



Tanya D. Lane
Town Manager

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

Thursday, April 26, 2018

Town Hall

Conference Room L-101

131 Cedar Street Newington, Connecticut 06111

5:30 P.M.

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
IN NEWINGTON, CT

2018 MAY -7 PM 3:42

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely of the Town Clerk, positioned above the printed name "Town Clerk".
Town Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting was called to Order by Councilor Serra at 5:37 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

- Councilor Arace (5:53 P.M.)
- BOE Member Branda
- Councilor Manke
- Councilor Serra
- James E. Krupienski, Recording Secretary

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- None

IV. DISCUSSION/PROPOSED SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE

- Commission members discussed prior language changes that were proposed.
- Members discussed applicability of Town Policies to appointed/elected officials.
 - Councilor Arace suggested addition of possible enforcement actions for applicable violations
- Discussion took place on how/where enforcement actions would be handled through.
- Discussion took place regarding the use of personal devices by appointed officials and the applicability of the Freedom of Information Act and how the record might be preserved.
- Discussion took place regarding acknowledgement of receipt of information.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- i. Councilor Manke, seconded by BOE member Branda, moved a motion to approve the January 17, 2018 and April 12, 2018 Special Meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. SCHEDULING OF FUTURE MEETING

- Subcommittee scheduled next Special Meeting as May 16, 2018 at 5:45 P.M. in the Council Chambers, Room L-101

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- Councilor Serra, seconded by Councilor Manke moved a Motion to Adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.
- Meeting Adjourned at 6:54 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Krupienski
Recording Secretary

TOWN OF NEWINGTON SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTED AND
ELECTED BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Social Media Guidelines

I. Policy:

- A. **Introduction.** The Town of Newington (the “Town”) depends upon an environment of tolerance and respect for the achievement of its goals in serving the citizens of the Town.
- B. **Purpose.** The purpose of this is to provide expectations and guidelines to appointed board, commission and committee members and elected officials that their use of social media must conform to the law and this policy. This policy is designed to promote and govern the professional and personal use of social media in a responsible manner and to avoid uses that can: (1) breach confidentiality by revealing protected information about the Town, its citizens, or its employees; or (2) interfere with productivity and/or ability of Town employees to perform the duties and responsibilities as Officials of the Town.

II. Definitions:

1. The Town: Town of Newington.
2. Official: An individual who holds office in the Town, whether elected or appointed.
3. Social Media: Online forums in which individuals participate in the exchange of ideas, messages, and content, including but not limited to, blogs, microblogs, and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter).
4. Electronic Media: All forms of electronic communication, transmission, or storage, including but not limited to, websites and any content contained therein or related thereto.

III. General Provisions:

- A. While Officials may maintain and use personal web pages and websites, blogs, microblogs, social networking sites and other forms of social media while off-duty, their

status as Officials of the Town requires that the content of any postings on those social media sites or other web pages not be in violation of existing Town by-laws, policies, directives, rules or regulations. The Town's image as a professional organization comprised of professionals is critical to maintaining the respect of its constituents. Although the Town recognizes that Officials may choose to express themselves by posting personal information upon electronic media sites through personal websites, social networking sites, blogs, microblogs, chat rooms, or other electronic means or by making comments upon electronic sites hosted by other persons, groups or organizations, this right of expression should not interfere with the operation of the Town. That is, although the Town acknowledges its Officials have the First Amendment right to free speech, the right is not absolute and extends only to matters of public concern. Therefore, Officials should exercise caution with respect to comments they post, particularly those concerning the Town and the business of the Town.

B. This section describes guidelines and expectations of all social media by Officials.

Officials should use their best personal judgment when using any form of social media and must ensure that their use does not violate this or any other Town policy.

C. All use of social media is subject to the following conditions:

1. Use of the Town's electronic communication devices including, but not limited to, Town-issued email accounts, Internet services, Intranet, Town-owned lap tops and computers provided for remote use, and computer software constitutes acceptance of such monitoring. Content maintained electronically is also subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Town of Newington Freedom of Information Policy.
2. All Officials are expected and required to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Town's policies and standards of conduct.

3. Officials must not reveal any confidential or privileged information about the Town, its constituents, or its contractors. Officials must be particularly careful to protect against the inadvertent disclosure of confidential information (i.e., Executive Session material).
4. Officials must not harass others in contravention of the Town's Acceptable Use Policy, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Policy, and Policy Prohibiting Harassment, regardless of the time, place, form, or manner in which the information is posted or transmitted. Comments may be deemed to violate these Guidelines even if the Town's name or the name(s) of any individual is not specifically referenced.
5. Officials should be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if they make a mistake must correct it quickly. Officials should not post any information or rumors they know to be false about the Town, its employees, constituents, officials, suppliers, vendors, contractors or any other entities or individuals. Although errors cannot always be erased, prompt notification can make a significant difference in the Town's ability to correct or remedy the issue.
6. Officials may express only their personal opinions and should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for the Town, their board, commission or committee unless designated to do so. If the Town is a subject of the content created by an Official, the Official should be clear and open about the fact that he/she is an Official of the Town and should make it clear that his/her personal views do not represent those of the Town, or its employees, officials, suppliers, vendors, or any other agent of the Town unless designated to do so.

7. Officials who publish blogs or other online posts related to their role with the Town should make clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Town (unless designated to do so).
8. Officials must also recognize that posting content regarding Town-related matters may result in the violation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Officials should consult the Boards, Committees and Commissions Booklet (BCC) provided to them by the Town Clerk's Office for more information. Town Attorney may also be consulted subject to the prior approval of the Town Administrator.
9. Officials are expressly prohibited from using social media to engage in any activity or conduct that violates federal, state, or local law (e.g., software or data piracy, child pornography, etc.).
10. Officials are prohibited from using social media to engage in any activity that constitutes a conflict of interest.
11. Officials must be mindful that residents, property owners and others appearing before Town boards or committees come from all walks of life. Public comments, in any forum, that contain racial slurs, express bigotry toward a group based on their race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or any other legally protected classification shall be considered conduct unbecoming a Town Official and shall constitute good cause for removal for any appointed Official.

D. Beyond the above general provisions, appointed and elected board/committee members are strongly encouraged to consider the impact of their statements before making them. The Town strives to be professional in its operations and processes. Posts that suggest a likelihood of more or less favorable treatment toward any individual or group of individuals, e.g., based upon race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, reflects

poorly on the individual making an inappropriate statement as well as the Town and its citizens. Further, comments suggesting such treatment can expose the Town to liability and legal costs. All are strongly encouraged to carefully consider their comments before posting them.

IV. Complaints or Problems of Misuse:

Should any Official receive or become aware of a violation of this policy, the Official should report the violation to the (??????). The Town prohibits taking action against anyone for reporting a possible violation of this Policy or for cooperating in an investigation.

V. Questions:

Anyone who is unsure whether a particular posting or contribution to online social media violates this policy is encouraged to ask the Town Manager or Town Attorney.

VI. Discipline.

Violation of this Policy may constitute good cause for removal of appointed Officials under the Newington Town Charter, Chapter 412. A failure to enforce these Guidelines does not constitute a subsequent waiver of any violation of this Guideline. This Guideline shall be read and interpreted in conjunction with all other Town policies and procedures.