SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY
FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS
Council Approved January __, 2020

PURPOSE:

The City of Stoughton has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "announced" or "spoken" on behalf of the City of Stoughton through the use of social media. This policy establishes guidelines for conveying information about the City and its events and activities.

This policy shall not be applied to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, speech or expression that is protected or privileged under law. This includes speech and expression protected under state or federal constitutions as well as labor laws or other applicable laws.

OPEN MEETINGS LAW COMPLIANCE:

All conduct by officials serving on a governmental body must comply with Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law. Elected officials should refrain from discussing business or action of the governmental body with one another while using social media. Communication among members of governmental bodies using social media may constitute a "meeting" under the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. Such "meetings would trigger a host of legal requirements and expenses for the City.

COMMUNICATING CITY BUSINESS:

Elected officials using social media to convey information about the City of Stoughton business, its events and activities on behalf of the City must follow these guiding principles:

- Communications must be factual and accurate and not reflect opinions or biases.
- Whenever possible, communications should be shared from an existing City-managed social media page or webpage. This can easily be done by "sharing" a City of Stoughton post or providing the direct link to the City's webpage. This ensure accuracy and that the original author is an expert in the subject.
- Communications must comply with policy, directives, professional expectations, and respect for privacy, confidentiality, and applicable legal guidelines for external communications.
- Ensure that legal right exists to publish all materials, including photos and articles and comply with all trademark, copyright, fair use, disclosure of processes and methodologies, confidentiality and financial disclosure laws.
- If identifying yourself, then maintain transparency by using your real name and elected position, and by being clear about your role regarding this subject.
- Communications must never be for political purposes or in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.

- Communications must never be for purposes of private business activity or commerce, or for personal motivation or sharing of personal opinion or commentary.
- Communications must not promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation, or other protected status.
- Communications must not compromise the safety or security of the public, public systems, or public services.

An important part of social media use is restraint. While the City of Stoughton desires to inform the community of City business, elected officials should not enter into debate or discourse with others on social media while promoting City business, events or activities.