



# **CITY OF BONIFAY**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

CREATED: 6.22.2023

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## **Purpose**

This policy sets forth guidelines for the establishment and use by the City of Bonifay (the “City”) of its social media sites (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo, et al.) as a means of conveying the City-related information to its residents, employees, and visitors. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is published on behalf of the city on its social media sites.

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by City officials and employees when engaged in City business. Social media at this time refers to the City’s website and its Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo and any other communication that is open to response or comment. Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the City are properly authorized and in correct form; that communications to the municipality by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent; that all communication to the municipality is related to the posted municipal information; and that the sender is clearly and fully informed that a message received by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

For purposes of this policy, “social media” is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. For purposes of this policy, “comments” include information, articles, and pictures.

## **Scope**

This policy shall apply to all Municipal departments and/or agencies. The City of Bonifay appreciates that social media can be a rewarding way for employees to share information about themselves, and to interact with people in the community and around the world. Because City employees serve the public, however, and potentially are subject to public scrutiny for their on and off-duty conduct, use of social media carries with it risks and responsibilities of which employees must be aware. This is especially true for those employees who are employed in a supervisory or managerial capacity, although it applies to everyone. This policy sets forth the City’s guidelines on employee social media usage.

Employees are solely responsible for what they post on social media. Remember that many postings can be viewed worldwide and are archived “forever,” meaning that they cannot be deleted once posted, or are archived even if deleted and that seemingly “private” posts can easily be shared with a wide audience via a single contact in your closed network. It is also easy to capture short lived messages (like Snapchat) and rebroadcast them in a more permanent format despite the originator’s intent.

## **General Policy**

The objective of the use of social media by the City and its departments is to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information from the City to its residents, taxpayers and the general public.

1. No City social media site shall be established without prior approval of the City Council.
2. The City social media sites shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the City and that they follow this Social Media Policy.
3. Wherever possible, the City social media sites should link back to the official City website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City.
4. Social media accounts established by the City or a City agency are to be used for City and agency business purposes only.
5. City social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the City, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, giving notice required by any statute or responding to official City correspondence.
6. This social media policy shall be available for public viewing on the City website, [www.cityofbonifay.com](http://www.cityofbonifay.com).
7. The City Clerk and or designee shall monitor City social media sites to ensure adherence to both this Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the City. The City has the right and will restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on the guidelines will be retained by the City Clerk pursuant to the applicable City retention policy, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
8. The City website, [www.cityofbonifay.com](http://www.cityofbonifay.com), will remain the City's primary and predominant internet presence.
9. Employees and volunteers representing the City's government via its social media sites shall, at all times conduct themselves as a representative of the City and in accordance with all its policies.
10. All City presence and activity on social media are an integral part of the City's information networks and must comply with all rules and policies governing the City's computers and electronic media.
11. All City use of social media is responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and county laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Open Public Record Act (OPRA), First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Municipality.

12. All Social Media sites must clearly indicate that all Posts are subject to public records laws.

13. All City policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the City.

14. Social media sites are operated by a third-party agency separate from the City. The City reserves the right to disable its social media accounts either temporarily or permanently at any time. In the event of a discontinuation of a social media site, documentation related to the site will be maintained in accordance with records retention guidelines.

15. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by the City of Bonifay.

### **Comment Policy**

1. As a public entity the City must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.

2. The intended purpose behind establishing the City social media sites is to disseminate appropriate information to residents, employees and visitors.

3. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City.

4. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the City's internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrator will be subject to prosecution.

5. The City reserves the right to deny access to its social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Bonifay Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.

6. All comments posted to social media websites are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of the operating programs that govern those sites.

7. All comments posted to City social media pages will become part of official public record and may be accessible via Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests.

### **Prohibited Content**

1. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on City social media.

2. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on the City's social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the City Communications Team:

a. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language, or sexually suggestive or explicit content links to such materials. Any image or link containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situations will be reported to law enforcement.

b. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.

c. Defamatory attacks.

d. Threats to any person or organization.

e. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale.

f. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law.

g. Illegal activity or encouragement of same.

h. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.

i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright. The City does not permit or allow copyright infringing activities and/or infringement of intellectual property rights on its website or social media sites and will remove or modify any and all content and submissions if properly notified that such content and/or submission infringes on another's intellectual property rights.

j. Private contact information such as names, addresses and phone numbers no matter how easily obtained elsewhere. Personal information of a person other than the poster.

k. Spamming or repetitive content.

l. Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a City media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old. Parents are responsible for any minor child's posting or comments.

m. Content that incites violence.

n. Comments unrelated to the particular post being commented upon.

3. The City Clerk and or designee may be required to remove postings on City social media sites deemed to constitute a breach of Policy. In the event of removal, those postings will be subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements.

### **General Policy for Personal Social Media Use**

1. Be thoughtful about how you present yourself in all Social Media, where the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Also understand that what you are posting online may very well become public knowledge.

2. If you choose to identify yourself as a City employee on a personal or non-work related Social Media site, take care to make sure the reader understands that you are expressing your own personal views and not those of the City. For example, wherever appropriate, use a disclaimer such as, "This is my personal opinion and not necessarily the opinion or position of the City of Bonifay."

3. Employees' personal Social Media sites should remain personal in nature and should not be used for work-related purposes. Employees should not use their City email account or password in conjunction with a personal Social Media account.

4. Refrain from accessing personal or non-work related Social Media sites while on work time.

5. In keeping with the City's Communication Policy (City of Bonifay Personnel Policy Handbook – Chapter 11 – Sections 7, 8, and 9), Employees may not use City-owned property (computer, network, etc.) to access personal or non-work related Social Media sites.

6. Some ethical obligations must be followed at all times, even when employees engage in Social Media use in their personal capacities. For example, employees should not disclose confidential information acquired by the employee by reason of the employee's official position.

7. Employees are not prohibited from using social media to communicate with each other about pay and working conditions. However, employees must avoid posting material about work that reasonably could be construed as malicious, obscene, or threatening, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

### **Violations of Policy**

Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Duty to Report**

All employees have an ongoing duty to report any violations of this policy by any other employee. The City of Bonifay considers this duty to report to be a critical component of its efforts

to enforce this policy, and thereby ensure the safety, well-being, morale, and efficiency of its employees, preserve its reputation and goodwill in the community, and avoid or minimize unnecessary disruptions to or interference with its operations and service to the public.

## **Terms of Use Disclosure**

### **A. Information Disclaimer**

By visiting this site, you understand and agree that this City of Bonifay website is provided “AS IS”. The City of Bonifay makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information on this website. The information contained herein is not official nor in any way shall it be deemed to constitute legal notice where such legal notice is required by law. The information contained in this site is provided as a service and convenience to people needing information about the City of Bonifay. The City of Bonifay, its officers, employees or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use or provision of information, including but not limited to damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy or timeliness of any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing or copying of those materials.

### **B. Linking Policy — Links to External Sites**

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### **C. Copyright and Trademark Limitations**

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### **D. Use of Material**

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**E. Unauthorized Modifications**

Unauthorized attempts to modify or otherwise alter any information or image stored on any City of Bonifay website may result in criminal prosecution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date