

**TOWN OF AYDEN, NC – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**1.0 POLICY/PURPOSE**

The Town of Ayden will employ the use of social media websites to reach citizens it might not otherwise reach. The Town, through the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel, may operate Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts as deemed necessary by the approval of the Town Manager.

**2.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Information posted to any Town of Ayden social media site must be approved by the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel and must be consistent with the mission and community activities of the Town of Ayden government. For the Town’s primary social networking sites, such as its official Facebook page, Twitter and YouTube pages, content will be posted by the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel in accordance with its practices for disseminating other forms of public information. Typically, that involves securing approval from affected departments (department heads or their designees) and appropriate management in the Town Manager’s Office. Content posted to social media sites may include news releases, approved photos and videos, agendas, announcements, promotional tools, and similar material.

**3.0 SOCIAL MEDIA SITE BENEFITS**

- Provide an excellent resource for communicating the Town’s various messages and promoting Town services, programs and initiatives.
- Allow real-time interaction with citizens, thus enabling us to better serve citizens’ needs.
- Increased efficiency as it pertains to the posting of information, news, events and high-level materials.
- Providing a nontraditional support device to internal departments and divisions for promoting events, partnerships and other Town-driven initiatives and opportunities.
- Additional advertising tool for increasing traffic on the Town of Ayden main site.

**4.0 GUIDELINES**

- The Town Manager or Authorized Personnel will create and maintain the Town’s official Social Media accounts. All account activity will be reviewed and uploaded to the account.
- Under certain circumstances, a Town Department may want to create and maintain social media applications that are separate from those maintained by the Town Manager or Authorized Personnel. Departments are required to get approval from the Town before implementing departmental specific social media applications.

- Departments must provide specific justification and reasons for maintaining separate social media applications. If approved, the Department Head, and Town Manager will periodically review each application. Those that do not meet the Town’s intended goals and objectives may be removed at any time.
- Some avenues to allow user comments may be turned off, including discussion boards, “walls” and comment sections.
- Unless a social media site has been authorized to accept comments, unofficial or public comments may not be posted.
- If the public is allowed to post comments to a social media account or page, the following posts are inconsistent with the Town’s policies and will not be allowed:
  - Obscene content
  - Offensive language or images
  - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
  - Potentially libelous statements
  - Plagiarized material
  - Private, personal information published without consent
  - Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum
  - Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
  - Commercial promotions or spam
  - Fundraising activities not sponsored by the Town of Ayden
  - Organized political activity
- Anyone may become a “fan” of the site. However, individuals who displaying objectionable profile pictures on the Town’s social media sites will not be accepted as “fans.”
- The Town of Ayden has the right to post, remove, delete or choose not to post any materials on any social media sites that officially represent the Town of Ayden and/or its departments.

## **5.0 PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

As with other forms of public communication, such as telephone and email, employees who engage in using social media during work hours are personally responsible for the content they publish. The creation of Town social media platforms must be approved by the Town Manager.

### **Guidelines:**

- Usage of personal media during work hours for personal communication or personal reasons should be brief. Employees shall not access inappropriate website or engage in detrimental personal conduct.
- Engagement on any social media platform on work time should be limited and performed in adherence with the employee’s direct scope of work and responsibilities, with the best interest of the Town paramount in their postings.
- Employees must conduct themselves in a professional and positive tone.
- Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and Town laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, NC Public Records Law and other protected information such as Personal Identifiable

Information (PII). Confidential information such as HIPAA protected content will remain confidential.

- A public blog is not the place to communicate internal Town policies for employees or to air disputes or grievances.
- These guidelines may continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge. The Town Manager or Authorized Personnel will review social media site usage and provide policy recommendations on a continuing basis.

**Unacceptable uses:** Accessing, messaging or printing sensitive materials including, but not limited to, illegal activities, gambling, sexually explicit materials, weapons, drugs, violence or materials that include inappropriate language, profanity, obscenity, racial, ethnic or discriminatory comments, defamatory statements or otherwise inappropriate content (to include statements such as partisan political positions, religious positions and other statements that may subject the Town, its mission, or its employees to be viewed in a light that is not in the best interest of Town of Ayden) is strictly prohibited.

**Failure to Comply:** Each department is responsible for ensuring compliance with this directive. Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in the removal of department pages or information from social media outlets. Employees may lose the privilege to use their electronic devices and/or telecommunication equipment and may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

## **6.0 DISCLAIMER**

The Town of Ayden 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 or any other server. Such materials have been compiled from a variety of sources, and are subject to change without notice from the Town of Ayden. Except to the extent required by law, commercial use of the materials is prohibited without the written permission of the Town of Ayden.

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

Except to the extent required by law, communications made through e-mail and comments posted shall in no way be deemed to constitute legal notice to the Town of Ayden or any of its agencies, officers, employees, agents or representatives with respect to any existing or potential claim or cause of action against the agencies, officers, employees, agents or representatives where notice to the Town is required by federal, state and/or local laws, rules or its regulations.

## **7.0 TERMS OF USE**

Important: The Town of Ayden Facebook Fan page is intended to be used for *informational* purposes only. If you wish to contact Town of Ayden Board of Commissioners or to request Town services, please visit the Town's official website: [www.ayden.com](http://www.ayden.com).

This site is maintained and moderated by the Town's Town Manager or Authorized Personnel 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 Town Hall's normal business hours. Posted comments must comply with the following regulations:

- Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious, offensive, threatening, profane, or insulting language.
- References to the personality of individuals or personal attacks will not be permitted.
- Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted.
- Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion.
- Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.
- Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
- Comments containing links to other web sites or pages must be relevant to the topic.
- Comments cannot serve electoral campaign purposes. Political messages will not be published.
- Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not breach any law, confidentiality, or copyright.

Anyone posting comments contrary to this Terms of Use policy may be prohibited from future participation. The Town of Ayden reserves the right to make administrative updates of these Terms of Use and will provide appropriate notice to staff.