

*MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE  
RESOLUTION*

Date: 7 Sept 2021

49/2021

MOVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

SECONDED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS** Committee of the Whole at their meeting held on August 3, 2021 considered a Staff Report regarding Social Media Policy;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Council adopt the Social Media Policy attached hereto as Appendix "A" and authorize staff to make any administrative modifications necessary to renumber and/or consolidate within current administrative policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Bob Sanderson

<b>Social Media Policy</b>		Effective:	Sept 7, 2021
		Approved:	Sept 7, 2021
<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Social Media</b>	By-law:	n/a
Section:		Resolution:	49/2021
Application:	All Employees	Supercedes:	n/a

## Policy

Municipality of Port Hope main corporate websites (porthope.ca and visitporthope.ca) are the primary sources of online information exchange with the public and are the Municipality’s official internet presence. The Municipality also uses social media to enhance communication and information-sharing with the public and other audiences. It is the policy of the Municipality of Port Hope to support and promote the use of social media as a tool to deliver effective and accessible communication about municipal news, programs, and services to the community. Social media tools offer many benefits, including:

- sharing information on programs, services, and news to a wide audience.
- promote/market the Municipality online to local, regional, and national audiences.
- disseminate time-sensitive and emergency information quickly; and
- increase civic engagement by providing an additional tool for the public to communicate with the Municipality.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines and standards to ensure the appropriate use and management of social media on behalf of the Municipality of Port Hope.

## Scope

This policy applies to all Municipality of Port Hope employees and elected officials who make public statements on municipal social media sites and social networks that discuss, share or comment on the Municipality of Port Hope. This policy also applies to members of the public who use, comment or post on municipal social media sites and social networks. The policy applies to all social media channels as defined in this policy.

Appendix A includes a list of current social media accounts owned and operated by the Municipality of Port Hope. This appendix will be updated on an as-needed basis to align with the current social media tools and platforms being used by the Municipality.

Municipal employees must comply with all employment-related obligations in both their personal and professional activity, including standards for workplace behaviour, privacy,

confidentiality, conflict of interest, nonpartisan services, and political activity. These obligations apply to social media use, even on accounts unaffiliated to the workplace. The Municipality of Port Hope as the employer must comply with legislation that regulates workplace behaviour, such as the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

## Definitions

**Accessibility** or **Accessible** means the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, environment) can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to ensure it is barrier-free to persons with a disability, and by extension, highly usable and practical for the general population as well.

**Corporate Account** means the Municipality of Port Hope's primary social media account within each of the selected Social Media channels, that provides communication for all municipal departments and functions, and is managed, maintained, and populated by the staff member designated to be responsible for the corporate accounts by the Communications division.

**Council** or **Councillor** means the Council of the Municipality of Port Hope and any individual elected member of the Council of the Municipality of Port Hope.

**Department Head** means the CAO or a Director of a department of the Municipality of Port Hope, and who is a member of the Senior Management Team.

**Employee** means any person that is employed by the Corporation of the Municipality of Port Hope. This includes all classifications of employees as defined in the Employment Classifications Policy.

**Information Technology (IT) System** means all electronic communication devices used by the Municipality of Port Hope Council, employees, or contractors which include, but are not limited to, all computer and telephone networks, devices and applications as well as mobile devices (e.g. tablets, smart phone devices).

**Objectionable Material** means content that contradicts the principles established by the Ontario Human Rights Code or materials of a pornographic, profane or sexually explicit nature, as well as content that may offend based on race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, creed, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, family status, religion or disability.

**Official Record** means any record of information however recorded, whether in printed form, by electronic means, or otherwise includes: Correspondence, a memorandum, a

book, a plan, a map, a drawing, a pictorial or graphic work, a photograph, a film, a microfilm, a sound recording, video recording, a machine-readable record (or capable of being produced from a machine-readable record), any other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and any copy thereof.

**Online Communication** means the exchange of information using the Internet or mobile communication network for any purpose (e.g., information sharing, marketing, public engagement, etc.).

**Separate Account** means a social media account set up by a municipal department, board, or committee that is in addition to the Corporate Account. Separate accounts are managed, maintained, and populated by the Social Media Account Administrator of the department/board/committee. The account is owned by the Municipality of Port Hope and will remain with the Corporation after employment ends.

**Social Media** means the various online, accessible communication channels or technologies that enable individuals to join and/or participate in online communities for the purpose of publicly sharing information, ideas, messages, pictures, etc. These channels can include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, SnapChat, Tic Tok as well as blogs, mobile applications, websites, photo boards, discussion boards, or any other online location where commentary is publicly shared and attributed to the corporation, an employee, or elected official.

**Social Media Account Administrator** means any employee designated by the Municipality of Port Hope to maintain a particular Corporate or Separate Social Media Account, including writing and publishing content and monitoring, managing, and measuring account activity.

**Tourism Account** means the Municipality of Port Hope's tourism social media account within each of the selected Social Media channels, that provides communication for all tourism-related functions and is managed, maintained, and populated by the staff member designated to be responsible for the tourism accounts by the Tourism division.

**Transitory Record** means any record that has temporary usefulness and is only required for the completion of a routine action or until superseded.

**Trolling** means the activity of making deliberately offensive or provocative online posts with the aim of upsetting someone, eliciting an angry response and/or encouraging unproductive discussion.

## **Policy Administration**

### **Assigning Social Media Account Administrators**

The Municipality of Port Hope Manager, Communications, in consultation with the Director, Corporate Services is responsible for designating the role of Social Media Account Administrator.

Where possible, staff in the Communications division are designated as the Social Media Account Administrator for each Corporate or Separate account that exists. These staff are responsible for posting, monitoring, and maintaining the account on behalf of the Municipality, department, board, or committee. In some cases, an alternate Administrator can be identified.

### **Account Creation & Management**

Before creating a corporate social media account or adding a new social media channel, discussion must occur between the Social Media Account Administrator, Manager, Communications, Director, Corporate Services, and any other applicable staff on the need for and benefit of a new account and/or channel. Adequate resources, including staff time and material, must be available for the creation of a new account.

Before creating a separate account for a department, board or committee, employees must obtain permission from the Manager, Communications and/ or Director, Corporate Services if deemed appropriate.

Any corporate or separate social media account established by the Municipality of Port Hope prior to the adoption of this policy will be reviewed by the Social Media Account Administrator(s) for use and management compliance to this policy. Any significant recommendations occurring from this review should be forwarded to the Director, Corporate Services for their review and decision.

### **Acceptable Use of Social Media by Account Administrators**

Social Media Account Administrators are permitted to engage in social media activity for corporate purposes. Social Media Account Administrators must use judgement managing time and balancing the integration of social media within their overall work plans.

#### **I. Maintenance**

Social Media Account Administrators must maintain accounts to ensure they are kept current and relevant to the public. Social media accounts with frequent periods of inactivity (six weeks or more without new information) will be brought to the attention of the Social Media Account Administrator for discussion on continuation. This does not apply to any seasonal accounts (if applicable).

Social Media Account Administrators must undertake regular audits of social media comments to ensure inappropriate postings are removed in a timely fashion (e.g., commercial advertisement, disparaging remarks).

## II. Purpose and Use

Social media should be used as a communications tool for the intent of enhancing communication from the Municipality to the public about programs and services for the following purposes:

- Raising awareness and sharing information
- Recruiting volunteers and employees
- Promoting municipal events, programs, and services
- Increasing access to information for specific audiences
- Promoting opportunities for public involvement and comment on the Municipality's online engagement platform [www.myporthope.ca](http://www.myporthope.ca).

Where possible, municipal social media posts should link back to the municipal website for the purpose of downloading forms, documents, and providing specific or additional information.

Municipal social media accounts must comply with rules and guidelines set out in the municipal Brand Guidelines document.

## III. Conduct

Social Media Account Administrators using social media on behalf of the Municipality will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, including:

- Post accurate, credible, and consistent information and links that are consistent with the Municipality's information, messages, brand identity, and policies. Staff are responsible for the accuracy and relevancy of any information forwarded to the Social Media Account Administrator for posting.
- Strive for transparency and openness, including when deemed necessary, identifying their name and position within the Municipality.
- Publicly correct any information in a timely manner that has been communicated and found to be in error, using the same platform it was produced.
- Post content in a manner that is discreet, does not disclose confidential information or release personal or corporate information, without prior consent. Social Media content must take the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Act (MFIPPA) into consideration.

- Must not engage in offensive language, respond in a confrontational manner, or post content that is not professional or that contravenes municipal policies and the Municipality's Code of Conduct Policy (By-law 12/2019) and the Standards of Conduct Policy 6.6 (By-law 58/2020).
- Must not use corporate accounts to express personal opinions or further personal agendas.
- Ensure proper protocols and permissions are obtained for posting any copyrighted material (including documents, websites, logos, images).
- Ensure security of social media accounts is maintained, including password and login information.

Where possible, each social media account used by the Municipality should contain a disclaimer clearly advising visitors to the site that third party comments are not official communications of the Municipality of Port Hope. The disclaimer should also note that the Municipal Website is the official destination for municipal information and that social media accounts are regularly monitored Monday to Friday during regular operating hours.

Disclaimer example:

“Comments made by members of the public are not official communications of the Municipality of Port Hope and are owned by the contributing commenter. These comments are not reflective of the Municipality's views, opinions, and/or policies.

This page is primarily monitored during regular operating hours, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. The Corporate website at [porthope.ca](http://porthope.ca) should be used as the official resource for municipal information.”

In order to ensure that information can be exchanged readily with the customer and the Municipality, customers requesting a response to a non-routine inquiry will be required to provide name, home address, telephone number and email address to municipal staff. Failure to provide the requested contact information will result in the request not being processed.”

#### IV. Sharing/Re-posting Content

The Social Media Account Administrator may share or re-post content from a social media account that is not owned by the Municipality of Port Hope when:

- a) The post connects the public to information and services provided by upper tier governments or government-funded agencies or boards in Canada.
- b) Provides further information on subject matter found on the Municipality's website. Such information must be provided by an official and/or accredited source.
- c) The post shares information about a municipally affiliated organization, service club or registered charity (direct partnership by way of funding, sponsorship, staff resources or in-kind contributions).
- d) The post is from a business improvement area or Chamber of Commerce operating within the Municipality.
- e) The post is shared by a professional association as determined by staff
- f) Any organization approved by Council and/or the CAO.

Any posts that include links to a personal account/website, individual business account/website (except when part of a Municipal website business directory and/or Heritage Business Improvement Area or Chamber of Commerce), political party/candidate account/website, or objectionable material as defined in this policy must not be shared or reposted on a municipal social media account.

Additionally, Social Media Account Administrators may share social media content promoting events that are:

- a) Organized or funded by another level of government.
- b) Organized by a government-funded agency or board.
- c) Organized by a Municipality of Port Hope affiliated organization/group.
- d) Funded in full, or in part, by the Municipality of Port Hope.
- e) Sponsored by the Municipality of Port Hope.
- f) Organized by a registered charitable organization operating within the Municipality of Port Hope or the County of Northumberland.



- g) Organized by a service club operating within the Municipality of Port Hope performing work that benefits Port Hope residents.
- h) Organized by the Heritage Business Improvement Area or Chamber of Commerce for general promotional purposes.
- i) Located in a facility owned by the Municipality of Port Hope.

Any posts that promote events that are for individual businesses (except members of the Heritage Business Improvement Area or Chamber of Commerce), include objectionable material, do not comply with municipal, provincial, or federal legislation, are political in nature, or promote an individual religion or religious service must not be shared or reposted on a Municipal social media account.

#### V. Records Management and Retention

Posts/user content deemed to be Official Records must be retained and purged according to the Municipality's Records Management Program (By-law 30/2017) and comply with appropriate sections of the MFIPPA.

Posts/user content that is considered a Transitory Record of the Municipality is not required to be retained and may be purged from social media sites.

#### **Personal Use of Social Media by Councillors and Employees**

Municipal employees who are not Social Media Account Administrators are not permitted to publish or comment via social media in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with or as representatives of the Municipality of Port Hope and any such content is not endorsed by the Municipality.

Incidental or occasional personal use of social media on personal or workplace devices is allowed, providing such limited use will not result in any measurable expense to the Corporation in time, material, or productivity, and is subject to the limitations of this policy.

#### I. Conduct

The Municipality expects all employees and Councillors who use social media to do so without breaching their duties to the Municipality and adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct.

Employees and Councillors should consider the following:

- Even if you do not explicitly identify yourself as a Municipal employee or Councillor, others may identify you as an employee or Councillor by your name, your place of

work, a photograph, or by the content you post.

- Identifiable Municipal employees should make it clear that their position does not officially represent the Municipality’s position. Use phrases such as “in my personal view” or “Personally...” to communicate that you are expressing personal views.
- Do not use visual cues that suggest you represent the Municipality. Do not post Municipally owned logos, photographs, graphics, or other media without the Municipality’s explicit authorization.
- Do not circulate any organizational or confidential information, such as internal deliberations about how decisions are made, personal information, such as stakeholder or employee information, or negative comments about the Municipality of Port Hope, Councillors, employees, or residents.
- Do not disparage or embarrass the Municipality, individual Councillors, employees, or others associated with the Municipality.
- Do not engage in workplace discrimination or harassment, or activity that includes inappropriate comments, photographs, links, etc. pursuant to the Workplace Violence, Harassment and Discrimination Policy 6.7 (By-law 20/2021).
- Overall, employees and Councillors are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on and-off duty. Even when an employee does not publicly associate themselves with the Municipality on social media, all materials associated with their page may be perceived to reflect upon the Municipality.

Further, employees and Councillors should not expect confidentiality or privacy in relation to their online activities as they pertain to the Municipality of Port Hope. Within a traditional legal context, it has generally been found that that posting content on social media sites about an employer is considered a publication and not private activity. Councillors and employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online as it relates to the Municipality.

## II. Municipal Councillor and Other Government Accounts

If a Councillor, MP, or MPP representing the Municipality of Port Hope, Northumberland County, or the Northumberland-Peterborough South riding has a personal social media account, the Municipality’s social media accounts are permitted to like/follow the account. Accounts belonging to municipal Councillors must be created and maintained by the Councillor and not Municipal employees.

The Municipality’s social media accounts are permitted to share/re-post content from posts belonging to a Councillor or the Municipality of Port Hope or Northumberland County, or a representative of the Northumberland-Peterborough South riding if the content does not clearly promote or criticize a political party, candidate, or ideology. Appropriate sharable content includes, but is not limited to, community events, funding announcements, bill/law announcements, etc. Overall, Social Media Account Administrators should use their best judgement when sharing/re-posting content belonging to a municipal Councillor, MP, or MPP.

Effective January 1 of an election year (the beginning of the Nomination Period), all links, likes/follows, and sharing of content with a Councillor, MP, or MPP site shall be stopped and removed until the Inaugural Meeting of the newly elected Council or Legislature is complete.

### **Security and Monitoring of Corporate Use**

#### **I. Information Technology**

Municipality of Port Hope Information Technology (IT) staff may facilitate a request to monitor and oversee social media accounts and may:

- Allow internet access to an authorized user.
- Limit or prevent unnecessary functionality within social media sites.
- Enable technical risk mitigation controls, including filtering and scanning files exchanged with social media sites.

All information created on Corporate and Separate social media accounts using municipal technology is the property of the Municipality of Port Hope. Reasonable technological and procedural measures, including auditing and random monitoring of social media accounts, will occur to ensure adherence to corporate policies and standards.

#### **II. Log-in and Password Management**

The Municipality of Port Hope’s Corporate and Separate social media accounts are owned by the Municipality. The Director, Corporate Service will have full “Administrator” access privileges to social media accounts.

All credentials and details for Corporate and Separate accounts must be communicated to the Municipality’s IT staff. The Municipality’s IT staff will maintain a master list of the Municipality’s social media login information. Password changes must be immediately communicated to IT staff.

Accounts created to represent the Municipality of Port Hope must be associated with a valid municipal email address (@porthope.ca).

### **Citizen Conduct**

Users and visitors to the Municipality's social media accounts/pages should be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a communication platform and information-sharing tool between the Municipality and the public.

A hyperlink to the Municipality of Port Hope Social Media Policy will be posted on the respective social media account/page where possible.

The Municipality reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts, images, and comments) from social media accounts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unproductive content, the Municipality may ban/block the user from the site at the discretion of staff and may take other action that could lead to legal consequences.

Further, posts and comments on other social media pages not necessarily owned by the Municipality with inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content may also result in the Municipality blocking / banning the user from posting on municipal channels and could result in legal consequences.

Comments, posts, or articles containing the following content on any social media channel, page or site (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts, websites (myporthope.ca, visitporthope.ca), blogs, etc.) will not be allowed:

- Comments not topically related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon.
- Account spamming, trolling or over posting.
- Posts that are meant to solicit sales, products, or goods and services.
- Profane, aggressive, hateful, defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive or violent language or content.
- Content that includes or includes links to objectionable material, as defined in this policy.
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Information that may compromise the privacy, safety, or security of the Municipality, public, or public systems.
- Comments or posts that includes inaccurate material or misrepresent facts as known by the Corporation.
- Comments or posts that impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, municipal staff or municipal officials.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Municipality of Port Hope is not responsible for any comments or use of material posted by users.

### **Legal**

Comments and content uploaded to a social media account may be permanently available for viewing and printing and can be republished in other media without the Municipality's permission.

As a result, Social Media Account Administrators must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and data protection laws are adhered to.

All Corporate and Separate social media accounts must adhere to applicable provincial, federal, and local laws (i.e. copyright laws, the Privacy Act, etc.) regulations, and policies, including other applicable municipal policies.

Any content removed based on the guidelines in the Citizen Conduct section will be retained by the Social Media Account Administrator, and have supporting documentation, including the time, date, identity of poster, reason for removal, and any required incident reporting.

### **Social Media Measurement**

The Social Media Account Administrator will produce a bi-annual report (June, December) of analytics on the Municipality's social media accounts to the Director, Corporate Services. Reporting performance measures should include:

- Twitter – overall followers, new followers, number of tweets, number of replies, impressions, engagement rate, retweets, link clicks, favourites and top performing tweets.
- Facebook – likes, engaged users, reach, top posts, shares, comments and demographics.
- Instagram – followers, impressions, hashtag usage, reposts.
- YouTube – views, likes, dislikes, comments, shares and demographics.

### **Policy Communication**

This policy will be communicated internally with staff and posted on the municipal website for public use. The policy will also be hyperlinked onto the Municipality's social media accounts, where possible. This policy will be available to staff on an ongoing basis and as part of the new Councillor orientation sessions.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed once per Council Term or more often as needed.

**Compliance**

In cases of policy violation, the Municipality may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

Employees may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for violating this policy.

Members of Council may be subject to action for violation of the Code of Conduct.

These guidelines provide additional information to assist in ensuring compliance with legislation and supplement existing Municipality of Port Hope policies and directives that may apply when an employee uses social media in their personal life or as part of his or her professional responsibilities.

These guidelines do not address every situation related to social media. Employees should use their best judgment when using social media, both personally and professionally. When in doubt, seek clarification from your manager or supervisor.

## **Appendix A**

### **Municipality of Port Hope Corporate Social Media**

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/MunicipalityofPortHope>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/municipalityofporthope/>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/PortHopeInfo>

YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/municipalityofporthope>

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/2288610/admin/>

### **Municipality of Port Hope Tourism**

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/porthopetourism>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/exploreporthope/>

### **Fire and Emergency Services**

<https://twitter.com/PortHopeFire>

This appendix will be updated on an as-needed basis to align with the current social media tools and platforms being used by the Municipality.