

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-003

**THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE KNOWN
AS THE TOWN OF BLUFF CITY'S
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

WHEREAS, the Board of Mayor and Alderman deem it necessary to develop a social media policy for the health, safety and welfare of the Town of Bluff City, Tennessee.

BE IT THEREFORE ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMAN THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADDED TO TITLE 4, CHAPTER 9 OF THE BLUFF CITY MUNICIPAL CODE:

9-101. PURPOSE. The Town of Bluff City's use of social media platforms is intended to expand and enhance communication to a growing number of citizens who rely on social media for news and updates about Bluff City. The goal of our use of social networking is to communicate and promote information about the business of the Town and how we serve our citizens. The Town must ensure that use of social networking maintains our identity, integrity and reputation while minimizing actual or potential risks. The main goals of our social media communications are:

- (1) To provide communications in a timely manner about Town news, emergencies, road closures and construction, parks and recreational programs, job opportunities, government services, holiday closings, weather alerts, educational information, and other matters of interest to the social media users.
- (2) To engage residents and businesses in Bluff City's dialogue about the Town.

9-102. PLATFORMS. This policy applies to all social media outlets used by the Town of Bluff City, which at the time of adoption of this policy is Facebook. More outlets may be added as social media opportunities continue to expand.

9-103. POLICY COMPONENTS. This policy is divided into two components:

- (1) An external policy establishing standards for use of the Town's social media outlets by the public.
- (2) An internal policy establishing standards for Town employees who are authorized to post and manage content on official Town of Bluff City social media pages.

EXTERNAL: PUBLIC USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

9-104. APPLICABILITY. This policy establishes standards for use of the Town's social media outlets by the public.

9-105. CONTENT STANDARDS. The Town of Bluff City invites and encourages people to discuss issues affecting the Town on its social media sites, which serve as limited public forums. However, the Town of Bluff City will not allow posts to remain that include but not limited to:

- (1) Nudity/pornography or messages/depictions with sexual, obscene or indecent content
- (2) Language or information that is foul, vulgar, scurrilous or scatological
- (3) Promotion of the use of alcohol and tobacco
- (4) Threats, attacks, harassment, unlawful discrimination or hate language
- (5) Advocation of illegal or inappropriate use of firearms or drugs, or any illegal activity
- (6) Depictions or promotions of animal cruelty
- (7) Promotion or endorsement of a political campaign or candidate
- (8) Programs and events not officially sponsored by the Town of Bluff City or a Town board
- (9) Solicitations for donations, except for official Town sponsored activities.
- (10) Exchange of goods and services.
- (11) Propaganda machine.

The Town of Bluff City reserves the right to close a conversation if comments stray from the context of the original post.

9-106 Personal Information. The confidentiality and privacy of individuals should be considered high priority. Social media users should not include individual addresses, phone or email information in social media postings without permission.

9-107 Town's Rights to Posted Information. All messages, images and information posted on the Town's social media or sent to the Town by electronic means will be considered public information. The Town may repost or disseminate such messages, images and information as it deems appropriate.

9-108 Public Records Law. The Town of Bluff City's official social media sites are subject to applicable public records law. Any content maintained in a social media format related to Town's business, including communication posted by the Town and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The Town is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for social media content.

INTERNAL: ADMINISTRATION OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA

9-109 APPLICABILITY. This policy establishes standards to ensure timely, accurate and appropriate use of social media outlets by Town employees who are authorized to post and manage content on official Town of Bluff City social media pages.

9-110 MANAGING CONTENT.

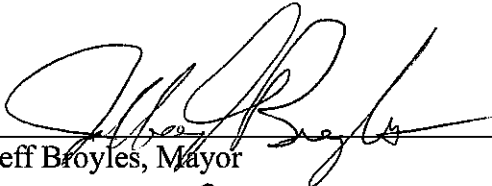
(1) The Town of Bluff City will use a distributed control model for managing social media content. This means that control is distributed to several groups within one government, but with one gatekeeper per site. The Town Manager will serve as the one gatekeeper for all official Town of Bluff City social media sites.

(2) The Town Manager is responsible for the development of the Town of Bluff City social media strategy and oversight of the policies and procedures pertaining to the social media outlets used by the Town. The Town Manager will establish social media sites when needed and distribute access to user names, passwords and instructions on how to access the different social media sites. Any department wishing to create a new social media outlet must first consult with the Town Manager. The Town Manager will approve all social media sites used by the Town and serve as an administrator on each authorized Town social media page.

(3) Posts by the public on the Town's social media pages are to be monitored by the Town Manager, and any posts that violate the content standards established in the Town's External Policy for Public Use of Social Media are to be deleted. Whenever any content is determined to meet criteria for deletion from a page, the content shall be retained, and a record shall be kept of the reason for the deletion.

Unless the speech clearly falls into an unprotected category, First Amendment challenges can be anticipated. The following measures are to be observed for all deleted content:

- a. Take a screen shot of the deleted message.
- b. Document why the message was removed and the policy the message violated.
- c. Save a copy of this documentation.



Jeff Broyles, Mayor

Attested: 

Sharon Greene, City Recorder

Approved
as to form: 

J. Paul Frye, City Attorney

Passed on First Reading: 6-6-2023
Passed on Second Reading: 6/23/23
Public Hearing: 6/23/23