

DRAFT

Common Council member Social Media Policy – PHASE 1

For purposes of this policy, “social media” is defined as an internet platform that allows users to create a page, account or similar presence for the user to post and share information, photos and other digital content for viewing, sharing, commenting and interaction with other users or subscribers to the platform, who may have to take steps to connect, join or follow the user, resulting in a connected social network.

Examples: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit (?) Tik Tok, What’s App, Nextdoor.

Not social media: a blog site without a comment feature, any of the City of Madison’s official websites, a personal or business website, a shopping website. News websites may have social features such as the ability to comment which relies on a third-party social media platform.

During Phase 1, Alders may have an official City Facebook page and/or Twitter account to be used solely for official council business of that alder. No other City-supported social media accounts will be allowed.

A social media page or account is an “Official City account” if:

- The account is set up directly by city staff with the account ownership / contact person being a city employee.
- The account is set up with an official City email address, other contact info is City info.
- The password for the account is managed by City staff
- The page or account is capable of being transferred to future elected officials in the same aldermanic district by a City employee, OR renamed for a newly-elected official in the same district. (check to see how this works. Would a constituent want to follow the new alder? would they rather opt-in or opt-out?)
- The name of the page/account is formatted as follows: _____ (decide formal naming convention for both FB and Twitter)
- Creating an account for the first time requires agreement with legal t’s and c’s of the social media platform. For official pages to be maintained by the City, the IT director must authorize specific employees to click to agree to those terms. (see APM 3-20, Resolution creating the EULA process and Facebook Resolution.)
- Other:

Policies for Alders’ Official Facebook pages and Twitter accounts during Phase 1.

1. Only the alder or (designated city staff) shall have access to the page/account for purposes of posting on that account.
2. The alder shall ensure that no one else is allowed to log onto and post on the alder’s official account.
3. Pages shall be public to join - no criteria is required to join, like, or follow the page or account.
4. Pages or account “home” shall prominently feature a link to the official Common Council webpage and an official city email address to contact the alder directly.
5. Page or account “home” shall include any other mandatory content and follow any other formatting or style conventions required by the City of Madison for that social media platform.

6. Pages shall prominently feature any *social media comment policy* of the City or of the Common Council, if deemed enforceable by the City Attorney's Office (see below).
7. Page shall feature a standardized disclaimer approved by the City Attorney (TBD) to explain that it is a public page, the City and alder are NOT responsible for the content of any comments made by visitors to the page, comments do not reflect the official views of the alder, the Common Council, the City of Madison or any of its officers or officials. (final language TBD.)
8. Alder posts shall be for purposes of one-way communication and information sharing.
9. Alders shall only post informational items relevant to their district and City government. Posts can be original content of the alder, or shared from the following sources:
 - a. Other City of Madison official social media pages (not including other alders' pages.)
 - b. City of Madison official website(s) including the websites of individual departments and divisions of the City.
 - c. Public Health-Madison and Dane County's official website and social media pages
 - d. Community Development Authority of the City of Madison's official website and social media pages
 - e. Official websites and social media pages of Dane County, State of Wisconsin, the U.S. government, and agencies thereof.
 - f. All other posts shall be the original material of the alder and not shared, copied, or re-tweeted from any other source.
10. The page / account shall be configured so that only the alder (or their designated staff) can create an original post. No other user, friend, or followers of the page should be able to create their own original post on the page or share posts or any other content to the page.
11. **Tagging.** Alders should be able to set privacy settings on FB so they cannot be "tagged" by others, such that other people's posts will show up on their page. If that is not possible, alders should be able to set privacy settings so they cannot be "tagged" without permission. (First – check to see if this applies for an official govt page. Discuss whether they should have the ability to agree to be tagged.)
12. **Commenting.** On Facebook - comments cannot be turned off for visitors to the page (confirm this is the case for the type of page selected for alders.) Alders shall refrain from using the comment feature. This means:
 - a. Do not answer questions posted in the comments, other than with a canned response: "Thank you for your comment. Comments on this page are not monitored. Please feel free to email me at: _____" or call at "____". (Decide on a standard response and use that consistently.)
 - b. Alders shall not engage in any back and forth with commenters on the post.
 - c. Alders shall not type a comment for any reason other than to provide the canned response in 12.a.
13. **Twitter** specific policies (insert similar rules from par. 12 for Twitter)
 - a. Retweeting
 - b. Commenting
 - c. What else?
14. **Private messaging and Direct messaging:** Alders shall not use the PM or DM features on these platforms. If these features cannot be disabled, Alders should look into setting up an automatic response similar to that used for comments. If automatic responses cannot be set up, decide

whether to ignore all private messages or respond manually to all messages with the canned response that includes email or phone contact info.

15. **No blocking.** (unless an enforceable policy is devised)

16. **No deleting or hiding of comments** (unless an enforceable policy...)

Specific issues:

17. Use of photos other than the alder's own original photos?

18. Use of other copyrighted material or other IP of others

19. No campaign activities for the alder or any other political candidate for office or cause on the ballot.

20. No promotion of commercial businesses, whether your own or other's.

21. No use of City resources or facilities for personal gain (get actual rule.)

22. **No promotions of nonprofit organizations? DISCUSS. How do alders handle these requests now? Do you promote these things via your official email, blog, etc.?**

- a. If the alder is willing to share / retweet nonprofit events or announcements relevant to their district – be prepared to do this for Any and all organizations that come calling...
- b. Is there a difference if the alder writes their own post about the event?
- c. Is there a difference if the alder says "I am going to this event" vs. promoting it to others?
- d. OR make a rule that the page will only be used to share government announcements

23. **Open meetings** – Alders may follow, like, or join another alder's page but shall not comment on another alder's page. This is to avoid creating an online walking quorum or other open meetings law violations. (confirm whether sharing a post from another alder, or retweeting is OK.)

24. **Public Records** - records will be maintained by City staff as required by applicable retention schedules by virtue of the page being an Official City Page or Account. (confirm with IT how this is done –is it automatic or require action by the staff who will be supporting these pages.)

Decorum and civility by alders:

Alders shall ensure their own posts follow any policies for decorum and professionalism applicable to members of the City of Madison Common Council. (are there any?)

[PLACEHOLDER – Alders shall likewise follow the City's current social media comment policy = if an enforceable policy is approved by the OCA.... This is under review. See below.]

Page moderation:

Options: #1 no comment policy in place, because cannot be constitutionally enforced in this type of a public forum. page will not be moderated, users will not be blocked, comments will not be deleted or "hidden." Include disclaimer at top of page so people realize this.

Option #2 - Update policy in place - only unprotected speech. Decide who will moderate and how often, train that person, will be time consuming and require nuanced legal decision-making to moderate.

Option #3 – since these pages are just starting - begin with a strong comment policy that goes beyond unprotected speech (such as hate speech and off-topic) monitor very closely to maintain a

limited public forum status. Decide who will monitor, how often, train that person, will be very time consuming and require nuanced legal decision-making.

Option #4 - Have voluntary “community standards” and encourage everyone to follow them and self-monitor, but inform them that the city is not moderating the pages, warn for triggering content, we are not responsible for such content, and have prominent disclaimer that the views expressed here are not the city’s.

All of the options will require the general disclaimer that views expressed in the comments by visitors to the page are not the views of the Alder or of the City of Madison or its officers, officials, agents or employees.

Tips and Suggestions for effective use of social media – see other “tips” documents being worked on.