



VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
BOARD POLICY MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Social Media Policy

No. 5.K

By: Board of Trustees

Approved: October 18, 2018

I) PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The Village recognizes the role that social media plays in the personal lives of Village employees, elected and appointed officials and committee members. However, personal use of social media can have an impact on Village operations and personnel in an official capacity. This policy provides precautionary guidance on the use of social media, as well as prohibitions on individual use of the Village's social media sites.

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communications, *social media* can mean many things. For purposes of this Policy, *social media* includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to one's own or someone else's blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity website or application, web bulletin board or chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with the Village.

II) USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OFFICIAL VILLAGE BUSINESS

Only persons designated by the Village Manager shall publish official Village related content on Village social media sites. Village employees, elected and appointed officials and committee members shall not publish official content relating to Village business or Village-related matters to Village social media accounts, unless they have been authorized to do so by the Village Manager.

III) PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Village employees, elected and appointed officials and committee members who choose to maintain or participate in social media for personal use shall conduct themselves with professionalism and in such a manner that will not negatively reflect on the Village or its mission. In most cases, social media posts will be seen by a public audience, and deleting posts is not a reliable way to remove them from the public domain. It should be assumed that the public is reading your words, viewing your photographs, no matter how secure or obscure the site to which a posting is made may seem. Keep in mind that anyone can take a screenshot of online activities and distribute them beyond their intended audience.

Posting on social media may bring the public spotlight to a post. Make sure that you are expressing views that you would feel comfortable discussing or defending publically.

Village employees, elected and appointed officials and committee members are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships within the Village; impede the performance of their Village related duties; or negatively affect the public's perception of the Village. To that end, the following guidelines should be followed when using social media for personal purposes:

- A) Personal use of social media must not be attributable to the Village or the individual's affiliation with the Village. While individual use and comments on social media sites are subject to First Amendment protections, as well as permissible restriction, any personal use made of social media sites outside of work must not be attributable to the Village or the individual's function at or in relation to the Village.
 - a. Do not use a Village e-mail address to register for social media or other sites unless the purpose is directly related to your job and you have been authorized to do so by the Village Manager;
 - b. Do not display the Village seal or other official logos, emblems or patches on personal social media accounts;
 - c. Do not discuss any Village related information or business that is not considered public information. The discussion of sensitive, proprietary or confidential Village business is strictly prohibited. If there are questions about what is considered confidential, Village employees, elected and appointed officials, and committee members should consult with the Village Manager;
 - d. Do not state or imply that you speak for the Village, for a Village department or Village officials.

- B) Profile Professionalism. If you are identified as an employee, agent, committee member or an appointed or elected official of the Village in your social media profile, or you have a public facing position for which your Village association is known to the public, ensure your profile and related content (even if it is of a personal and not an official nature) are consistent with how you wish to present yourself as a Village professional and appropriate based upon the public trust associated with your position. Individuals should have no expectation of privacy when using social media.

- C) Use a disclaimer. Where you publish to a blog or some other form of social media, make it clear that your views and opinions are your own and not necessarily the views and opinions of the Village. Unless you are specifically authorized by the Village Manager to speak on behalf of the Village, consider the following disclaimer on blogs or social media where you identify yourself as a Village employee: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the positions, strategies, or opinions of the Village of Lombard."

- D) Village employees, appointed officials and committee members shall use caution when engaging in online debate or dialogue on social media regarding specific Village projects, policies or plans. While Village employees, appointed officials and committee members have the right to discuss and comment on matters of public concern as private citizens, individuals or organizations should be directed to Village resources and encouraged to contact Village personnel via phone or e-mail to discuss specific Village projects, policies or plans.

- E) Personal Conduct. Do not engage in vulgar or abusive language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive terms targeting individuals or groups. Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of social media conduct to avoid include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

- F) Political Use. Elected officials who use the same social media for communicating with constituents as they do for campaigning risk violating the law prohibiting use of government resources for political purposes. Elected officials who use social media for campaigning shall establish separate non-Village social media for that purpose and shall not access social media used for political purposes by using government technology.

- G) Using Social Media At Work. Village employees may, on occasion, utilize social media and the web for personal matters in the workplace. Employees may engage in incidental personal use of social media in the workplace so long as such use does not consume significant time or resources, interfere with operations and productivity, or violate Village policies.