



TOWN OF GRAFTON

Grafton Memorial Municipal Center
30 Providence Road
Grafton, Massachusetts 01519

Social Media

PURPOSE:

As part of the official internet presence of the Town of Grafton (“the Town”), certain social media sites and accounts will be used by municipal employees for communicating information to inform the public of the work, and news of various Town Departments. The Town’s social media sites are subject to the same rules as other government publications. The Town is not obligated to comment or reply to any response, comment, or message, but will moderate such comments/contributions by the public to comply with federal, state, and local laws, along with our own policies, and respond when necessary/appropriate.

The Town recognizes that employees and officials have the right to participate as citizens in public forums and discussions (including social media platforms) on matters of public concern. However, that right is balanced against the legitimate interests and needs of the Town in promoting accountability, responsible and mature judgment, and the efficiency of public services. Nothing in this policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent employee communications that are otherwise protected under law (i.e. First Amendment, Whistleblower, Union Activities, etc.)

It is the purpose of this policy to establish procedures for governing the use and presence of the Town of Grafton on various social media platforms.

APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all employees, permanent, per diem, temporary, independent contractors, consultants, temporary workers, interns, elected officials, and appointed officials, acting in an official capacity on behalf of the Town.

POLICY:

General:

- Only social media accounts started by authorized representatives of the Town will be recognized as “official”.
- All Official Accounts should link back to the Official Town of Grafton website, www.grafton-ma.gov.
- All Official Accounts must prominently display the identifiable characteristic of an official Town site (i.e., the Town Seal), and shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Town of Grafton.
- All Official Accounts must be linked to the Town’s *ArchiveSocial* account in order to preserve accurate records in compliance with federal and state law.
- No comments will be accepted through the Town’s social media accounts for any public hearing or meeting. Residents must attend public hearings and meetings or directly communicate with the deliberative body.

- The Town is responsible solely for content upload to the official Town accounts, and not for any related or “suggested” videos, linked photos from other users, nor for any advertising or other content contained on the relevant platform.
- Official Town social media pages may only be created on approved social media networks.
 - Social media networks on the approved list shall be regularly monitored for changes to terms of use agreements, and other relevant changes.
 - A Department/Committee may request that additional social media networks are reviewed and potentially approved as needed.
 - A complete list of approved social media networks will be kept by the Town Administrator’s Office.
- No Official Town social media account shall endorse or cite (with approval or disapproval) any vendors, suppliers, or clients.
- No Official Town social media account shall be used to engage in political activity. This includes, but is not limited to, endorsement of any candidate for elected office, comments in support or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.

Department Specific Pages:

- Any Department/Committee wishing to use social media in an official capacity must receive approval from the Town Administrator prior to establishing the account.
- All usernames, passwords, or other credentials must be on file with the Town Administrator’s Office.
- Department/Committee specific accounts must include a link back to the Official Town website, www.grafton-ma.gov.

Primary Uses By Employees/Departments:

In general, Town social media sites shall be used to communicate the following:

- Announcements about departmental or community items of interest
- Emergency notifications
- Spotighting Town events or activities
- Directing the public to content on grafton-ma.gov.
- Highlighting residents, employees, or volunteers who have done exemplary work for the community.

Access to social media accounts is limited to individuals performing official Town Business. Department Heads/Committee Chairs are responsible for determining who is authorized to use social media on behalf of the Department/Committee, and designating appropriate access levels. Individuals who have been approved to communicate through the Town’s social media sites shall adhere to the following:

- Individuals representing the Town on social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as a professional representative, and in accordance with all Town policies.
- Any authorized individuals will review, be familiar with and comply with the guidelines of this policy.
- Authorized individuals shall not express their own personal views or concerns through postings on official Town accounts. Postings shall only reflect the views of the Town.

- Town social media sites shall use authorized Town contact information for account set-up. The use of personal email accounts or phone numbers by any Town employee is not allowed for the purpose of setting up a Town social media site.

Monitoring:

All official Town Social Media sites shall be monitored regularly, and prompt corrective action will be taken when issues arise that has the potential to place the Town at risk. The Town reserves the right to remove from public view and post, comment, photo, or remark that does not conform with the terms of this policy or contains any of the following:

- Content that violates the host site's terms of use or policy
- Comments not topically related to the particular topic or thread
- Content that is abusive, defamatory, or disparages an individual or potentially libelous statements
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language
- Profane language or content
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of any protected class under state or federal law
- Sexual content
- Solicitations of commerce
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Personal and private information
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party
- Comments or hyperlinks unrelated to posted information
- Commercial promotions or spam comment.

Any removed post, comment, photo, or remark will be captured before removal, and kept on record. If these types of comments, posts, etc., become a habitual problem with specific individuals, the Town reserves the right to block said user from posting, viewing, or interacting with Official Town social medias. A record will be kept of any blocked users.

Records Management

In the interested of complying with all public records laws, all social media pages, posts, and comments, must have a copy retained by the Town. With that in mind, all official Town pages must be linked to the Town of Grafton *ArchiveSocial* account so that an accurate record will be kept.

In the event that a page cannot be linked to the *ArchiveSocial* account, all posts, comments, shared content, pictures, etc., will need a record kept by the relevant Department Head or page moderator.

Approved By: Select Board

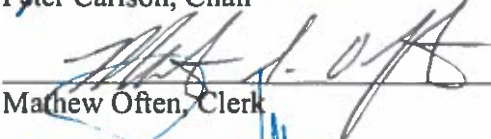
Date: 9/21/2021



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Doreen DeFazio, Member



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