Social Media Internal Organizational Usage

Policy No.: ADM-7	**Council Resolution No.:** 120/2022
Department: Administrative	**Authority:** Council
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Review Date: March 2025	**Repealed Date:** N/A
Supersedes: Social Media Policy CS-IT-3	
Related Procedure No.: ADM-7	
Related Procedure Name: Social Media Internal Organizational Usage	

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This policy governs the publication of social media commentary on social media venues by employees, volunteers, and Mayor and Council of the Town of Taber.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Social Media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

2.2 The Town of Taber supports the use of social media to further the strategic direction and goals of the organization. Social media provides additional tools and channels that can complement traditional communications and marketing methods and mediums.

2.3 The Town of Taber will build its presence on social media sites and use social media tools with adequate consideration given to:

2.4 Ensuring efforts align with the Town's Strategic Plan, Corporate Values and policies;

2.4.1 Identifying the fit within business and communications/marketing plans and objectives;

2.4.2 Understanding the benefits, implications and risks in using social media.

2.5 Legitimate business use of social media should benefit the organization by advancing the following goals:

2.5.1 Building a positive image for the Town of Taber;

2.5.2 Increasing mind share and awareness of the organization by reaching large audiences at low monetary cost;

2.5.3 Improving client satisfaction in order to receive more timely and personal service in the medium that they prefer and will be more satisfied;

2.5.4 Gaining citizen insights to monitor public opinion about the Town of Taber and its services;

2.5.5 Networking with professionals to maintain business contacts or maintaining contacts with members of professional organizations and their standards;

2.5.6 Reducing the cost of servicing clients to quickly and efficiently respond to customer service issues.

2.6 In their capacity as private citizens, Town employees, volunteers and Council members have the same rights of free speech as other citizens, however the Town of Taber expects that they will not represent the Town of Taber on their own personal social media sites or comment about the Town's operations.

2.7 Employees are bound by the official Oath of Confidentiality, the Employee Code of Conduct, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy, and must not disclose any Town information or content that they are not specifically authorized to disclose.

2.8 Volunteers are bound by the official Oath of Office for their respective volunteer assignments and must not disclose any Town information or content that they are not specifically authorized to disclose.

2.9 Acting as a private citizen, a Town employee must use a private email address and make every reasonable effort to make it clear that their contribution to social media sites is as a private individual, and not as a representative of the Town.

2.10 The Mayor and Councillors are bound by the official Oath of Confidentiality, the Council Code of Conduct, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Municipal Government Act and the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy and must not disclose any information or content that they are not authorized to disclose.

2.11 Council members who use social media to carry out their political work (rather than in their private capacity) must adhere to all laws, bylaws, policies, and procedures.

2.11.1 Council members who use social media platforms to create an official Councillor or Mayoral profile must ensure that their use of social media does not put the Town's security, reputation, or information at risk.

2.11.2 Council members must not use their @taber.ca email address to create social media accounts.

2.11.3 Council members shall be held personally responsible for the content they publish on their own political social media platforms and shall not hold the

Town of Taber responsible or liable for any content placed on their own platforms.

2.11.4 Council members can be involved in political debate and state their own opinions on their political social media platforms. All actions on Council members' political social media platforms must be done with respect. Bullying, hatred, bigotry, disrespect, harassment, and otherwise bringing Council, the Town of Taber, or Town Administration into disrepute are all prohibited and are subject to disciplinary action to be decided on by Council as a whole and through the guidelines as outlined in Council's Code of Conduct Bylaw.

2.11.5 Council members must not act, claim to act, or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of Council as a whole on their political social media platforms. Council members using social media must make clear that their actions and opinions on social media are their own.

2.11.6 Council members may not represent themselves as anything other than their official title and capacity on their political social media platforms (for example, stating you are the Mayor when you are not the Chief Elected Official).

2.11.7 Council members may not publish or report on meeting discussions that are held during closed session on social media, regardless of the profile being public or private.

2.11.8 Council members may not use the official Town of Taber logo on their social media platforms.

2.11.9 All media used on a Council member's social media profile(s) must follow copyright laws and best practices regarding privacy, rights, and permissions.

2.11.10 Any Council member's political social media platform shall not be promoted by the Town of Taber official social media platforms. The Town of Taber does reserve the right to like or share content that is posted to official Council social media accounts if the post is deemed to be of informational value to the community as a whole.

2.11.11 During an emergency situation, Council shall adhere to best communications practices and allow the municipality and/or the Emergency Operations Centre, Director of Emergency Management, and/or the Information Officer section to release emergency information on official social media channels. As a best practice, it is encouraged that during an emergency situation, Councillors share the official platforms so citizens know which platforms/profiles will have the most up-to-date information. This will reduce the confusion of citizens reaching out to their elected officials during an event where it is critical citizens seek the information from the proper channels.

2.11.12 Once an elected official's term comes to an end, they must delete or rename their political social media platforms to reflect that they are no longer a sitting member of Council within two weeks of their end of term.

2.11.13 If an elected official resigns from their position, they must delete or rename their political social media platform to reflect that they no longer hold a position on Council within two weeks of the resignation.

2.11.14 If Councillors do not know the process of deleting a social media page, help from Administration will be provided upon request.

2.12 Council shall acknowledge that it is Administration's role to release information on Town news, announcements, projects, events, and other relevant items, and shall not circumvent that duty unless specifically given authorization to do so by a resolution of Council.

2.12.1 To this end, Council members shall never release information on their own social media accounts (whether private profiles or public pages) prior to Administrative Staff releasing the information to the public.

2.12.2 A best practice for the above would be to share official Town of Taber posts after they have already been released.

2.13 Mayor and Council shall have no authority to direct the content, administration, creation, or usage of any official Town of Taber social media profiles except for those directions that are outlined in official Town bylaws, plans, policies, or procedures. Council will acknowledge it is Administration's role to determine best practices for social media communications with citizens and to determine which (if any) platforms will serve the same.

2.13.1 Council may provide ideas for content (such as providing pictures of official duties, event attendance, etc.), but on the understanding that those ideas shall be considered by Administration, and not necessarily implemented, as there are schedules of content created by Administration to coincide with budgets, events, and other various projects the Town of Taber undertakes.

2.13.1.1 Council members are encouraged to use their own platforms (if they have them) to post their attendance at various events instead of requesting they be placed on the Town's official platforms. The Town's official platforms are best used to promote events/announcements where Council as a whole attends, instead of singular elected officials.

2.13.2 Council members at all times must respect all privacy and copyright laws and legislation in regards to all pictures and content they provide to Administration for social media considerations. This includes obtaining the consent of all individuals in pictures (or guardians if they are under the age of majority).

2.14 Committees and/or volunteers of the Town of Taber shall have no authority to direct the content, administration, creation, usage, or naming of any Town of Taber social media accounts.

2.15 The Town of Taber's only role during a municipal election period in regards to social media will be to promote the election itself, and will not be used to further the campaigns of current or prospective members of Council.

2.15.1 No sharing of any content for prospective members of Council shall occur on any official Town of Taber social media channels at any time.

2.15.2 To safeguard a fair and equitable election period, effective August 31st of an election year, all links, likes, follows, and sharing of any content with a current Mayor or Councillor shall be stopped on all official Town of Taber social media channels until the Organizational Meeting for the newly elected Council.

2.15.3 The Town of Taber reserves the right to delete any comments or links posted to its pages or social media posts from any persons seeking election or promoting the official channels of those seeking election in order to maintain neutrality during the election and to avoid the Town of Taber official social media platforms becoming a campaign tool.

2.15.4 The only exceptions to the above shall be the following:

2.15.4.1 In the event of a State of Local Emergency, Emergency Centre Operation Activation, or community crisis that requires public acknowledgement from a current member of Council. What constitutes a community crisis shall be determined by the Chief Elected Official, Chief Administrative Officer, and/or the Director of Emergency Management in collaboration with Town of Taber Communications and/or Information Officer and with the input from the current Chief Elected Official at the time of the emergency;

2.15.4.2 A large announcement for a project, funding, partnership or service that involves the Federal or Provincial Governments and requires Council to take part in a photo opportunity, media event, or announcement;

2.15.4.3 An event/announcement of such uniqueness that it requires the Mayor and/or Council to provide comment or participate in an event that will receive coverage from the municipality. What is considered such a unique event will be at the joint discretion of the Chief Elected Official, Deputy Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer and the Communications Coordinator exclusively.

2.16 This policy and its corresponding procedure may be superseded at any time by the Director of Emergency Management and/or the official Information Officer of the Town of Taber's Emergency Operations Centre during official activations of the EOC and surrounding an activation of a State of Local Emergency.

2.17 This policy is in addition to and complements existing policies regarding the use of computers, information management, technology, electronic media and associated services, email, and the internet social media access and use involving the Town's Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy.

2.18 Administration shall establish procedures for this policy and shall be responsible to ensure the spirit and intent of the policy is adhered to.

3.0 ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- Employee Code of Conduct Policy No. CS-HR-3
- Town of Taber Oath of Confidentiality
- Town of Taber Oath of Office
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Council Code of Conduct Bylaw

MAYOR	Apr. 13, 2022 **DATE**
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	April 7/22 **DATE**