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UMZIMVUBU LOCAL
MUNICIPALITY SOCIAL
MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Umzimvubu Local Municipality comprehends the need to utilise modern communication resources in this information age. Social media has become an acceptable means of communication with citizens over the course of the last few years. Social media has afforded local governments the opportunity to engage with users using a personal and more direct approach, narrowing the gap between local government and communities.

As social media has become, in most cases, the chosen medium for communication, it is only natural that Umzimvubu Local Municipality take a step towards this form of communication in order to keep up with the changes in the rest of the world. This would be in order to take advantage of the free means of getting information across to the public.

By adopting social media as a form of communication it can help Umzimvubu Local Municipality to better inform, understand, respond to and attract the attention of specific audiences. It also enables interactive communication that is not possible via other platforms. Such interactivity allows for the exchange of perspectives and opinions among multiple audiences. It also allows effective and efficient communication to take place where those conversations are already occurring.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

People are using social media to engage in numerous behaviours including socialisation, entertainment and information seeking. It is important for the municipality to improve the efficiency of our communication processes through social media use by continuously engaging communities on service delivery matters, being responsive to communities and allowing two-way communication at all times.

In order to reach as many people as possible, Umzimvubu Local Municipality balances its communications programme by engaging in traditional media as well as social media. The primary purpose of social media is to take part in on-going conversations of interest to the Municipality, disseminate brief message quickly, provide links for further information, and promote municipal sponsored activities. Social media is about communicating directly with the community: sharing municipal information and listening to our communities. Responsiveness, openness and mutual respect are essential at all times.

3. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS TO

3.1 Improve service delivery.

3.2 Allow two-way dialogue.

3.3 Connect the Municipality with the communities we serve in a cost-effective way that promotes good relationships.

3.4 Improve relationships between municipalities and key sectors of the community, and to

3.5 Strengthen government and civil society.

4. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Umzimvubu Local Municipality acknowledges that it has a responsibility to inform its internal and external stakeholders of identified issues, progress made and results achieved in addressing its mandate. There are several government policy documents that encourage the involvement of communities. These are the Municipal Systems Act, the Municipal Structures



Act, and the Municipal Finance Management Act. This policy is also informed by the Umzimvubu Local Municipality' communication Policy.

4.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

4.1.2 Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000

4.1.3 Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000

4.1.4 National Communications Policy, 2017

4.1.5 Public Service Act, 1984

4.1.6 The Protection of Information Act, 1982

4.1.7 The Copyright Act, 1987

4.1.8 Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2000

4.1.9 Local Government Municipal Systems Act, no. 32 of 2000, Chapter 4: Community Participation

4.1.10 GCIS Social Media Policy Guidelines April 2011

5. SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS MANAGEMENT

5.1 Municipal Departments must submit approved content they require posted on social media platforms to the Municipal Communication unit and/or Communication Team, which then needs to be approved and signed off by the Municipal Manager or HOC in the event where the Municipal Manager is not available.

5.2 Communications Department will be required to manage content on the municipal social media accounts.

5.3 The Communications Department/Communicator must ensure consistency of messaging, to avoid confusion and miscommunication.

5.4 Communications Department/Communicator is expected to respond to positive or negative comments on the respective social media platforms only if approved by the municipal manager

5.5 Communications Department/Communicator will be responsible for the monitoring and reporting of the respective social media accounts.

5.6 The Communication Department will be responsible for ensuring adherence and reviewing of this policy

6. RULES AND REGULATIONS

6.1 FOR UMZIMVUBU LOCAL MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

6.1.1 Content and conversations on social media should be professional and intended to inform and engage. Information posted by the Municipality is accurate, relevant and consistent with municipal policies and protocols.

6.1.2 Only appointed administrators in the Communications Unit will post content and comment on the social media sites.

6.1.3 Administrators will respect confidentiality and sensitivity of the information, including financial and business information, privileged information, legal advice, personal information,



home addresses and telephone numbers, or any information not generally available to the public.

6.1.4 Some level of criticism is expected, and this presents an opportunity to participate in the ongoing conversation, correct misinformation and deliver service. Negative comments should be responded to using constructive feedback rather than censorship.

6.1.5 It is sometimes appropriate, within the professional judgement of the administrator, to allow public commentary to take its course without Municipal intervention.

6.1.6 Employees or contractors of the Umzimvubu Local Municipality have a legal duty to act in good faith towards the Municipality

6.1.7 They may therefore not do anything that damages or tarnishes the reputation of the Umzimvubu Local Municipality and must always act in its best interests of the organisation

6.1.8 With negative comments, for e.g. on service delivery, it is important to try to take the conversation in a private channel to avoid prolonged negative conversations in public.

6.1.9 Employees may not comment negatively on social media about anything associated with the Municipality.

6.1.10 Umzimvubu Local Municipality will not use emoticons or acronyms to communicate with fans but will use a light, friendly tone where appropriate when communicating and having a conversation with an individual.

6.1.12 Posting is forever, what is written, posted, uploaded is now a public domain. Therefore remain mindful that we are speaking on behalf of Umzimvubu Local Municipality

6.1.13 Continues monitoring of sites for inaccurate or inappropriate information and responding quickly

6.1.14 No confidential information will be posted on any social media under any circumstance. It is critical that any information shared on the various social media platforms is not sensitive or confidential in any way.

6.1.15 Comments containing any of the following shall not be allowed on the Umzimvubu Local Municipality social media sites and may be removed by the Communications Department in conjunction with management and Legal Department:

i. Disrespectful language and content

ii. Content that promotes discrimination on the basis of race, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability and sexual orientation.

iii. Sexual content or links to sexual content

iv. Content related to non-municipal related sales, advertising or promotions (commercial advertising)

v. Content for the purposes of promoting a candidate for municipal, provincial or national election.

6.1.16 It is the Municipality's responsibility to remain impartial yet informative when communicating with the public about political matters.



6.2 FOR POLITICAL PRINCIPALS

6.2.1 Everything Councillors/employees do and say on social media reflects on the Elias Local Municipality and its reputation

6.2.2 The Municipality is not to share political opinions of any office bearers on any of the department's social media platforms. However official statements made by office bearers which can be published on the Municipality's website can be shared on social media platforms.

6.2.3 The Municipality must not share content of a party political nature. Office bearers must use their personal accounts to publish party political statements.

6.2.4 In conducting themselves on social media, it is important that Councillors use sound judgment and common sense, act with professionalism and integrity, and adhere to the Municipality's values.

6.2.5 Councillors should restrict party political messages and campaigning to their personal pages

6.2.6 The Municipality will not share or endorse any political content on any of its social media platforms at any time

6.2.7 Councillors should also stop posting administrative information via the social media platform to the general public, if the procedure is still in the process of completion and not yet finalised

6.2.8 This type of information should first be clarified and verified with the Municipal Manager before it can be made public.

7 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

7.1 It is the Municipality's responsibility to provide training to the Communications Department /Communicator using social media on behalf of the Municipality.

7.2 All employees using social media on behalf of the Municipality must undergo relevant training before gaining access to any social media accounts.

7.3 Communicators must be provided with the necessary tools in order to manage municipal social media accounts on desktop/laptop computers and mobile/smartphone. These tools include: access to social media platforms; budget and/or cell phone allowance to manage municipal social media platforms remotely (i.e. airtime and/or data to manage social media via smartphone) as the need arises and the available budget permits.

8 PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER AT ALL TIMES

8.1 Only administrators can post Municipal content on official sites and employees are not permitted to represent the municipality on these sites/ the administrator must put signature at the end of each post.

8.2 Municipal officials who participate in conversations on the Municipality's social media sites do so as third party visitors and, as such, are personally responsible for their comments and information posted.

8.3 Municipal employees using social media platforms and wishing to provide personal comments on platforms, could contravene the accepted Code of Conduct and bring the public service into disrepute or be misinterpreted as being an official representative of the Municipality.



8.4 All employees must adhere to the Municipality's Code of Conduct at all times.

8.5 Visiting social networking sites are not permitted via the municipality's infrastructure

8.6 Any personal social media account, or accounts unrelated to the Municipality, are not to be registered using a Municipal e-mail address. This applies to any social media platform that requires an e-mail account to register. These accounts must make use of private email addresses and contact details.

8.7 Nothing is private on social media platforms. If individual staff members share something on any social media platform, even their own, they cannot claim that their privacy has been violated.

8.8 No politics on municipal pages.

8.10 Employees should keep their tonality professional, while not losing the personal touch.

8.11 All posts should be relevant to the community.

8.12 Content to be shared is about events, departmental collaborations, awareness campaigns, links on stories, vacancies, tenders, local achievement and community-based campaigning.


9. SOCIAL MEDIA MISCONDUCT

9.1 Any action or behaviour by Councillors or members of staff, which is in conflict with this Policy, will be deemed a misbehaviour of the Code of Conduct of Councillors or Staff members, as the case may be.

9.2 This policy is also informed by the Municipality's Communication's Policy, Language Policy and ICT Policy.

Confirmed By:

COUNCILLOR NGONYOLO
SPEAKER



MR GPT NOTA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

DATE: _____



APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

The Municipal Council has approved this policy and amendments thereof.

AUTHENTICATION

The amendments of the policy and or the new policy was adopted by the Council on the
23 / 01 / 2020

As per Council Resolution number 215 / 19 / 20

Signed off



Mr. G.P.T. Nota

Municipal Manager



Cllr. N.F Ngonyolo

Speaker of the Council

