

# Comstock Charter Township Social Media Use Policy

## Effective Date: May 24, 2022

### SECTION I: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to create enforceable rules for official communications between the Comstock Charter Township and the public. Although there are many benefits to working in an electronic forum, there are also many challenges, including the ability to easily modify electronic documents and concerns about the security of public records. Adherence to this Policy will provide consistency, efficiency, and openness to the public and help lessen any potential negative impacts to the Township as it increases its reliance on electronic methods of conducting Township business.

### 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 Communications Development Coordinator, Township Superintendent or other township official who has administrative access to the sites
- **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 have a hyperlink to this policy on the Township's website.
- Township Communications Development Coordinator and Township Superintendent 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 Superintendent for FOIA purposes.
- The Township Moderator will report any illegal activity to 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 Administrator.

- Any Township entity, employee or volunteer that receives permission from the Township Administrator 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 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 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 within the Township.
- 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 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 spelled correctly and use good 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 and may be deleted by the Township if it deems it appropriate to do so.
- All site names, passwords and/or access codes or information or changes to these shall be filed with the Township Administrator 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 Administrator within two days of the change.
- 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 with residents and be more transparent about Township affairs. Users are encouraged to submit comments, questions and concerns using the Township's Social Media sites. However, the Township Social Media sites serve as moderated online discussions and not a public forum. Township Officials will monitor Township Social Media sites and ensure that discussion is legal and civil.

The following content or posts are prohibited and therefore subject to removal by the moderator:

1. Comments not related to the original posting, comments that are irrelevant or unintelligible
2. Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity, content that violates or promotes violating local ordinances.
3. Comments or content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination or hate on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability or the receipt of public assistance
4. Any comment or post that is defamatory, racist and/or anti-Semitic.
5. Comments that are vulgar, harass or threaten a person or organization, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations.
6. Spamming or repetitive content
7. Content in support or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures
8. Profane, obscene, sexually suggestive, explicit, or pornographic content or links to such sites
9. Information about a user that is private or personal
10. Promotion of services, products or activities not related to government business
11. Solicitation of commerce, including advertising any business or product.

Repeated offenses may result in a user being barred from commenting further on Township Social Media sites.

#### **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 Administrator 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 Administrator 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.

Any Township employee or volunteer found by the Township Administrator 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.

Any illegal activity shall be reported to the appropriate authorities.