

ORDINANCE NO. 2017- 24

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND PERSONNEL POLICIES
RELATIVE TO ADOPT A NEW POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF NEW LONDON, HURON COUNTY, OHIO,
AS FOLLOWS

Section 1. That the New London Employee Handbook and Personnel Policies are hereby amended to adopt and incorporate a new Policy which shall read as follows:

**VILLAGE OF NEW LONDON
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Purpose

The expansion of general use of Social Media has been dramatic in the past few years. Participation in these activities by governmental entities and their employees raises a wide variety of potential legal issues that should be anticipated and addressed proactively where possible. This Policy is an attempt to do that with the understanding that, as legal decisions are made, this Policy may require revisiting in response.

Guidance for personal use of social media by employees

Social Media encompasses many channels in which to share knowledge, express one's creativity, and connect with others sharing the same interests. The Village respects a person's choice to participate in these online communities that include but are not limited to blogs, social networks, and websites such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Flickr, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Second Life, and YouTube to name a few. However, there are risks associated with these sites. This policy establishes recommendations to help staff use these forums effectively and protect personal and professional reputations.

ALL VILLAGE EMPLOYEES ARE EXPRESSLY ADVISED THAT NOTHING IN THE POLICY IS INTENDED TO ABRIDGE ANY RIGHTS THEY MAY HAVE UNDER STATE OR FEDERAL LAW TO ENGAGE IN PROTECTED CONCERTED ACTIVITY, SUCH AS TO DISCUSS THEIR TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT WITH FELLOW EMPLOYEES. TO THE EXTENT THERE MAY BE ANY AMBIGUITY WITH REGARD TO ANY STATEMENTS IN THIS POLICY, THE TERMS OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS NOT BEING INTENDED TO PROHIBIT OR RESTRICT EMPLOYEES WHO ARE SO ENGAGED, OR WHO ARE EXERCISING RIGHTS ACCRUING TO THEM UNDER THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.

General recommendations

The keys to success in social media are being honest about who you are, being thoughtful before you post, and respecting the purpose of the community where you are posting.

Think Before You Post

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, the Village suggests it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

Maintain Confidentiality

Do not disclose information which has been expressly identified to you as being "confidential" or "proprietary." For example, information concerning ongoing police investigations, personal details about police officers, income tax records, or medical records may all be *outside* the bounds of normal "public records" or public activities; and they should not be disclosed through Social Media. When in doubt as to whether there is such a legal restriction, you always have the option of inquiring of your department head.

Respect Village Time and Property

Village computers and your work time are to be used for Village-related business – your maintenance of personal sites should be done on your own time, with your own computer.

Be Respectful

As a Village employee, you understand the Village's commitment to respect the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of opposing ideas. Some online communities can be volatile, tempting users to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't. Your reputation (and the Village's) are best served when you remain above the fray.

Respect Intellectual Property Rights

Respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws. For the Village's protection as well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted materials owned by others, trademarks, and other intellectual property, including the Village's own copyrights, trademarks, and brands.

Protect Your Identity

While you want to be honest about yourself, be careful about disclosing personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use against you. Your home address, telephone number, work telephone, and e-mail address are examples of information scammers would like to have.

Monitor Comments

Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments – it builds credibility and community. However, you can set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

Comments on behalf of the Village

In your personal use of private social media, the Village requests that, in connection with any comments you may make which concern Village business, you make it clear that your comments are your personal views and not those of the Village. No persons should represent a private social

media site to be an “official” site of the Village unless its creation has been expressly authorized by the Village Council, Mayor, Administrator, Police Chief, or Fire Chief.

Social Media Sites Authorized/Controlled by the Village

“Official” social media or websites of the Village shall be created only at the direction of the Village Council, Mayor, Administrator, Police Chief, or Fire Chief; and the Village shall consider all such sites to be owned by the Village. These platforms/sites should be restricted to the display of news and information directly related to Village programs and services, and used to facilitate communications and distribution of information.

Access/Control

Whenever a social media or website is created by the Village, the official authorizing its creation shall also designate those officials, agents, and employees of the Village who shall be charged with the operation, monitoring, maintenance, and changes in that site. No unauthorized persons shall attempt to control or alter such sites.

Monitoring Use

The Village will monitor the use of any social media platform or site which it has authorized and reserves the right to remove comments that contain:

- Profane language or content;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination against protected classes;
- Sexual content;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Spam or comments that include links to external online sites;
- Solicitations of commerce or advertisements including promotion or endorsement;
- Promotions of particular services, products or political candidates or organizations;
- Content that violates legal ownership interest of any other party, such as copyright or trademark infringement;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Personally identifiable information, including medical information;
- Contain threats, defamatory statements or personal attacks;
- Content not related to Village-specific topics or which significantly deviates from a particular conversational thread or discussion.

Anonymous comments are considered spam and will be removed.

Violators of this policy may have their comments removed from Village social media platforms. Continued or egregious violations of this policy may prompt the Village to further restrict or prohibit an individual’s commenting on official Village social media platforms.

Public Records

Only public information is permitted to be posted on Village social media platforms. And, postings from the public may become public records. Therefore, the person charged with the operation of a Village-authorized social media or website shall, in connection with the Village Records Commission, institute measures to preserve content as may be necessary under State law.

No Endorsement of Content

The views expressed in user-posted comments, replies, retweets, likes, followers, favorites, and/or links reflect those of the author(s) and do not imply endorsement, agreement or support by or on behalf of the Village, and do not reflect the official views and/or policies of the Village.

No Public Meetings

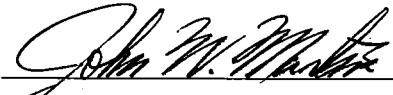
Members of any Village public body should not use any Village social media to engage in a meeting.

No Commercial Use

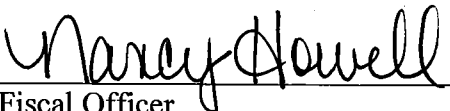
No reference or link should be made in Village-authorized social media or websites to foster or endorse any nongovernmental entity, especially including any commercial enterprises.

Section 2. That this Ordinance shall take effect at the earliest period allowed by law.

PASSED: 10/9/17

Mayor 

ATTEST:


Fiscal Officer