

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC OUTREACH POLICY**

### **Purpose**

Because the Township of Westampton has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding who may “speak” and what is “spoken” on behalf of Township of Westampton on social media sites and public outreach tools, the policy is to address the use of social media communications the Township of Westampton utilizes to provide information online; and

To encourage the use of social media and public outreach tools to further the goals of the Township of Westampton and the missions of its departments and affiliated boards, commissions and authorities as a means to disseminate information from the Township about the Township to its residents, employees and visitors.

### **Policy**

For the purposes of this policy, “social media” is understood to be content created by individuals using accessible, expandable and upgradable publishing technologies through and on the internet. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter. “Public outreach tools” is understood to be content created by individuals and published on the website, electronic signs, e-mail blasts, text blasts (e.g. Nixle, reverse 911, etc.) and public access TV. For purposes of this policy, “comments” include information, articles, pictures and any other written or communicated words or phrases.

1. This policy shall apply to all township agencies and departments as well as any affiliated commissions, committees or boards.
2. This policy is intended to compliment and expand the Communication Media Policy contained within the Westampton Township Employee Handbook.
3. The Township of Westampton shall have a single presence on social media sites deemed appropriate for use. Requests for individual departmental pages or sites must be approved by the Township Administrator. No Township Social Media site shall be established without prior approval.
4. Each approved social media site and public disclosure tool shall have a designated administrator responsible for the posting to the social media site and/or use of the public outreach tool. The Township Administrator and/or his/her designee shall make all attempts to share these other department pages on the main Westampton Township social media site, e.g. Township of Westampton Facebook page should share the Township of Westampton Public Works’ posts.
5. The designated administrator for each social media site shall have primary responsibility of posting. When posts are not strictly information for the public (such as road closures, storm updates and the like), the designated administrator shall seek posting approval from the Township Administrator and/or his/her designee.
6. The Township Social Media sites and public outreach tools shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the Township and that they follow this Social Media and Public Outreach Policy.

7. This Social Media and Public Outreach Policy shall be placed on the Township website and the Terms of Use Disclosure shall be posted on any Township social media sites and, as practicable, public outreach tools.
8. The Township social media sites and public outreach tools are intended be informational.
9. The Township social media sites and public outreach tools are not to be used for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, requesting an inspection, giving notice required by any statute, regulation or ordinances, such as but not limited to notices of claims. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site.
10. The Township Administrator and/or his/her designee shall monitor Township social media sites and public outreach tools to ensure adherence to both this Social Media and Public Outreach Policy and the interest and goals of the Township. The Township has the right and will restrict or remove any content that is deemed to not be in the best interest of the Township or in violation of this Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained and maintained by the Township Clerk pursuant to record retention policy along with the author/poster, date and time.
11. The Township will approach the use of Social Media tools as consistently as possible.
12. The Township website ([www.westampton.com](http://www.westampton.com) or [www.westamptonnj.gov](http://www.westamptonnj.gov)) will remain the Township's primary and predominant internet presence.
13. The Township's social media sites and this policy are subject to all applicable federal and New Jersey State laws and regulations. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Open Public Records Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Township.
14. Employees representing the Township via its social media sites or public outreach tools shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Township and in accordance with the Employee Handbook and all other policies.
15. No "friending", "liking" or other special relationship between a Township employee and a third person is permitted on, or working on, a Township social media site. Although the Township social media site seeks to be "friended" and "liked", it should only "friend" or "like" the pages of other organizations not that of any individual's page(s)
16. Social media and public outreach tools are run by third parties separate from the Township and may occasionally become inoperable. The Township reserves the right to disable its social media accounts either temporarily or permanently at any time. There is no guarantee of "uptime."
17. This Social Media and Public Outreach Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Township Committee.

Regarding commenting and posting which for the purposes of this policy includes information, articles and pictures as well as other communication mediums on public outreach tools.

1. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Township 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 Township, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Township.

2. All comments posted to any Township social media site are bound by any applicable terms and conditions of the social media platform and the Township reserves the right to report any violation directly to the platform with the intent of the platform taking appropriate and reasonable responsible actions.
3. Township employees are prohibited from commenting on the municipal social media sites.
4. No Township employee, Township elected official, vendor performing work or providing services to the Township, or volunteer, may post or comment on a Township social media site.
5. Only content approved by the Township Administrator and/or his/her designee for public release is allowed to be posted.
6. A "designee" or a person appointed by the Township Administrator is never to be allowed to transfer their social media account information or allow someone access to their account on their behalf without prior written authorization from the Township Administrator or Chief of Police
7. Persons posting prohibited content are subject to being barred from posting comments on Township social media. Prohibited content is not permitted on Township social media sites and will be subject to removal and/or restriction from the Township Administrator, Chief of Police and/or his/her designees.

Prohibited content includes comments containing any of the following:

- Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language, or sexually suggestive or explicit content links to such materials. Any image or link containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situation will be reported to law enforcement
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation
- Defamatory attacks
- Threats to any person or organization
- Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale
- Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law
- Encouragement of illegal activity or illegal activity
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as copyright, of any party the Township does not permit or allow copyright infringing activities and/or infringement of intellectual property rights on its website or social media sites and will remove any and all content and submissions if properly notified that such content and/or submission infringes on another's intellectual property rights

- Private contact information such as names, addresses and phone numbers no matter how easily obtained elsewhere; personal information of a poster other than the poster
- Spamming or repetitive content
- Comments from children under the age of 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a Township media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old (Parents are responsible for any minor child’s posting or comments.)
- Content that incites violence
- Comments unrelated to the particular post being commented upon
- Comments including vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations
- Postings that could be construed or perceived as being partisan in nature as determined by the Township Administrator and/or his/her designee
- Postings which share or distribute articles published by another social media user or by printed or on-line publications regarding any topic or subject that is or to be pending before any Township department, committee or board

The Township Administrator or the Chief of Police and/or his/her designee may be required to remove internet postings on Township social media sites which are deemed to constitute a breach of policy as determined by the Township Administrator or Chief of Police subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements.

Any social media sites created by the Township remains the property of the Township, including all the followers, friends and the like generated by the site. If the person who created the social media site leaves the employment of the Township, they must relinquish everything related to the site including user names, passwords and/or access codes or information.

**Terms of Use Disclosure (to be posted on all Township Social Media Sites)**

- A. Information Disclaimer – By visiting this site, you understand and agree that the Township of Westampton site is provided “AS IS.” The Township makes every effort to provide accurate and completed information on this website. The information contained herein is not official nor in any way shall it be deemed to constitute legal notice where such legal notice is required by law. The information contained in this site is provided as a service and convenience to people needing information about the Township/ Portions of the information on this site may be incorrect or not current. The Township, its officers, employees or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of information , including but no limited to, damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy or timeliness or any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing or copying of those materials.
- B. Linking Policy/Links to External Sites – The Township of Westampton site contains links to outside websites. These websites are not owned, operated, controlled or reviewed by the

Township. These links are provided solely as a courtesy and convenience to you, the visitor. The Township, its officers or employees, exercise no control over the organizations, views, accuracy, copyright or trademark, compliance or the legality of the material contained in these outside websites. The Township, its officers or employees, do not sponsor, endorse, or approve the information, content, proceeds, materials, opinions or services contained on such outside websites. The visitor proceeds to these outside websites at his/her own risk. The Township specifically disclaims any and all liability from damages, which may result from the accessing of a third-party site, which is linked to the Township website (or a Township social media site) or from reliance upon only such information.