

**CITY OF KIMBALL**  
**MUNICIPAL POLICY NUMBER 01-2017**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**DATE COUNCIL APPROVED:** May 2, 2017

**UPDATED:** June 1, 2021

**I. Purpose**

The City of Kimball strives to provide the public with accurate and timely information that is communicated in a professional manner in accordance with federal, state and local laws regarding public information and data practices. The City makes use of social media as a means to provide communication with the public. This policy seeks to ensure proper administration of the City of Kimball's social media sites by its representatives.

The City has limited control of social media accounts with third parties (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.). At the same time, there is a general expectation by the public that the City have a social media presence by which to share information about current City projects and City business. For municipal purposes, the City's social media accounts will be used for incidental, non-vital communication and general information only. It is not the purpose of the City's social media accounts to be a medium for transactions of City business. The one exception is in the case of a natural or man-made disaster, if it is determined by the City that the best means of communicating with the public is through social media account(s).

City representatives have the responsibility to use the City's social media resources in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner pursuant to all existing City policies.

**II. Policy**

The City of Kimball will determine, at its discretion, how its web-based social media resources will be designed, implemented and managed as part of its overall communication and information sharing strategy.

City of Kimball social media accounts are considered a City asset and administrator access to these accounts will be securely administered in accordance with the City's Computer Use Policy. The City reserves the right to shut down any of its social media sites or accounts for any reason without notice.

All social media websites created and utilized during the course and scope of an employee's performance of his/her job duties will be identified as belonging to the City of Kimball and include a link to the City's official website. The City of Kimball does not create or maintain social media accounts for its elected officials.

**III. Scope**

This policy applies to any existing or proposed social media websites sponsored, established, registered or authorized by the City of Kimball. The City's social media accounts are exclusively the following:

1. City of Kimball Facebook account at [www.facebook.com/kimballmn](http://www.facebook.com/kimballmn)

The City does not create, collect, disseminate or regulate use of any other social media accounts, including the personal accounts of its elected officials and staff.

#### **IV. Definition**

Social media are internet and mobile-based applications, websites and functions, other than email, for sharing and discussing information, where users can post photos, video, comments and links to other information to create content on any imaginable topic. This may be referred to as “user-generated content” or “consumer-generated media”.

Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites and apps such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Nextdoor
- Blogs
- Social news sites such as Reddit and BuzzFeed
- Video and photo sharing sites and apps such as YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat and Flickr
- Wikis, or shared encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia
- An every-emerging list of new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed above

As used in this policy, “employees and agents” means all City representatives, including its employees and other agents of the City, such as independent contractors or Councilmembers.

“Social media manager” means any City employee or agent with administrator access who, when posting or responding to a post, appears to the City social media account owner.

#### **V. Rules of Use**

City social media managers are responsible for managing City social media accounts or websites.

All approved sites will be clearly marked as the City of Kimball site and will be linked with the official City website ([www.ci.kimball.mn.us](http://www.ci.kimball.mn.us)). No one may establish social media accounts or websites on behalf of the City unless authorized in accordance with this policy.

The City’s social media page must conspicuously display or link to a public notice that informs the public of the purpose of the social media presence and the terms one agrees to in accessing, using or posting to the City’s social media page.

City social media accounts covered by this policy will not be used by social media managers for private or personal purposes or for the purpose of expressing private or personal views on personal, political or policy issues or to express personal views or concerns pertaining to City employment relations matters.

No City social media account may be used by the City or any social media manager to disclose private or confidential information. No social media website should be used to disclose sensitive information; if there is any question as to whether information is private, confidential or sensitive, contact the City Clerk.

Outside of situations of disaster, no City social media account will be used for transactions of City business.

Comments by members of the public are not routinely monitored 24/7 and members of the public should always contact City Hall if they have a request or question in regards to City business. As time allows, a response may be provided by a social media manager to a commented question by a member of the public, the initial post may be edited or a subsequent post may be created to include the information.

The City of Kimball's social media managers will not edit any posted comments. However, the City herein reserves the right to remove comments posted by members of the public on the City of Kimball's social media sites if they fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Obscene or pornographic content
- Direct threats to persons or property
- Material asserted to violate the intellectual property of another person
- Private, personal information about a person published without his/her consent
- Information that compromises a public safety security system
- Statutorily private, confidential or nonpublic data
- Are prejudiced or hurtful remarks made toward any person or entity, including an ethnic, racial or religious group
- Promote political organizations
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Hyperlinks to material that falls into one of the foregoing categories

A copy of the removed content will be saved in a social media archive along with an explanation of the specific policy violation requiring its removal.

A member of the public whose comment is removed may appeal the removal of the comment and seek reconsideration of its removal by contacting the City in writing and explaining how the comment does not fall into one of the categories for removal. A written response should be provided as soon as reasonably possible.

A member of the public who disputes the legality of any portion of this policy may dispute the particular portion in writing. The City should acknowledge the claim promptly and, upon consultation of the City Attorney, respond to the claim concerning legality of the policy portion as soon as reasonably possible under the circumstances.

The comments expressed on City of Kimball social media sites do not reflect the opinions or positions of the City of Kimball, its employees, advisory boards or elected officials.

The use of social media is intended to supplement rather than replace existing forms of communication with the public. The official website of the City of Kimball remains the primary source for online information and all content on City social media sites is considered a duplication of the original information. Whenever possible, a link to the original information or the official website will be provided.

## **VI. Data Ownership and Retention**

All communications or messages within social media accounts covered by this policy composed, sent or received on City of personal equipment are property of the City and will be subject to the Minnesota

Government Data Practices Act. This law classifies certain information as available to the public upon request. As no transactions of City business shall be conducted through social media accounts (outside of disasters), in accordance with the City's records retention schedule, the City shall retain all social media messages only until read.

**VII. Approval of Policy**

This policy shall be formally approved and adopted by the City Council.