

## **TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL**

### **PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **I. Purpose**

The Town of Front Royal encourages this community to share, connect, and discover all that the Town has to offer. The Town embraces social media as a forum to educate citizens, increase access to Town services, encourage community engagement and raise community awareness. Social media provides a real time method for the transfer of information. The purpose of establishing official Town social media is to broadcast, announce and share Town information that is useful to the public and the citizens of the Town of Front Royal.

#### **II. Town Staff Publishers**

Publisher(s) of the Town's social media page(s) will be assigned from within Town staff employees by the Town Manager or his/her designee . Duties of the Publisher(s) include serving as the lead contact, development of the framework for posting information and responding to comments/questions, adhering to policies, and ensuring the social media site(s) is updated regularly. Only assigned Town staff will serve as Publishers. Volunteers, interns, contractors and committee/commission members are not eligible to administer official accounts or serve as Publishers unless authorized by the Town Manager or his/her designee. Elected officials will not serve as Publishers.

#### **III. Town Staff Publishing/Posting Guidelines**

- A. Publishers should ensure that the information posted is clear and concise. The information should be relevant and timely in that it helps citizens and pertains to their daily lives and/or pertains to deadlines and/or events.
- B. Publishers should not use or publish statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage citizens, members, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Town Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and county laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, and information security policies established by the Town.
- C. Publishers will not post information about pending or threatened litigation; nonpublic information of any kind; or personnel or confidential information of any kind. Publishers should use a timestamp on any time-sensitive information so that it is clear when it was published. Use a template such as: 08/14/15, 10:33 a.m.: *(message)*.

#### **IV. Citizen Comments**

- A. Citizens should report an issue or concern to the Town on the form provided at [www.frontroyalva.com](http://www.frontroyalva.com) or by contacting Town Hall at 540-635-8007, and it will be routed to the appropriate Town Department for action. Social media is not the appropriate channel to report issues or concerns.
- B. Comments posted by the public may disagree with Town Policy and will not be removed on that basis.
- C. Comments from residents and members of our community are welcome on social media sites and will be monitored daily during working hours.
- D. Town Publishers may remove comments based on the following guidelines: (1) vulgar, obscene, or profane language; (2) defamatory or personal attacks of any kind; (3) comments or content that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination or ridicule on the basis of race, ethnicity color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability or sexual orientation; (4) advocate illegal activity; solicitation or promotion of particular services, products, or political organizations; (5) information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations; (6) sexually explicit comments or references; (7) is internet- or email-spam; (8) advocates or depicts illegal activity; (9) contains threats, personal attacks or defamatory statements; (10) promotes or endorses private business ventures, services, or products; (11) campaigns for public office or promotes a political organization; (12) infringes on copyrights, trademarks, personally identifiable medical information or other legal rights of others; (13) content depicting the abuse of alcohol or use of illegal drugs; (14) Information that compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems. (15) In addition, the Town reserves the right to remove material containing computer viruses or which otherwise may disrupt, damage or restrict the use of any computer software, hardware or telecommunications equipment.
- E. Content that is designated as inappropriate by the Town may be removed from public view, and a record of the content and the reason it was removed shall be retained pursuant to the appropriate records retention schedule.
- F. The Town reserves the right to ban or block repeat offenders of this Social Media Policy.
- G. Comments that meet the above criteria will be preserved as a record by the Town and then deleted. Publishers should take screenshots of the original post and the comment that will

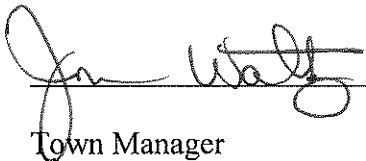
be deleted. A description detailing why the comment was removed will be maintained by the Town with the record.

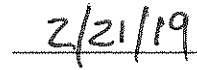
- H. If Publishers choose to reply to comments, the reply should be factual and not an opinion.
- I. Replying to comments may take coordination with other Town Departments. Publishers are not expected to reply to comments outside normal working hours.
- J. Town staff and officers who are not designated as Publishers should refrain from commenting or responding to posts on the Town's social media sites. This will avoid confusion as to the formal position of the Town as it relates to postings.

**V. Additional Information**

If you have questions about this policy, please contact the Town Manager or Town Attorney at 540-635-8007.

Approved:

  
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Town Manager

  
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Date