

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES & GUIDELINES *FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS*

City of Coppel Resolution No. 2022-0426.1 adopted Social Media Best Practices and Guidelines for all officials. These guidelines provide background information and social media recommendations intended to help ensure that any city-related information published is accurate, professional, and in alignment with the Texas Public Information Act and the City's Code of Ethics. City officials should adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Public officials should separate personal social media accounts from professional social media accounts so that City-related matters and all public records generated from those posts are easily archived and to avoid City-related information being intermingled with personal posts not related to City matters.
2. Officials should not delete posts and related comments regarding any City-related matters to avoid violating record preservation requirements outlined in Texas Government Code Sec. 552.
3. Officials should be mindful that posting content regarding City-related matters could inadvertently result in the violation of the Open Meetings Law if enough other public officials respond or comment on the post, resulting in a quorum.
4. It is expected that officials will occasionally have access to information that is non-public. It is recommended that officials consider the impact of sharing this type of information publicly prior to posting.
5. Officials should be honest and accurate when posting information or news, and should quickly correct any mistakes, misstatements and/or factual errors in content upon discovery.
6. Officials should exercise caution with respect to posted comments, particularly those concerning the City and the business of the City.
7. Officials are strongly encouraged to consider the potential impact of social media statements prior to posting. Public comments, in any forum – including on personal and professional social media accounts – that contain racial slurs, profane language or acronyms for profane language, express bigotry toward a group based on race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, party affiliation, or any other legally protected classification may be considered conduct unbecoming.
8. Officials should consider whether liking, sharing, retweeting, or commenting on any social media posts could be perceived as an endorsement of or about the City, its employees, constituents, other public officials, suppliers, vendors, or contractors relating to views on various issues, including political affiliation.
9. Officials should refrain from using social media accounts to communicate with City employees about City-related matters, as this creates a public record on employees' personal accounts that must be retained per Public Records Law outlined in Texas Government Code Sec. 552.
10. Public officials should be cautious in using official City-provided logos, taglines, symbols, and photographs that belong to or are licensed by the City on personal social media sites. Elected and appointed officials choosing to use official City-provided photographs and identifying themselves as elected officials on personal social media sites should tailor communications on those sites accordingly.

RECORDS RETENTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Any City-related content created or received using a social media account may be considered public record. As such, the following should be considered:

1. The City does not archive or manage social media accounts for officials. The official is solely responsible for the retention and archival of content published to individual accounts.
2. It is recommended that elected and appointed officials create a digital folder for City-related social media content. Officials should capture screenshots of City-related posts and save them in this folder. Any posts that are deleted or hidden from an elected or appointed official's social media account for violation of the City's posted social media guidelines - whether the content was posted by the official or a member of the public - should be captured via screenshot and retained.