



Village of New Paltz

Social Media Policy

Introduction

The Village of New Paltz recognizes the value of social media in connecting with our constituents and encourages the use of social media to further the Village's mission and goals of outreach, public dialogue, open government, and sustainability.

Policy Scope

This Policy is intended to guide Village Officers, Officials, Employees, and all members of the Village's various Boards, Commissions and Councils using social media in performing authorized work for the Village. This Policy does not apply to any of the aforementioned individuals' personal use of social media.

Definitions

Social Media: Media created to be shared freely across different web publishing platforms, including social media and/or new media tools and applications.

Procedure & Guidelines

Access and Administration:

- All Village of New Paltz Boards, Committees, Commissions, Councils, and Departments are welcome to maintain an official social media presence using any number of social media tools and applications; if such a presence (e.g. a Facebook page) does not already exist, all Village Boards, Committees, Commissions, Councils, and Departments are welcome to create such a social media presence, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, and for the sole use of sharing fact-based, non-political, non-partisan information that is germane to the mission and goals of the Village.
- An official Village email must be used to create such a social media presence for these purposes. Administrative access (e.g. usernames, passwords, publishing privileges etc.) to any such social media tool must be at minimum disclosed to the Clerk's Office, as well as the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- This policy must be shared in full or via a link on any Village social media tool or application.
- No social media platform utilized by Village Boards, Committees, Commissions, Councils and/or Departments shall be considered to be official posting places or means of

formal notification for any Village business, including, but not limited to, announcements regarding utilities or public safety, meetings notices, public hearings or election matters. The Village of New Paltz website, the official newspaper(s) and the official posting places designated by the Board of Trustees are the only official sources of notification with respect to Village business.

- Regardless of which Board, Committee, Commission, Council or Department may maintain a social media platform, the New Paltz Village Board of Trustees reserves the right to remove or edit content contained thereon that it deems inappropriate for any reason in the sole and absolute discretion of the Board of Trustees, whether such content is posted by an individual acting on behalf of the Village or by a member of the public.

Interactive Communications/Commenting:

A Village or agency social media site or page may be considered a “limited public forum” under the First Amendment if visitors to the site are able to post comments or other communications.

If interactive communications (e.g. comments) are permitted, the following terms of use apply:

- Comments are not considered formal public comment.
- Communications posted by visitors on this site may not contain ethnic slurs or profanity; material that is harassing, defamatory, fraudulent, discriminatory or sexually explicit; or any material that infringes copyright, trademark or other intellectual property rights. Any such communications may be removed at any time without notice.
- This site is not owned, controlled, or operated by the Village or Village agency. Visitors to the site must comply with the terms of use and privacy policies of the site operator, and are subject to the site operator’s practices regarding the collection and retention of passive information (e.g. cookies) and other information from and about visitors.
- Any advertisements appearing on the site are not controlled by the Village or the agency and do not reflect endorsement by the Village or agency.
- Opinions expressed by visitors to the site do not reflect an endorsement or opinion on the part of the Village or agency.

All social media postings are prohibited from containing any of the following:

- Information about actual or potential claims and litigation involving the government.
- The intellectual property of others, without written permission.
- Photographs of employees or members of the public, without written permission.
- Defamatory material.
- Any personal, sensitive or confidential information.
- Obscene, pornographic or other offensive/illegal materials or links.

- Racist, sexist, and other disparaging language.
- Sexual comments about, or directed to, anyone.
- Political campaign materials or comments.
- Threatening or harassing comments.
- Other information that is not public in nature.

Use of Social Media for Polling of Public

As many social media platforms offer the ability to gather public opinion, the Village recognizes and encourages the solicitation of public feedback while also acknowledging that any data collected is only representative of the users of that particular social media platform and may not represent a similar percentage of all Village residents. All polling is to be determined by a majority consensus of the Board, Commission or Council that will publish the information, with one board member tasked with crafting appropriate verbiage that meets the standards as defined within the Village's social media policy, as well as any additional standards listed within the policy for that particular social media platform.