitutes consent for the city to copy, distribute, and re-use the content as the city sees fit.

- B. The persons posting to the site are aware that they are subject to the State of Texas Public Information Act and their comments may be disclosed to third parties.

 - C. Individuals making comments are aware of their responsibility to adhere to the following:
 - Users must comply with the Terms of Use of the social media site;
 - Individuals who post or comment are legally responsible for their comments and/or posts. Comments and/or posts must not breach any law, confidentiality or copyright.

 - C. Unless any state or federal law or city ordinance otherwise requires, any removed content need not be preserved.

 - D. 6.5 Record Retention/Open Records Act/State Law
 - 6.5.1 Department social media sites and their contents are subject to State of Texas laws, including but not limited to laws on record retention and public information.
 - 6.5.2 When responding to open records requests or to document subpoenas, department director or designee will include in their search for responsive document the contents of department social media sites in addition to all other records locations.
 - 6.5.3 The department director or designee maintaining a social media site shall preserve records required to be maintained pursuant to relevant records retention schedules for the required retention period on a city server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. The records thus maintained are the official record copy for retention requirements. Departments shall not rely on hosting entities as the primary mechanism for maintaining and disposing of city records.
 - 6.5.4 Contents related to city business shall be maintained by the director or designee in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to an open records request or legal discovery. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Users shall be
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notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the relevant department records retention coordinator. Records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the approved city platforms.

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