



STAFF REPORT

TO: Council

FROM: Erin Hartley, Director of Corporate Services

APPROVED BY: Warren MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 10, 2025

SUBJECT: **Social Media Policy**

ORIGIN

The need for clear written process and procedure relating to municipal staff, Council, and representative’s social media usage.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne approve the attached Social Media Policy.

DISCUSSION

A social media policy is a formal document that provides rules, standards, and guidance for how an organization—and its employees or representatives—should use social media. In the municipal context, it sets expectations for both official accounts and personal accounts when employees are identifiable as representing the municipality.

The purpose of the Municipality approving a social media policy is to guide municipal staff, Council, and representatives, and ensure professional, consistent, accurate and legally compliant communication with the public.

The policy covers who it applies to, which accounts it applies to, types of communication and content, roles and responsibilities, as well as enforcement for breaches of the policy.

An email containing the proposed policy was sent to Councillors on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, to provide required notice of 7 days as per MGA S. 48.

ATTACHMENTS

- Social Media Policy

POLICY PURPOSE

55.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction to members of Council and municipal staff on the appropriate and responsible use of social media. The goal is to enhance transparency, accessibility, and engagement with residents while safeguarding the Municipality's reputation, integrity, and non-partisan standing.

55.2 This policy applies to:

- Council members (Warden and Councillors);
- Municipal staff, whether permanent, part-time, contract, or casual;
- Official Municipal Representatives, whether members of the public on municipal associations, boards and committees, or municipal staff, or Council representatives on outside associations, boards and committees.

55.3 This policy covers use of:

- Official municipal social media accounts managed on behalf of the Municipality;
- Personal or third party accounts where municipal matters are discussed or where an individual is reasonably associated with their role in the Municipality.

POLICY DETAILS

55.4 All users of social media in their role as municipal councillors, staff or representatives must:

- Be professional, respectful, and ethical at all times;
- Act in a way that maintains the public's trust and confidence in the Municipality;

- Clearly distinguish between personal views and official municipal positions;
- Ensure communication is transparent, accurate, accessible, and non-partisan;
- Comply with all relevant laws, including the Municipal Government Act and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP).

55.5 Roles and Responsibilities include:

(a) The Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) ultimately oversees the use of municipal social media, approves creation of new accounts, but may designate authorized staff to manage them;

(b) Staff designated by the DCAO may create and post content on official municipal accounts;

(c) Only the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Warden are authorized to make official statements on behalf of the Municipality;

(d) Council Members may use personal social media to share information about Council decisions and community events, but must avoid misrepresenting personal views as those of the Municipality. No Council member shall make a statement on behalf of the Municipality unless designated by the Warden or CAO;

(e) All municipal staff and representatives may share official content but must avoid misrepresenting personal views as those of the Municipality.

55.6 When using social media in relation to municipal matters, Council, staff and representatives must:

- (a) Use Respectful Communication
 - Treat residents, colleagues, staff, and fellow councillors with courtesy.
 - Avoid offensive, defamatory, discriminatory, or harassing content.
- (b) Differentiate Between Personal vs. Official Views
 - State clearly when expressing personal opinions (e.g., “views are my own”).

- Do not present personal accounts as official municipal channels.
- (c) Adhere to Confidentiality & Privacy Standards
 - Do not disclose information from in camera meetings, private personnel matters, or residents' personal information.
 - Protect confidential and proprietary information at all times.
- (d) Non-Partisanship
 - Municipal accounts must never be used for campaigning, endorsements, or partisan political activity.
 - Councillors and staff must keep campaign-related activity entirely separate from municipal communications.
- (e) Maintain Accuracy & Transparency
 - Share factual and verifiable information.
 - Correct errors promptly.
 - Refer complaints or service requests to official municipal channels.
 - Refer resident inquiries related to Council matters to the Councillor for their area.

55.7 Council and staff must not use social media to:

- Undermine municipal staff, Council members, representatives, or colleagues;
- Discredit Council decisions. Once a motion is passed by Council, it must be owned by Council as a whole;
- Commit a fellow municipal Council member, staff member or representative to action;
- Commit a municipal association, board or committee (including Council) to action;
- Breach confidentiality or privacy obligations;
- Spread misinformation or unverified claims;
- Promote personal business or financial interests;
- Engage in hostile, inflammatory, or partisan conversations or debates, even if the intent is to de-escalate or clarify.

55.8 This policy will be enforced as follows:

- Council Members and Municipal Representatives: Breaches will be addressed under the Council Code of Conduct and relevant provisions of the Municipal Government Act.
- Municipal Staff: Breaches will be addressed through Human Resource policies and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne duly passes the policy respecting Social Media on _____, 2025.

SIGNED this _____ day of _____, 2025.

WARDEN

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Approved by Council:

Effective Date: