

# **Forsyth Township**

## **Social Media and Website Policy**

### **(Adopted December 18, 2025)**

#### **SECTION I: PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines for use of the Township social media sites and website. The intended purpose of using social media and the website is to disseminate information from the Township, about the Township, to its residents. The Townships social media is reserved for government speech and is not intended as a public forum for private expression or free speech. The Townships website will remain the Townships' primary and predominant Internet presence.

#### **SECTION II: DEFINITIONS**

- Social Media: refers to Facebook, blogs, MySpace, Reddit, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, the Township website, and any other future internet sites that are used to communicate with the public.
- Township Moderator: is the Township Manager, Township Supervisor, or other Township Employee who have been specifically named by the Township Manager or Township Supervisor.
- Administrative Access: means that the township employee has access to the passwords of Social Media sites and can post or remove content.

#### **SECTION III: SCOPE**

- This policy shall apply to all Township entities and the volunteers and employees who are members of those entities acting in their capacity as members.
- This policy does not apply to individuals who post as individuals and not on behalf of the Township or a Township entity.

#### **SECTION IV: GENERAL POLICY**

- Any Township social media sites will reference this policy located on the Township's website.
- The Township Moderator will be responsible for monitoring the content on all social media sites to ensure it complies with the Township Social Media Policy.
- Any removed content will be sent to the Township Manager for FOIA purposes.
- The Township Moderator will report any illegal activity to the local police.
- A social medium may be created and/or used by Township entities so long as its creation and/or use conform to the requirements listed herein and was subject to prior approval by the Township Moderator.
- Any Township entity, employee or volunteer that receives permission from the Township Moderator to create or use social media shall clearly state that it is authorized to do so by the Township and that it follows this Social Media Policy.
- Social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Department and shall have Department contact information prominently displayed.
- Social media shall be used solely to convey information about the entity posting it. No personal information or personal opinions shall be posted by the entity, employee or volunteer.
- Any Township entity creating or using a social medium shall designate a member(s) of that entity, approved by the Township Moderator, to post and monitor the site.
- This Social Media Policy shall be posted on the official Township website.
- Where appropriate, the social media sites created/used by Township entities shall link back to the official Township website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business, or provide a business phone number for residents to call for more information.

- Township entities shall not use social media to make any official Township communications to the public other than those specifically referencing the activities of that entity. Accuracy of information is of vital importance and must be considered a priority when posting.
- The Township Moderator has the right to and will restrict or remove any content that it deems in violation of this Social Media Policy, any applicable law or for any other reason it deems appropriate.
- All Township entities, employees and volunteers creating/using social media sites are subject to all applicable federal and Michigan laws and regulations as well as applicable record retention requirements.
- All Township entities and their members as well as elected officials representing the Township's government via its/their social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Township and in accordance with all of its policies.
- All postings by Township entities should be professional using clear language, accurate information, spelled correctly and with proper grammar.
- Any social media sites created by a Township employee, Township volunteer, Township official and/or Township entity remains the property of the Township, including all the followers and friends generated by the site which may be deleted by the Township if it deems it appropriate.
- All site names, passwords and/or access codes or information or changes to these shall be filed with the Township Moderator and updated within two days of any change.
- If the person who created the social medium site leaves a Township entity, the passwords and/or access codes to the site shall be changed and the new information filed with the Township Moderator within two days of the change.
- Employees or volunteers may be subject to civil litigation for publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group or organization. Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission, that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person, using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an

exploitative purpose, or publishing the creative work of another, trademarks or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner is prohibited and may be subject to civil litigation.

- Following or being followed by the Township on any social media does not imply endorsement of any kind.
- Any advertising found on the Townships social media is controlled by the owner of that media and is not sponsored by the Township. They do not imply endorsement of any kind.
- Social media may occasionally be unavailable. The Township accepts no responsibility for lack of service due to unavailability.
- Links to outside websites are not controlled or maintained by the Township. These links are provided solely as a courtesy and convenience to the residents. The material contained in these outside websites are not monitored by the Township and residents should proceed to them at their own risk. The Township specifically disclaims any and all liability from damages, which may result from accessing a third-party site.
- Sharing posts or information from other public entities shall be allowed if such sharing helps the Township meet its goals or objectives, or if it has been determined to be beneficial to the community.
- The Township is not responsible for the contents or accuracy of material posted on Township officials' personal social media sites, or for any comments made by Township officials on Township social media sites posted independently and without the Townships consent or approval. Publication of such content does not constitute an endorsement by the Township.
- This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Township Board.

#### **SECTION V: COMMENT POLICY**

The Township uses social media to better communicate to the residents and be more transparent about Township affairs. To avoid misinterpretation of government speech and

private speech all comments shall be turned off. Where appropriate a phone number, email or link shall be placed in postings for questions to be addressed.

#### **SECTION VI: BREACH OF POLICY**

Internet postings on Township social media sites that are deemed to constitute a breach of this Policy as determined by the Township Moderator shall be removed subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements. If a social media site is frequently in violation of this Policy, it shall be permanently deleted.

Any entity found by the Township Moderator to have violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on social media for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Township Moderator.

Any Township employee or volunteer found by the Township Moderator to have violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on social media for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Township Moderator.

Any illegal activity shall be reported to the appropriate authorities.