Common Council Social Media Pilot Policy

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~~: What social media is NOT: a blog site without a comment feature (whether or not the blog offers an email subscription to receive updates), any of the City of Madison's official websites, a personal or business website, shopping websites, news websites.

During Phase 1, only Facebook and Twitter will be used by alders. 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[1] 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 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.
- The name of the page/account follows an official naming convention established by the City.
- The public-facing portion of the alder's social media page directs visitors to their official City of Madison email address, City website, etc. (not the alder's personal email address) using standards to be established by the City.
- Setting up a social media account requires agreement with legal terms and conditions of the social media platform. Only the IT Director can authorize City employees to click to agree to those terms. (See APM 3-20, Resolutions [47764](#) and [59191](#)). Protocols for setting up and managing accounts will be established by City IT and the Council office.
- Examples of what is NOT an Official City account: any social media account/page/presence created by the alder on their own, not created through the City of Madison and not managed by City staff using the steps above.

<u>Pilot Phase eligibility and expectations:</u>

- Eligibility for Phase 1: for Facebook, alders must already have or will set up a personal User Account. For Twitter, no pre-existing presence is needed.
- Phase 1 Expectations for support: alders will be expected to generate and post their own content; City IT and Council Office staff are not able to publish content on behalf of alders or monitor their pages/accounts.

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[1] Depending on the platform, the word "account" and "page" mean different things. On Facebook, a user must set up an account before they can have a Page. On Twitter, the user only has an account. This policy will distinguish them when necessary, and otherwise use "account" generically to refer to the alder's social media presence.

Alders' Official Facebook pages and Twitter accounts - Pilot Program POLICIES

1. An alder may have an Official City Facebook page and/or Twitter account to be used solely for official council business of that alder.
2. The alder shall not allow anyone else to access their account, shall not share login or passwords to the alder's official page or account, other than with designated city staff per this policy.
3. Pages/accounts will be public, with no restrictions on who may join, like, follow or view the alder's page or account (other than requirements of the social media platform itself.)
4. The account/page must disable the ability of visitors to make posts, so that only the alder (or designated city staff) will have the ability to post content to the alder's page/account.
5. **Page/account design:**
   a. Facebook functionality choices: City IT and Council Staff will develop **technical guidelines for staff,** where many of these details will be found. Alders must adhere to the following:
      i. Alders' official City of Madison Facebook presence will be in the form a "**Page**," (not a "People" profile) in the category of "**Government Official**". https://www.facebook.com/help/135275340210354/?helpref=hc_fnav
      ii. **Turn off reviews.**
      iii. Do not **connect** your Page to other, non-official City social media accounts you might have such as Instagram.

   b. Twitter accounts will be set up according to standards defined in the staff technical guidelines and alders shall not change the account settings.
   c. Page configuration changes will be made by City staff according to staff technical guidelines from City IT.

6. **Naming conventions**:   Staff will set up the page/account according to the technical guidelines, including these minimum requirements:
   a. Facebook Page name format: City of Madison Alder District 15 (no personal names)
   b. Twitter handle and display name format: naming convention must incorporate district number, not use personal names, and should be standard for each alder's twitter account.
   c. Make sure any separate account alder uses for campaign purposes can be easily distinguished, does NOT follow the above naming conventions, is clearly identified as an account for campaign or election purposes, and follows any further guidance issued by the City.
7. **Mandatory content**. The alder's social media page must include:
   a. Link to the alder's official City district webpage.
   b. Alder's official City email address.
   c. A link to any current, approved, "social media comment policy" of the City of Madison or of the Common Council, if such policy exists.
   d. Approved, standardized disclaimer approved by the City Attorney to inform visitors that:
      i. it is a public page/account
      ii. City and Alder are NOT responsible for the content of any comments made by others.

        iii.   Comments by others do not reflect the official views of the alder, the Common Council, the City of Madison or any of its officers or officials.

    e.   Any other mandatory content required by the City for that social media platform.

    f.   The page shall follow any other formatting or style conventions established by the City for the applicable social media platform (to be put in the technical staff guide.)

8. **Operation of the page**.
   a. **Comments**: On Facebook Pages, commenting cannot be turned off. Therefore, the alder will have no control over what others say in the comments beneath their post.
   b. **Responding to comments**: See Guidelines, below.
   c. **No deleting or hiding of comments** until / unless the City Attorney approves a policy for the same, and then only in compliance with such policy.
   d. **No blocking of users** (i.e. blocking a person from viewing/accessing your account or page) until / unless the City Attorney approves a policy for the same, and then only in compliance with such policy.
   e. **PM and DM** - see Guidelines, below.
   f. **Page moderation / enforcement of any social media comment policy.** Any policy for moderation of comments and visitor content shall be consistent with the City's approved social media comment policy, if any.

9. **No campaign activities** for the alder on their official City social media page, or any other political candidate for office or cause on the ballot, because City resources cannot be used for this. **Sec. 3.35(5)(b), MGO.**

10. **No promotion of commercial businesses**, whether yours or others, or use of the page for personal financial gain. The City Code of Ethics applies:
    a. **MGO 3.35** https://www.cityofmadison.com/attorney/documents/EthicsCodeSimplified.pdf
    b. See also paragraph 5 of **APM 3-13**

11. **No misuse of City resources**. Use of an Official City social media account under this Policy, whether accessed on a personal device or City-owned computer, constitutes use of City resources. Therefore, alders participating in this pilot agree to follow the following APMs:
    a. **APM 3-9** Appropriate Use of Computer Network Resources:
    b. **APM 3-13** Web Linking Policy

12. **Open meetings** – Alders may follow, like, or join another alder's page. Do not engage with another alder or City Board, Committee or Commission (BCC) member on your page, or take any other actions interacting with another alder or BCC member's social media that would create a walking quorum, negative quorum or other open meetings law violations.

13. **Public Records** - Records will be maintained by City staff as required by law and applicable retention schedules, by virtue of the page being an Official City Page or Account. If an alder deletes or edits their own post or content, the alder must take a screen shot of the original version and retain a copy as part of their duties as Records Custodian of their own records. If an applicable social media policy of the City allows for editing or deleting comments of visitors to the page, the alder must take a screenshot and store the original version(s) before editing or deleting, and retain a copy. This policy may be revised if it is determined that the platform will save and make deleted or edited posts and comments available for future retrieval.

Pilot Program GUIDELINES

Alders should keep these guidelines in mind when using their Official City social media account:

1. **Commenting**: Alder pages are intended as a medium to deliver communications and share information about topics of interest and relevance to the alder and their constituents and city business, rather than a forum for back and forth discussion among visitors to the page. During Phase 1 alders will use their best judgment in participating in the comments.

    a. Alders may choose not to engage in comments at all, and instead provide a canned response such as: "Thank you for your comment. Comments on this page are not monitored. Please feel free to email me at: _____" or call at "_____".
    b. A decision <u>not</u> to use comments must be consistently applied by that alder.

2. **Interaction with other platforms**: Be aware that some websites, including news sites, payment processors and other web-based services offer the option to log in or leave comments using your social media account. Be careful not to log-in or comment on any site with your Official City of Madison page/account. Likewise, when logged into a social media platform, be aware of whether you are using your Official City Page or your personal account or page.

3. When **sharing** others' posts or **retweeting**, keep in mind the source. If unsure whether to share or retweet something, refer to the Web Linking policy, **APM 3-13.**

3. If alders choose to **promote or share a nonprofit organization, event, etc**., alders should make decisions according to the City's **ethics code** and **web linking APM 3-13.** *(examples would be helpful – what would be allowed vs. what would not be allowed)*

4. **Tagging, mentioning, following, etc.** Become familiar with how these features work and be aware that your page or account might be tagged, mentioned, shared, etc. without your permission.

5. **Private messaging and Direct messaging**: Alders should avoid using the PM or DM features on these platforms. If these features cannot be disabled, Alders should set up an automatic response similar to that used for comments (directing people to the alder's city email where records can be maintained for public records purposes.) If automatic responses cannot be set up, decide whether to ignore all private messages or respond manually to all messages with a canned response instructing the sender to contact the alder via email or phone.

6. **Decorum and civility:** Alders shall ensure their own social media posts and content follow:
    o any policies for decorum and professionalism applicable to members of the City of Madison Common Council *(Is this going to be defined, examples added)*
    o any applicable, **approved** social media comment policy of the City of Madison.

7. **Tips for effective use of social media:** Alders may refer to guides prepared by City IT for effective use of social media (designed for City departments.)

<mark>Expiration of this Pilot program</mark>:   This pilot program policy can be changed or ended by action of the CCEC.

We have a policy currently around mailing (communications) and I think that this could/would eventually over social media communications:

Mailings that are considered an improper use of city funds

- ❑ Campaign literature or mailings designed to improve one's political position directly or indirectly. (Any contact with your constituents - whether through mailings, public meetings or other means - may, of course, indirectly improve an Alderperson's political position. However, any personal/political benefit should be incidental to the main purpose of the contact).
- ❑ Mailings to special interest groups that are primarily for political purposes (e.g., political parties, political action groups, pro-/anti-organizations, or environmental groups).
- ❑ "Thank you" notes of a personal or political nature.
- ❑ Opinion polls that do not deal solely with pending legislation.
- ❑ Mailings solely for a neighborhood association (e.g. neighborhood association meeting agenda).
- ❑ Any solicitation for funds or contributions.
- ❑ Mailings pertaining to proposed developments on behalf of the developer. (An alder may call a meeting in their district that deals with a proposed development.) Council staff may provide labels, at the request of the alder, to the developer to mail meeting notices.