

Social Media Policy

Town of Hamburg, New York

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment and use by the Town of Hamburg of social media sites (including the official Town of Hamburg website) as a means of conveying Town of Hamburg (“Town”) information to its citizens. The intended purpose behind establishing Town of Hamburg social media sites is to disseminate information from the Town, about the Town, to its citizens and visitors and as an alternate and additional means of communication including during emergency situations.

Definitions

1. Administrator is the person responsible for reviewing, approving, uploading information on a social media site and for ensuring adherence to both the Town’s Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town.
2. Comment/postings include information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted on a Town of Hamburg social media site.
3. Department Sites shall mean social media sites that are created for a specific town department or division of a specific town department and are meant to convey information regarding only that town department.
4. Employee shall mean an employee, officer or official of the Town of Hamburg.
5. General Site shall mean social media sites that are created for the Town of Hamburg as a whole and may contain information generally related to the town and/or information from any or all the various town departments.
6. Social media is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet on approved sites as delineated in this policy.

General Policy

1. The establishment and use by any Town department of Town social media accounts/pages are subject to approval by the Town Board. The administrator of the site must provide the name and hyperlink of the site to the IT Department within fifteen (15) days of approval by the Town Board.

2. The allowable social media sites used as official Town of Hamburg sites are limited to include only: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Website.
3. General Town of Hamburg sites shall be administered by the Town Board's designated administrator. This administrator will monitor, approve and post content on the general town social media sites. The administrator will ensure adherence to both the Town's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town. The administrator will be appointed from time to time by the Town Board and shall serve at the pleasure of the Town Board
4. Departmental sites are to be administered by the department head of that department. The department head shall be responsible for all content on the site and shall ensure the content adheres to both the Town's Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Town.
5. Departmental sites may link or share information posted on any other approved Town of Hamburg social media site. Sharing of information from other sites does not absolve the department head from ensuring the posted information adheres to the Town's Social Media Policy.
6. Town social media sites should make clear and conspicuous statements that they are maintained by the Town of Hamburg and that they follow the Town's Social Media Policy. Postings on the Town's social media may only be written by Town personnel and approved by the administrator of the site.
7. Comments by the general public shall not be considered for regulatory purposes as official correspondence with the Town. All official correspondence with the Town shall be made by written communication to the Town's mailing address or through electronic e-mail to the Town electronic address.
8. Wherever possible, Town social media sites should link back to the official Town of Hamburg website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the Town of Hamburg.
9. Administrators shall not recommend or promote any private service or product.
10. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the administrator for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.
11. These guidelines, if possible, shall be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
12. The Town will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.

13. All Town social media sites shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
14. Employees representing the Town government via Town social media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Town using the highest standards relative to decorum concerning language and content and in accordance with all Town policies.
15. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by the Town board.
16. Social media sites are subject to the records retention rules and regulations of the State of New York and the government of the United States.
17. The Town's Social Media Policy shall be reauthorized yearly at the Town's organizational meeting held in January.
18. Any Department may add additional requirements to its own internal departmental policies that are not in conflict with any of the provisions herein.

Comment/Postings Policy

1. As a public entity, the Town must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner. Comment/postings containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on Town of Hamburg social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the administrator:
 - a. Comments/postings not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comment/postings;
 - b. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
 - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, national origin, gender, physical and mental disability, family status, military status, or source of income;
 - d. Defamatory or personal attacks;
 - e. Threats to any person or organization;
 - f. Comment/postings in support of or in opposition to any political party, campaign, or candidate;
 - g. Comment/postings in support of or in opposition to ballot measures, policy proposals or other official government actions except when such ballot measures, policy proposals or other official government actions are initiated and/or directly related to the government of the Town of Hamburg;
 - h. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
 - i. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;
 - j. Encouragement of illegal activity;

- k. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - l. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.
2. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Town of Hamburg social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Town of Hamburg, nor do such comment/postings necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Town of Hamburg.
 3. The Town of Hamburg reserves the right to deny access to Town of Hamburg social media sites for any individual, who violates the Town of Hamburg's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
 4. Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comment/postings requesting responses from the Town and for comment/postings in violation of this policy.
 5. When an administrator responds to a public comment, the comment shall be limited to factual information only.
 6. Employees shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Town employees on town of Hamburg social media sites.
 7. All comment/postings posted to any Town of Hamburg Facebook site are bound by Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>, and the Town of Hamburg reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action.
 8. Town business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure.
 9. It shall be understood that the Town of Hamburg's Social Media sites are not maintained 24/7 and immediate responses to any requests via post, email etc. may not occur.

Restrictions

1. It shall be a violation of town policy for any employee or officer of the Town of Hamburg to post content on any personal social media site while that employee is at work or otherwise on town time.
2. It shall be a violation of town policy for any employee or officer of the Town of Hamburg to post on any social media site information that violates employee's or officer's obligation under the Town of Hamburg Code of Ethics.

Penalties

Any employee who fails to comply by the standards and rules of this policy shall be subject to discipline in accordance with Town of Hamburg work rules.

Effective Date

This policy shall become effective immediately.