MUNCIE
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MEMORANDUM

To: All City of Muncie Employees

From: Jeff Howe, Deputy Mayor, Acting Mayor

Date: July 13, 2026

Subject: Implementation of Employee Social Media Policy

Effective July 13, 2026, the City of Muncie Employee Social Media Policy is in effect and applies to all City employees.

As public servants, each of us represents the City of Muncie every day through our actions and communications. Whether interacting through an official City social media account or a personal account, our conduct should reflect the professionalism, integrity, and respect expected of public employees. Maintaining the public's trust is a responsibility shared by every employee.

All employees are expected to review and comply with the policy. Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that employees receive the policy and complete the Employee Acknowledgement Addendum. While the policy and acknowledgement will be distributed electronically, employees without regular computer access must also be provided a printed copy and paper acknowledgement form. Completed acknowledgements should be returned to Human Resources for placement in the employee's personnel file.

Questions regarding the policy should be directed to Human Resources or the City Administration's Legal Counsel, Beasley & Gilkison.

Thank you for your continued professionalism and commitment to serving the citizens of Muncie.

CITY OF MUNCIE

EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Approved by: Jeffrey Howe – Acting Mayor
Effective Date: July 13, 2026

Section 1: Purpose

This policy establishes expectations for City of Muncie (the "City") employees regarding the use of social media, both when acting in an official capacity and when using personal accounts where such use may affect the City's operations, reputation, legal obligations, or workplace environment. This policy is intended to promote professionalism, accountability, transparency, and respect for constitutional speech protections. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information provided on its social media accounts and the content that is attributed to the City and its officials.

Section 2: Scope

This policy applies to all City employees, regardless of position, classification, or department. This policy also applies to contract personnel, consultants, and other non-employee service providers to the extent incorporated by contract or vendor agreement. The City reserves the right to change, modify, or amend all or part of this policy at any time deemed necessary or appropriate, without notice.

Section 3: Definitions

"Social Media" includes any digital or online platform that allows for public, semi-public, or internal communication, including Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, text-based platforms used for public communication, and similar services.

"Official Social Media Account" means any account created, maintained, or authorized by the City for conducting public business or disseminating official information.

"Personal Account" means any account not designated as an official social media account, managed or owned by any City employee, regardless of position, classification, or department. The accounts of contract personnel, consultants, and other non-employee service providers to the extent incorporated by contract or vendor agreement shall also be considered Personal Accounts, subject to the terms of this policy.

Section 4: Official Use of Social Media

4.1 Authorization. Only employees authorized by their Department Head and/or the Communications Director may post, respond, or otherwise engage on behalf of the City using Official

Social Media Accounts. Employees shall not use personal social media accounts to conduct City-related business.

4.2 Professional Conduct. Employees engaging on behalf of the City must maintain a professional, respectful, and neutral tone; provide accurate and appropriate information; avoid arguments, debates, or prolonged exchanges with members of the public; and disengage from hostile, repetitive, or unproductive interactions.

4.3 Pre-Approval. Responses to public comments or messages should be approved in advance by the Mayor, Department Head or Communications Director unless prior guidance has been provided.

4.4 No Obligation to Respond. Employees are not required to monitor or respond to social media comments or messages as part of their job duties unless specifically assigned.

4.5 Official Channels. Employees shall not use social media as a substitute for official City processes. Members of the public must be directed to appropriate channels for complaints, service requests, or formal communication. The City's website (www.Muncie.in.gov) shall remain the City's primary internet information platform.

4.6 Content Accuracy. Content posted on Official Social Media Accounts must be accurate, timely, and consistent with the City's official position where applicable.

4.7 Civility and Discretion to Monitor Content. The City requires all employees engaging with Official Social Media Accounts to engage in civil discussions with all participants. The City reserves the right to reject and/or remove comments and/or materials solely at its discretion if the City deems that comments and/or materials to be opposed to this policy.

Section 5: Personal Use of Social Media

5.1 General Standard. Employees may use personal social media accounts; however, such use must not interfere with job duties, the operations of the City, and shall not occur during work hours (excluding breaks). Employees may not use City-issued email addresses to sign up for or access personal social media accounts. .

5.2 Representation of the City. Employees must not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of the City unless explicitly authorized. Employees shall not use City titles, logos, uniforms, or identifiers in a manner that suggests official endorsement or imply that personal views are official City positions.

5.3 Confidential Information. Employees are strictly prohibited from posting, sharing, or discussing confidential City information, personnel matters, ongoing investigations, non-public records, or information otherwise protected by law.

5.4 Workplace Impact. Employees may be subject to discipline for social media activity that disrupts workplace operations, undermines working relationships, impairs performance, or violates City policy or applicable law.

5.5 First Amendment. This section is not intended to restrict protected speech under the First Amendment but to address conduct that materially impacts the workplace or City operations.

5.6 Disclaimer. Employees are encouraged to include a disclaimer on personal accounts when discussing matters related to City business, such as: "This account reflects my personal views and not those of my employer."

5.7 Work Hours. Personal use of social media during work hours shall be limited to breaks, shall not occur during actual work hours, and shall not interfere with job duties, except where such use is part of assigned responsibilities.

5.8 Open Door Compliance. Communication among members of governmental bodies utilizing social media have the potential to constitute a "meeting" under the Indiana Open Door Law. Members of these bodies are strongly advised to be cognizant of their communications and seek legal counsel prior to communication to ensure compliance with the Indiana Open Door Law.

Section 6: Use of City Resources

6.1 Personal Use of Official Social Media Accounts. Employees shall not use City time, equipment, or resources for Personal Social Media use except for incidental use consistent with City policy.

6.2 Improper Storage of City Records. City records are prohibited from being permanently stored solely on social media platforms. Only copies of documents may be stored on social media for extended periods. City records (including documents, photos, videos, posts, or any other City record) created for social media are to be transferred by the user as soon as practical to City systems that are routinely backed up and archived or in the alternative, the City may contract with an archival company to provide such services.

Section 7: Account Management and Security

7.1 Authorized Users. Departments maintaining social media accounts must ensure that access is limited to designated users approved by the Mayor, Department Head, and/or Communications Director, in a writing identifying said individuals as Authorized Users.

7.2 Credentials. Official account credentials shall be maintained securely and, where practicable, in a City-controlled method approved by the City. The Mayor and/or an employee's Department Head may revoke the credentials of any individual determined to be in violation of this Employee Social Media Policy.

7.3 Duplicate or Unofficial Accounts. Employees shall not create unofficial accounts representing the City or any City department.

7.4 Separation or Reassignment. Access to official accounts shall be removed promptly upon employee separation, reassignment, or revocation of authorization.

7.5 Public Access. The City shall follow the Indiana Public Access Laws and relevant records retention schedules as it pertains to the City's Official Social Media Accounts and Sites. Requests for public information regarding social media accounts and sites should be submitted and responded to in accordance with City policy and the Indiana Public Access Laws.

7.6 ADA Compliance. The Mayor, Communications Director and all applicable Departments Heads shall ensure all of the City's Official Social Media Account(s) and Sites fully comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act by the required compliance date set by the United States Department of Justice, and any additional extensions issued by the Department. The compliance date for State and local government entities with a total population of 50,000 or more was extended to April 26, 2027, pursuant to an Interim Final Rule effective April 20, 2026.

Section 8: Record Preservation & Moderation

8.1 Public Records. Posts, comments, direct messages, attachments, and related account activity on official accounts may constitute public records and shall be retained in accordance with applicable Indiana and City retention schedules.

8.2 Moderation. The City may moderate comments or interactions on official accounts in a viewpoint-neutral manner, consistent with law and platform terms of service. The City of Muncie's social media pages have not been opened as traditional public forums, but rather the City's pages function as limited public forums. With guidance from the Department of Law, the City is authorized to remove unauthorized content links, comments, posts, etc. on the City's social media sites that do not conform with the requirements of this policy in a viewpoint-neutral manner.

8.3 Preservation. When a post or communication is removed, edited, or archived, the City shall preserve a record of the original content to the extent required by law or retention schedules/policy.

Section 9: Compliance Violations

9.1 Conflicts of Interest. The City's Official Social Media Account(s) and Sites shall comply with the City's Conflict of Interest and Ethics Codes and all applicable rules and policies.

9.2 Non-Guaranteed Responsiveness. The City does not guarantee responsiveness to user comments, messages, or interactions on its Official Social Media Account(s) and/or Sites. The Communications Director or designated departmental social media managers shall not be required to relay social media comments or messages to City personnel.

9.3 Guaranteed Responsiveness. When required, the City shall provide any guaranteed responsiveness under state and/or federal law to any member of the general public who contacts the City directly through the City's website, the public records request portal, the "Report It Portal," via phone, or in-person. Response times may vary.

9.4 Violations. Violation of this Employee Social Media Policy may result in removal of social media access or posting privileges and disciplinary action, up to and including termination, consistent with applicable City policies, collective bargaining agreements, contract terms, and applicable law.

Section 10: Disclaimers

Section 10.1 No Assumption of Liability. The City does not endorse or assume liability for any content posted by third-party users. The City disclaims liability for advertisements, videos, promoted content, or comments posted by the general public on the City's Official Social Media Account(s) and/or Sites.

Section 10.2 External Content. The responsibility for external content of comments rests solely with the organizations(s) and/or individual(s) providing them. Any inclusion or exclusion of content or comments does not imply endorsement or opposition by the City or any of its employees or elected officials.

Employee Social Media Policy

Employee Acknowledgement Addendum

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the City of Muncie Employee Social Media Policy. I understand that I am responsible for complying with the requirements outlined in this policy and that failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, in accordance with applicable City policies and law.

I understand that a signed copy of this acknowledgment will be maintained in my personnel file.

Employee Name (Printed): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Department: _____

Employee Social Media Policy – FAQ

Why did the City adopt a Social Media Policy?
To provide clear expectations for social media use while protecting the City's operations, reputation, and employees' constitutional rights.

Does this policy apply to me?
Yes. It applies to all City employees.

Can I still have and use personal social media?
Yes. The policy does not prohibit personal social media use.

Can I express my personal opinions online?
Yes. The policy respects employees' First Amendment rights but prohibits representing personal opinions as the City's official position or sharing confidential information.

Can I identify myself as a City employee?
Yes, but you should not imply you are speaking on behalf of the City unless authorized.

Who can post on the City's official social media accounts?
Only employees authorized by their Department Head and/or the Communications Director.

Should I respond to comments on the City's social media pages?
Only if you are authorized and it is part of your job duties. When responding on behalf of the City, remain professional and avoid arguments, debates, or prolonged back-and-forth exchanges.

Can citizens use social media to submit complaints or service requests?
No. They should be directed to the appropriate City department or official communication channel.

Are posts on official City social media public records?
Yes. They may be subject to Indiana public records and records retention laws.

What if I'm unsure whether I should post something?
Ask your Department Head, the Communications Director, Human Resources, or the Administration's legal counsel before posting.