



Communications and Social Media Policy

Monday, August 6, 2018



Communications & Social media Policy Table of Contents

Overview	Page 1
Purpose and Scope of Policy	Page 1
General Communications Procedures	Page 1
Media Relations	Page 2
Media Inquiries	Page 2
Media Notification	Page 2
News Briefings or News Conferences	Page 3
Emergency Media Relations	Page 3
Photo Opportunities	Page 3
Appearances and Interviews	Page 3
Guidelines for Acting as Private Citizens	Page 3
External Communications	Page 4
Speaking Engagements	Page 4
Promotional Events	Page 4
Informational Meetings	Page 4
Advertising	Page 4
Email Etiquette	Page 5
Public Information Requests	Page 5
Social Media Policy	
General Procedures/Use of Social Media.....	Page 6
City's Primary Social Media Pages	Page 6
Standards for Operating and Maintaining a Social Media Presence	Page 6
City's Social Media Pages Adhering to Content Standards	Page 7
Interacting on Social Media	Page 7

Accuracy and Timeliness	Page 8
Timeliness and Response	Page 8
Responding to Comments	Page 8
Removing Comments	Page 9
Correcting Mistakes	Page 10
Conduct	Page 10
Personal Use of Social Media	Page 10
Elected Officials and Officials Appointed to City Boards, Commissions and Committees	Page 11
Appendix A	Page 12
Appendix B	Page 14



Communications and Social Media Policy

The following policy supports the City of Johnston's Communications and Social Media Policy and describes how individuals should formally participate in external communications with media including social media platforms.

1. Overview

The City of Johnston's official website, located at www.cityofjohnston.com, will remain the City's primary online source for communicating information to the public, however, the City sees a business need to use social media as an additional form of communication to promote programs, events, services, and to represent itself appropriately and consistently on the internet. Social media technology allows news of an event to spread quickly and is a good forum to facilitate public discussion.

A social media presence is yet another way government can communicate to the broadest audience of those it serves and also provides residents the ability to communicate with their government pursuant to the terms of this policy.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

Purpose: To provide expectations and requirements of how employees, appointed and elected officials should conduct themselves when interacting with the media and on social media sites regarding topics relating to the City.

This policy provides guidelines for the City of Johnston to keep the media and the public fully, fairly and accurately informed of programs, services, events and issues in a timely and forthright manner. Efficient and effective communication with the media and the public is critical to the City of Johnston's ability to present information in a manner consistent with Johnston City Council policies and philosophy of open government. Coordination, uniformity, accuracy and timeliness are cornerstones of strong and productive public relations.

Coverage: The following policy covers the City's social media presence and use of social media sites such as, but not limited to; blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Scope: This policy applies to all City of Johnston full and part-time employees, temporary employees, appointed and elected officials, interns and any persons engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the provisions of any federal grant or contract.

3. General Communications Procedures

The City of Johnston intends to provide effective communications to residents while utilizing social media as a tool. Effective public relations best serve the city through:

- a. Providing accountability to the public and transparency of government.
- b. Ensuring timely and accurate information is conveyed to the public regarding incidents or issues of a sensitive or controversial nature.
- c. Establishing and maintaining an accurate public perception of the city.
- d. Increasing the visibility of the City of Johnston on local, statewide and national levels.
- e. Informing residents of City programs and services.
- f. Promoting the City's achievements, activities and significant events.
- g. To get truthful and accurate information to the public as soon as possible.

4. Media Relations

The City of Johnston's procedures will be used by all of those involved in this scope as applicable to media relations within the City of Johnston.

- a. **Spokesperson.** The Johnston Communications Specialist serves as the primary spokesperson for the City of Johnston and conveys the official City position on routine media inquiries, issues of citywide significance and situations that are sensitive and controversial in nature.
- b. **Primary City Contact.** The Johnston Communications Specialist will serve as the primary source of City information, providing background information about City issues, projects and services.
 - a. The City Administrator serves as the Spokesperson in the absence of the Communications Specialist.
 - b. The Finance Director or a ppointed designee serves in the absence of the Communications Specialist and City Administrator.
 - c. The Mayor or Council may also serve as the spokesperson on projects or events happening within the City.
- c. **Secondary City Contact.** Department Directors are required to designate a media liaison, or they can designate themselves as the media liaison. This will be kept on file in the Communications office.

5. Media Inquiries

The City of Johnston's media inquiries whether verbal, written or through social media, are to be directed to the Communications Specialist who will evaluate the request and provide an answer or direct it to the appropriate spokesperson. City Council members and the Mayor may speak with the media without referring it to the Communications Specialist, but are encouraged to inform the Communications Specialist of any discussion, before and/or after a conversation with a member of the media occurs.

Priority attention should be given to all media inquiries. Every effort should be made to meet media deadlines while ensuring all information released is accurate. Accuracy of information takes precedence over media deadlines. If another priority prevents an immediate response, a courtesy call should be made to the reporter confirming what information is requested and advising when the requested information will be available.

Exceptions

- a. **Routine media requests** may be responded to by the department media liaison if the response is of a factual, incidental or inconsequential nature (i.e. special event schedule, meeting dates). Please advise the Communications Specialist of routine inquiries.
- b. **The Police Chief and Fire Chief** may designate their own department spokespersons to handle media inquiries related specifically to public safety emergencies (for example, crimes, fires, accidents). Post-emergency media relations shall be handled under general provisions of this policy. Staff members who provide emergency medical care to the public should refrain from speaking to the media and refer them instead to their department's spokesperson. The Communications Specialist should be advised within a reasonable period of time when this exception clause is used.
- c. **Non-routine media requests** should be forwarded to the Communications Specialist before responding to the request. These may include responses that require interpretation of policy, employee information, issues of a controversial nature and emergency situations.

6. Media Notification

News Releases

- a. All news releases, media notifications and alerts are to be forwarded to the Communications Specialist prior to their release for review and approval, unless it is an emergency. The Communications Specialist shall have discretion to rewrite draft news releases submitted by a department.

- b. Emergency press releases, media notifications and alerts should be verbally cleared with the department director or designee. A copy shall be forwarded to the Communications Specialist upon release to the media. The Communications Specialist is in charge of posting the release on the city's website, sending the notification to those signed up through "notify me," and posting on the city's social media sites when deemed appropriate.
- c. Designated department spokesperson or the Communications Specialist should be prepared to respond to questions from the media following the release of information.

6.2. News Briefings or News Conferences may be conducted to educate the news media about potentially controversial issues and provide reporters an opportunity to ask in-depth questions. In most briefings, the City provides extensive background materials, fact sheets and explanatory materials. The Communications Specialist will be responsible for scheduling any such briefings.

Prior to the news conference or briefing, the City Administrator or Communications Specialist should inform the Mayor and City Council regarding this media interaction.

6.3. Emergency Media Relations. In the event of a disaster or emergency that requires the Johnston Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to be activated, the City's Emergency Operations Plan designates the Communications Specialist (or designee) responsible for primary media relations as Public Information Officer (PIO). The plan also designates a line of succession to this responsibility when the PIO is absent or when a second shift is required. The Communications Specialist will work with the City Administrator, Mayor and public safety officials to prepare for a news conference.

6.4. Photo Opportunities. Departments should advise the Communications Specialist about possible photo or video opportunities that may occur on projects that are resident sensitive (tree trimming, construction projects, sidewalk repairs, etc.).

Before an event or activity occurs, departments should notify the Communications Specialist. If available, the Communications Specialist will capture photos and/or video of the event or activity.

If department members or elected and appointed officials are at an event and capture photos with children, please ensure the parents are okay with the photos being used on social media and in various print publications. Please share these photos with the Communications Specialist.

6.5. Appearances and Interviews

- a. Any television appearances or interviews for print, web or radio should be coordinated through the Communications Specialist prior to the interview. If prior notification is not possible, the Communications Specialist should be notified shortly after the interview. City Council members, Mayor and appointed officials are encouraged to request the assistance of the Communications Specialist for interviews.
- b. Employees, City Council members, Mayor and appointed officials should remember they are representing the City and their comments should reflect the interpretation and administration of City policy. At no time should personnel issues be discussed with the media.

6.6. Guidelines for Acting as Private Citizens

The following guidelines are offered to those who may choose to contact the media as a private citizen. These guidelines do not prohibit such contact, but support other City policies regarding improper use of City equipment and property. These guidelines also apply to employees responding to or initiating media contact as official representatives of employee groups.

- a. Letters to the editor may not be prepared on city time, printed on city letterhead stationery, or mailed at city expense.
- b. Telephone contact may not be made on city time using city telephones.
- c. Use of city email is prohibited.

- d. Use of city facilities or supplies is prohibited.

6.7. External Communications

The following procedures and standards will be used by all departments as applicable to external communications.

All printed or online materials are to be coordinated through the Communications Specialist, unless it is an emergency including, but not limited to:

- a. **Brochures/Flyers/Fact Sheets** - Text and draft layout should be forwarded to the Communications Specialist for review, copyedit, page layout and design edit and approval.
- b. **Monthly Newsletter** - City departments are encouraged to offer copy ideas for each newsletter. The Communications Specialist will be responsible for final editing and submission.
- c. **Annual reports** – Department annual reports should be submitted in draft form to the Communications Specialist for final editing prior to printing and distribution.
- d. **Other** – All other forms of public information should be forwarded to the Communications Specialist prior to production and distribution for review, edit and approval. Forms of public information include anything that may be distributed to a wider audience or has a specific need for review to ensure accuracy.
- e. **Notices to residents** – Notices should be provided for street closings, tree trimming, parking restrictions, information meetings, etc. When a final copy is sent to residents, the Communications Specialist should also receive the communication.
- i. **Text and suggested layout** should be forwarded to the Communications Specialist for final approval. If notices are for emergency purposes, the department may issue without prior review and approval.
- f. **Door-to-door distributions** should not be placed into mailboxes, but attached to doors with rubber bands or hand delivered to residents.
- g. **Grammar, clarity, punctuation and spelling** should be triple checked for accuracy prior to submission to the Communications Specialist for review and approval. Jargon should be eliminated. Acronyms should be clear.

2. Speaking Engagements

General requests to City departments and elected officials shall be communicated to the Communications Specialist. The Communications Specialist is available to assist with preparing the necessary materials for the speaking engagements.

3. Promotional Events

- a. Primary coordination is the responsibility of the department director.
- b. The Communications Specialist is to be apprised of the activities including date, audience, purpose and activities to determine whether an organizational message is appropriate.

4. Informational Meetings

- a. Primary consideration resides with the department director, but if the informational meetings affect a larger area, including transportation for residents or visitors within the community, the Communications Specialist should be notified so this information can be shared with the public.

5. Advertising

- a. Text and suggested layout should be forwarded to the Communications Specialist for final copy edit and approval including telephone book advertisements, newspaper, yearbook, etc.

6. Email Etiquette

- a. If an e-mail is sent to more than one person and requires a response, only the recipient who has the highest level of authority should respond. When responding, that person should copy everyone in on the message. If the person of highest authority is unable to respond, they should direct it to the person most suitable to respond. This will prevent repeat messages and will ensure that Johnston residents are responded to in a timely, accurate and consistent manner.
- b. E-mail Signatures
- c. E-mail signatures on City accounts should be uniform in nature. Below is an example:



First Name Last Name, | Title
City of Johnston | 6221 Merle Hay Road, PO Box 410
Johnston, IA 50131-0410
o: 515.XXX.XXXX | c: 515.XXX.XXXX | e: XXXXXXXX@cityofjohnston.com
[website](#) | [facebook](#) | [twitter](#) | [Linkedin](#)

7. Public Information Requests

If public information requests are received from the media or the general public must be made through the appropriate City Department. The Department Director or designated spokesperson will notify the Communications Specialist when a request is made and before the request is filled.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media is a term encompassing a wide range of online activities integrating technology and social interaction. It includes forums, blogs, media sharing, and networking among other activities. To ensure continued support for the City's "one voice" policy and since such sites are by their nature collaborative and unstructured, unrestricted use of these media can potentially result in content posted that runs counter to the City's interests and/or exposes the City to legal action. All social media sites that carry the City of Johnston name and branding elements will be operated and maintained by the Communications Specialist.

This policy applies to any person who is provided an account on the City's network or systems including all employees and elected and appointed officials.

General Procedures:

- 1. The City of Johnston uses social media as follows:**
 - a. To provide additional communication methods for receiving information besides website, electronic newsletter, and the electronic sign
 - b. To disseminate time sensitive information as quickly as possible (i.e. emergency information);
 - c. To facilitate two-way communication, promote transparency and social engagement in government; and
 - d. To broadcast the City's messages to the widest possible audience.
- 2. The Communications Specialist shall be responsible for the City's primary social media pages.**
 - a. All official City of Johnston presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the City's information networks and are governed by the communications and social media policy contained in the City of Johnston employee handbook.
 - a. The City logo or branding shall be used on all social media accounts to confirm authenticity of the site. The social media site should also state that it is the "official" account for the department or city.
 - b. City social media accounts will only "join" a group or become a "fan" of a page if it is related to official City business, services and events.
 - c. All City social media sites should link back to the official City of Johnston website when appropriate.
 - d. Elected officials; appointed members of City Boards, Commissions and Committees, Volunteers; and employees must comply with the guidelines outlined in this document.
 - e. Employees representing the City of Johnston on the City's social media sites must conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with this policy at all times as representatives of the City.
- 2. Standards for Operating and Maintaining a Social Media Presence**

The City of Johnston's social media accounts and their associated content should focus on significant City interest areas and be organized in a manner that avoids ambiguities and/or conflicting information across the City's various communication mediums, including other City social media websites.

Authorized Representatives. The City's Communications Specialist or his/her designee are the only authorized city agents to establish a post as an official representative of the City of Johnston. Employees may respond to posts if it is in their area of expertise as an official representative of the City.

3. All City of Johnston's social media pages will adhere to the content standards below:

- a. Social media websites are to be consistently branded in order to communicate a clear association with the City and must contain a Disclaimer and Comments Policy as set forth below. Branding should include, but is not limited to, the inclusion of the City logo excluding Police and Fire, city department information (description, address, phone number, and hours of operation) and any other aesthetic "look and feel" defined by the Communications Specialist now or in the future.
- b. The City has a "page" in Facebook, not a "group." Facebook pages offer distinct advantages, including greater visibility, customization, and measurability.
- c. The City's Communication Specialist will standardize and provide all City Facebook page displays to include the City logo and other pertinent information.
- d. The use of abbreviations or hashtags on social media is an appropriate manner, but it is important the content being disseminated makes sense if it is abbreviated.
- e. An application shall not be used unless it serves a business purpose, adds to the user experience, comes from a trusted source and is approved by the Communication Specialist.
- f. All City sponsored social media sites shall prominently post the Terms of Use (see *appendix A*). In situations where a social media site does not allow for prominent posting of the Terms of Use, a link to a PDF copy of the Terms of Use shall be posted instead.
- g. Posts and monitoring shall be done during office hours, with the exception of emergency situations and all comments or questions shall be responded to in a timely manner within those parameters. In the event of an emergency, the Communications Specialist shall be contacted to send information to media (*if warranted*), post information on the City's website followed by social media.
- h. When responding to comments on social media, the name of the page should be used to respond to comments. When appropriate, direct the comment to the City's website for more information.
- i. If employees find comments about the City that contain misinformation, they should report to their supervisor or the Communications Specialist as soon as possible.
- j. The City's official website shall remain the primary medium for communicating information to the public such as press releases, documents with the exception of emergency communication efforts, events, postings about City functions and other social media engagement posts must be related back to information first posted on the website. While no City information shall be posted exclusively to social media websites, simple "reminders" and "shares" are appropriate and encouraged. Content posted to social media sites, if necessary, must contain links directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Johnston.

4. Interacting on Social Media

- a. The City of Johnston's social media sites may "like" or "follow" government entities; nonprofit and nonpartisan organizations related to City functions; local media sites; and elected officials. Posts or comments related to the City and the community at large may be shared to the extent that they correspond with the City's social media goals.

5. Accuracy and Timeliness

- a. The City of Johnston will make every effort to ensure the accuracy of information provided on the city's social media pages. However, several factors that are beyond the City's control (including unauthorized modification of electronic data, transmission errors, browser incompatibilities, cached information, or other aspects of electronic communication in an evolving and time sensitive environment) can affect the quality of the information displayed on the site.

6. Timeliness and Response

The City's timeliness about posts and responses to comments may also vary based on staff availability. Therefore, a disclaimer shall be posted on any social media site, stating:

- a. This site is maintained and moderated by the City's Communications Specialist to ensure that posted comments are constructive and suitable for all readers while respecting a range of opinions and points of view. Moderation will take place during city hall's normal business hours. We will reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

7. Responding to Comments

In cases where comments are automatically posted, the staff member responsible for the page must monitor the site regularly and respond in a timely manner.

a. Guidance on When/How to Respond to Comments:

- i. **If the person has a question** – Respond with information or point them back to the City's website or appropriate resource. You may ask them to contact you offline when appropriate (when it is a private issue, when the issue is one in which there is little or no interest by others, etc.)
- ii. **If the person has a complaint** – If inaccurate, politely correct inaccuracies. When a general complaint and when deemed appropriate, thank them for sharing feedback and direction that may be needed. If it is regarding a personal matter, reply that you would like to address the issue offline and provide contact information.
- iii. **If the person leaves a general comment**, like "This is a Great Project" or "We Look Forward to Completion of the Project," a response is recommended. Positive comments are then pushed to the top for other users to see. This is important because having users that follow pages and see positive content is important, especially if someone is looking to move into the community.
- iv. **If the person is looking to begin a debate**, take the conversation offline. Do not debate them on the site. It is ok to correct inaccuracies and to provide evidence to support information, but avoid debates.
- v. **Staff may use their discretion when responding** to a post that may be considered passive aggressive, antagonistic, posts previously answered or posts that have multiple comments that need addressed. You may choose to respond, or no response may be required, depending on the nature of the post.
- vi. **Employees, appointed, and elected officials** have a First Amendment Constitutional right to comment on matters of public concern. The boundaries of this right are established by case law. While personal pages are your property, when the information is posted online it is never truly confidential. Keep in mind that if you do not want the comments published in a paper if picked up by the media, it should maybe not be posted. Likewise, please consider whether the post may reflect negatively on the City.
- vii. All users shall adhere to applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
- viii. When in doubt on how to respond to a comment, please contact the Communications Specialist for guidance.

8. Removing Comments

Comments violating the City's Disclaimer and Comments Policy shall be removed promptly. When a person's comment is removed, the City should try to post a reason for removing the post (i.e. "A comment to this post was removed because it endorsed a political candidate. This is in violation of the City's comment policy. Removed comments should be archived for our records by completing the tracking form found in Appendix B and submitting it to the Communications Specialist. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law. Repeat individual violators may be removed or blocked from commenting on City social media sites.

Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on City social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction:

- a. Comments not related to the original topic;
- b. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or mental or physical disability;
- c. Defamatory comments;
- d. Threats to any person or organization;

- e. Solicitation of commerce including, but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
- f. Encouragement of illegal activity;
- g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, or any party.

The comments policy states the following:

Personal Conduct

- a. Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious, threatening or profane language.
- b. Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion. Repetitive or duplicate posts will be removed to maintain equity and ease of use for others.
- c. Comments containing links to other web sites or pages must be relevant to the topic.
- d. Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
- e. Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not breach any law, confidentiality, or copyright. Give credit to appropriate persons when required.
- f. Always think before posting; if it causes you to pause or question if it is appropriate, it most likely should not be posted.

Topic Guidelines

- a. As a community information resource, the City of Johnston's social media pages are intended to be politically neutral.
- b. Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted.
- c. Non-profit organizations that exist to directly support City facilities, functions, operations and personnel are permitted to use this space for fundraising, public awareness and community outreach.
- d. Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.
- e. The Communications Specialist will limit the number of posts, photo albums and status updates each day. The purpose is not to overload our users with too much information. In

the event of a severe weather event, crisis or emergency, the Communications Specialist may post as many updates as warranted.

The City of Johnston reserves the right to deny access to City social media sites for any individual who violates the City's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.

9. Correcting Mistakes

If an employee makes a factual mistake on a City's social media site, he/she should correct it as soon as possible. Corrections should be upfront and timely. Do not try to "hide" corrections, as someone may have seen the incorrect information and may be acting upon it.

10. Conduct

All City employees, appointed and elected officials have a responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to the public in a professional manner. The principles below should be followed when using social media.

- a. Postings shall be related to a department's specific function and subject matter expertise.
- b. Postings shall be factual, respectful, and on-point. They should not be off topic, or offensive.
- c. If media inquiries are received because of a post, the City's Communications Specialist should be notified. Under no circumstances shall non-department head personnel comment to reporters regarding matters of City policy, opinion, or interpretation, unless they are the designated spokesperson for the department.
- d. City social media sites or equipment may not be used by employees, appointed, or elected officials as a platform for private business or charitable activities, commercial or personal transactions, or for any other purpose prohibited by law.
- e. City Staff may acknowledge sponsorships, partnerships or thank you's to organizations, businesses or residents.
- f. Replies to individual constituent inquiries received via social media sites must be retained per the City's record retention schedule.

11. Personal Use of Social Media

Employees should make certain any online activities do not interfere with their effectiveness at work and ensure any on-duty personal use is limited in nature. If on-duty personal use is interfering with work effectiveness, employees will be subject to disciplinary action.

- a. Employees should be mindful of blurring their personal and professional lives when using or accessing social media sites.
- b. Employees may not use social media to engage in libelous, defamatory, obscene, or maliciously false behavior directed at the City, Departments, elected officials, appointed officials, other employees, or members of the public.
- c. Employees may not post confidential information which they have learned through their employment with the City.
- d. Posting of HIPPA protected information is not permitted.
- e. Employees may not use their City email account in connection with a personal social networking account.
- f. Employees shall not participate in online social media or forums on behalf of the City or their Department unless they are authorized to do so by the Department Director.
- g. Employees and appointed and elected officials can like and share events and postings to promote the City.

- h.** When violations of these guidelines occur, the City reserves the right to exercise judgment in determining the appropriate level of discipline by reviewing each incident on a case-by-case basis.

12. Elected Officials and Officials Appointed to City Boards, Commissions and Committees:

- a.** Elected officials should be mindful of the risks of electronic communication in relation to the Open Meeting Law; two-way communications between elected officials should be strictly avoided. Adding to a post or comment that would create a quorum of the group you represent should also be strictly avoided. (If the comment or posting requires official review it should be handled before the group during a public meeting.)
- b.** Elected officials should not use social media as a mechanism for conducting official City business other than to informally communicate with the public.
- c.** Elected officials should reveal they are elected officials for the City if/when making a post.
- d.** Elected officials should be sure that efforts to be honest do not result in sharing non-public information related to coworkers, personnel data, medical information, claims or lawsuits, or other non-public or confidential information.
- e.** To help prevent errors and liability issues, officials are encouraged to ask the appropriate staff person or department to post official City documents (i.e., an ordinance recently passed by the City Council), rather than summarizing. If an elected official makes a mistake, it should be corrected as soon as the official is made aware of the error. Corrections should be upfront and as timely as possible. If you modify an earlier post, make it clear the posting has been corrected. Consider designating corrections with “Fixed link” or “Fact correction” prior to the correction.
- f.** Elected officials who are contacted by the media on a topic of official City business should contact the Communications Specialist for direction.
- g.** Elected officials shall not post anything with content that violates the City’s Disclaimer and Comment Policy.

APPENDIX A

DISCLAIMER & COMMENT POLICY

(To be prominently posted on every social media page)

Definition and Purpose

The City of Johnston recognizes the impact and opportunities of new and evolving technologies for communicating with the community, as well as in its operations. In an effort to reach the many audiences who seek city information, various communications tools will be used, including social technologies and other web-based tools.

Social technologies are defined as any web application, Website or account created and maintained by the City of Johnston for staff to share opinions and information about City operations and events. Examples of social technologies include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Four Square, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube.

These communication tools will be used in a manner similar to the e-mail system currently used to share information regarding City operations – to publicize events, promote new City services, and provide important notices. On occasion, these tools may also be used to collect public comment and information.

This policy refers to social media accounts established for the City of Johnston and does not apply to personal social media accounts. In addition, this policy does not govern personal use of social media Web sites during work hours as this behavior is addressed in the city's Electronic Communications Technology Policy.

The City of Johnston Government fan page is intended to be used for informational purposes only. If you wish to contact City Council or to request City services, please visit the City's official website: www.cityofjohnston.com.

This site is maintained and moderated by the City's Communications Specialist to ensure that posted comments are constructive and suitable for all readers while respecting a range of opinions and points of view. Moderation will take place during city hall's normal business hours. We will reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. Posted comments must comply with the following regulations:

Personal Conduct

- Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious, threatening, or profane language.
- Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion. Repetitive or duplicate posts will be removed to maintain equity and ease of use for others.
- Comments containing links to other web sites or pages must be relevant to the topic.
- Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
- Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not breach any law, confidentiality, or copyright. Give credit to appropriate persons when required.
- Always think before posting; if it causes you to pause or question if it is appropriate, it most likely should not be posted.

Topic Guidelines

- As a community information resource, the City of Johnston's social media pages is politically neutral.
- Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted.
- Non-profit organizations that exist to directly support City facilities, functions, operations and personnel are permitted to use this space for fundraising, public awareness and community outreach.
- Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.
- The Communications Specialist will limit the number of posts, photo albums and status updates each day. The purpose is not to overload our users with too much information. In the event of a severe weather event, crisis or emergency, the Communications Specialist may post as many updates as warranted.
- Anyone posting comments contrary to this Terms of Use policy may be prohibited from future participation. The City of Johnston reserves the right to update these Terms of Use.

Photo Policy

The City of Johnston does NOT permit the reproduction or redistribution of photos (in partial or whole) from its Facebook page for resale use. City of Johnston photos may, however, be shared on other Facebook pages.

Disclaimer

The City of Johnston does not warrant or make representations or endorsements as to the quality, content, suitability, accuracy or completeness of the information, text, graphics, links and other items contained on this server. Such materials have been compiled from a variety of sources, and are subject to change without notice from the City of Johnston. Except to the extent required by law, commercial use of the materials is prohibited without the written permission of the City of Johnston.

Some of the links on this page and subsequent pages may lead to resources outside the City of Johnston municipal government. The presence of these links should not be construed as an endorsement by the City of Johnston of these sites or their content. The City of Johnston is not responsible for the content of any such external link. The City of Johnston specifically disclaims any and all liability for any claims or damages that may result from providing the City of Johnston website or information it contains, including any websites maintained by third parties and linked to the City of Johnston website. The responsibility for content rests with the third-party organizations who are providing the information.

By posting content, the user agrees to indemnify the City of Johnston and its officers and employees from and against all liabilities, judgments, damages and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred by any of them which arise out of or are related to the posted content.

The City of Johnston reserves the right to monitor content before it is posted on all of its social media websites and accounts, and to modify or remove any messages or postings that it deems, in its sole discretion, to be abusive, defamatory, in violation of copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party, or otherwise inappropriate for the service. The City of Johnston also reserves the right to edit or modify any submissions in response to requests for feedback or other commentary. Notwithstanding the foregoing, City of Johnston is not obligated to take any such actions, and will not be responsible or liable for content posted by any subscriber in any forum, message board, or other area within the service.

APPENDIX B

ARCHIVE REMOVAL OF INFORMATION

Today's Date: _____

Date Comment was Posted: _____

Date Comment was Removed: _____

Employee Who Removed the Comment: _____

Social Media Account Removed from: _____

Reason for Removing the Comment: _____

Which comment policy does the comment violate: _____

Attach screen shot of conversation or post or insert image below.