

STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF HENRY  
CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE

RESOLUTION R201199

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ESTABLISHING A SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY FOR THE CITY; AUTHORIZING THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST SIGNATURES AND AFFIX THE OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE CITY, AS NECESSARY; REPEALING INCONSISTENT RESOLUTIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

**WHEREAS**, the City of Stockbridge ("City") is a municipal corporation located within Henry County, Georgia duly organized and existing under the laws of the State of Georgia and is charged with providing public services to residents located within the corporate limits of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City finds it necessary to establish a social media usage policy for the City.

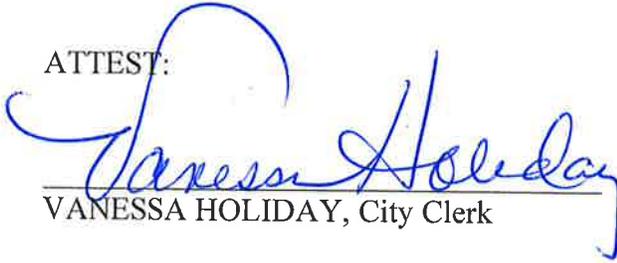
THEREFORE, IT IS NOW RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. **Approval of Execution.** The City hereby approves the social media usage policy attached hereto as Exhibit A.
2. **Documents.** The City Clerk is authorized to execute, attest to, and seal any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the amendment, subject to approval as to form by the City Attorney.
3. **Severability.** To the extent any portion of this Resolution is declared to be invalid, unenforceable or non-binding, that shall not affect the remaining portions of this Resolution.
4. **Repeal of Conflicting Provisions.** All City resolutions are hereby repealed to the extent they are inconsistent with this Resolution.
5. **Effective Date.** This Resolution shall be effective on the date of its approval by the City Council and Mayor as provided in the City Charter.

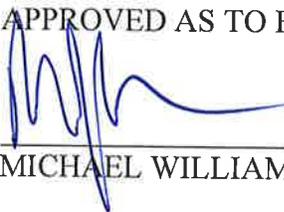
SO BE IT RESOLVED this 25<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ANTHONY S. FORD, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
VANESSA HOLIDAY, City Clerk (SEAL)

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL WILLIAMS, City Attorney

**EXHIBIT A**

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY**

## EXHIBIT A

### CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE POLICY

#### The social media adventure

The City of Stockbridge has embarked on the adventure that is today's social media. In an effort to build relationships, reach audiences that don't have access to or typically utilize the City's more traditional means of communication (e.g., newsletter), share information as needed on real-time basis, and retain its reputation as a progressive community, Stockbridge has begun to utilize social media outlets. We anticipate that our foray into social media will be an ongoing adventure that will require us to be flexible and open to opportunities.

Despite the fact that social media is still an emerging technology and that the way in which people use the technology will continue to evolve, the City of Stockbridge, through this policy, seeks to establish some basic guidelines for use of its social media outlets.

#### Our vision for social media usage

- While social media provides an effective forum for building relationships and for conveying small "bites" of information, they do not serve as the City's sole or even primary means of communication with residents, businesses, and others. The City of Stockbridge utilizes well-established means (e.g., public quarterly town hall meetings, website, and quarterly newsletter) to effectively share information with a variety of audiences.
- Social media forums provide an interactive means of sharing information that relates to the City of Stockbridge and of engaging in ongoing conversation. They provide an easy-to-use means of engaging citizens and others.
- Social media can be especially effective in communicating information in crisis situations when timeliness of the information is crucial.
- Social media is a particularly ineffective tool for communicating about complex issues and for addressing riled emotions. The City will use more appropriate means to communicate detailed information about complex issues and to discuss concerns with citizens and others who post potentially volatile comments.
- Practical and legal considerations may sometimes constrain, prevent, or prohibit discussion of certain topics, such as court cases, through this medium.

- We recognize that not everything posted will (or should be) flattering to the City. Posts that offer thoughtful criticism of the organization (not individuals) and City initiatives are welcome and shall not be removed or altered except as provided for in this policy.

#### Maintenance of City-owned accounts

- The City of Stockbridge will utilize one central account with desired social media networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, SeeClickFix and others). Individual departments and employees will utilize the central account to convey desired communication on behalf of the City.
- Management of social media accounts and initiatives shall lie primarily within the economic and community development department, and specifically (but not solely) with the public information officer (PIO).
- A limited number of staff members, including those in economic and community development, shall have access to social media accounts and passwords and permission to post as "City of Stockbridge." To ensure consistent application of, and compliance with this policy, as well as editorial review, postings shall be approved by the PIO prior to posting.
- Elected officials and other staff members are not to post, without advance approval, to the City of Stockbridge pages as representatives of the organization.
- Other City staff members may request that authorized staff post a message from the City of Stockbridge on their behalf.
- Responses on City pages/accounts from employees' personal accounts are not permitted.
- The City will strive to share information honestly and openly and to receive comments and feedback with an "open mind" in a spirit of collaboration.
- The City shall not post untruthful and purposefully inaccurate information. If an inadvertent inaccuracy is posted, a correction will be published as soon as possible.
- Designated City staff members such as the PIO and/or their back-up, or the City Manager may post comments/replies without advance review or permission of City management. However, if staff members have concerns or desire advance review, they may request such from the city manager, PIO, or appropriate department head.
- The City will not edit others' posts/responses.

- At all times, employees shall use good judgment when posting. Employees shall refrain from posts that may be interpreted as offensive, obscene, demeaning, or inflammatory. Confidential information shall not be posted.
- At times, employees may determine other means/tools are more appropriate ways to respond to citizen/fan posts or may determine that it is best not to respond to a post at all.
- In general, individual complaints, concerns, or service requests will not be addressed via social media.
- Staff members shall resist the temptation to engage in back-and-forth conversation regarding topics that are complex, controversial, heated, or otherwise sensitive nature.
- City employees, in consultation with the city manager, determine when an issue raised by others has reached a "critical mass" that requires a City response on the City's account.
- When employees do choose to reply to negative or heated comments, they need to do so in a manner that reflects positively upon the City.
- A standard reply may be used to direct users with concerns related to sensitive or complex issues. This standard reply shall lead something like: "The City of Stockbridge is very interested. in insights, concerns expressed here. However, complex topics typically are not effectively discussed in forums such as this. Please contact the City' public information officer or city manager at 770-389-7900 if you wish to voice your concern further or obtain additional information."
- Employees who respond to posts on City accounts (as City of Stockbridge) shall strive to be sure that their posts pass the "grandma" test; that is, posts shall be of the sort that would not cause grandma disappointment, embarrassment, or to shake her finger and scold

#### Guidelines and limitations for all users

- The conversation shall remain civil and respectful always.
- Inaccurate information posted by non-employees may be addressed and corrected, on a factual basis only.
- In an effort to keep the conversation open to all and to limit spam, posts from the same individual or organization shall be limited to no more than two (2) per day.

- Personal attacks, vulgar language, discriminatory or inflammatory posts by others are strongly discouraged. If a post is determined to be in violation of this policy, such posts may be removed.
- Elected officials may not post as “City of Stockbridge” or discuss campaigns issues and other political matters on City accounts.
- Elected officials are encouraged to establish their own social media accounts and to be solely responsible for its content.
- Campaigning — on behalf of political candidates or in support or opposition to issues is prohibited on behalf of the City.
- Political candidates are encouraged to establish their own fan pages and social media accounts and are prohibited, even if incumbent City elected officials, from using City of Stockbridge accounts, pages, etc.
- Violating this policy may result in removal of access to the service, disciplinary action, or both.
- This Social Media Policy shall be revised as needed. Posts to the City of Stockbridge's social media accounts shall constitute acceptance of this policy.
- City social media accounts strive to be fair and consistent and therefore they will not be used to promote individuals, businesses organizations, or non-profits since doing so could be considered unfair to other such entities and would require increased staffing. For this reason, only City events and Council initiatives, as approved by City Council, will be promoted. A community event or other initiative would require approval by the City Manager.

*Policy revised 08/25/2020*