

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF BONFIELD  
BY-LAW NO. 2023-39**

**BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**WHEREAS** Section 10(2)(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001 S.O. 2001, as amended, states that single tier municipalities may pass bylaws respecting the governance of the municipality; and

**WHEREAS** the Council for the Township of Bonfield desires to increase communication opportunities with the community and therefore deems it expedient to set a policy outlining protocols for the use of social media.

**NOW THEREFORE** the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the Township of Bonfield enacts as follows:

1. THAT the Social Media Policy attached hereto as Schedule "A" and is hereby forming part of this bylaw be approved.
2. THAT this By-Law will come into force and take effect on the date of the final passing in Open Council.

**READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND FINALLY PASSED THIS  
12<sup>th</sup> DAY OF SEPTMEBER 2023.**

  
MAYOR

  
CAO/CLERK



## BONFIELD TOWNSHIP

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### Bonfield Social Media Policy

Date: September 7, 2023	Revision Date:	Adopted bylaw No. Draft 1
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#### 1. Policy Statement

The Township of Bonfield is committed to communicating and engaging with residents, visitors, and stakeholders in an inclusive and respectful manner, in a variety of ways, including social media. The Township supports the responsible use of social media for Bonfield municipal business purposes. By using one voice across all Corporate Social Media, the Township strives to provide timely and reliable information in a professional manner.

#### 2. Purpose

- A. This Policy clearly defines what is and is not acceptable in terms of the use of Corporate Social Media and outlines consequences of misuse.
- B. Identifies existing policies and guidelines, and provincial and federal legislation, that apply to the use of social media by municipal officials.
- C. Sets out the approval process for the use of social media for municipal officials for Town business purposes.

#### 3. Definitions

- A. **Follow** means to subscribe to a social media account of another user and receive their posts as updates.
- B. **Municipal Official** means a paid employee, volunteer, member of a Township Committee or Board, Council members.
- C. **Political Material** means comments or posts made by politicians, supporters or otherwise, for the purpose of political gain.
- D. **Social media** means the web-based technologies and sites which allow users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, photographs, videos, and interests.
- E. **Social Media Manager** means Township of Bonfield's CAO or designate and representatives authorized with posting and reviewing content on Township Social Media sites.
- F. **Township of Bonfield Social Media** means social media sites created and managed by Township staff and representatives.

#### 4. Scope

- A. This Social Media Policy applies to all Township of Bonfield municipal officials when posting, sharing, or commenting on Township of Bonfield owned social media sites and participation on non-municipal social media sites regarding municipal business.

*Small Community, Big Heart*



- B. The Township of Bonfield owned Social Media sites are managed and administered by the Township to ensure consistent use, messaging, and monitoring.
  - i. Township and Department Accounts: Managed by CAO or designate
  - ii. Bonfield Public Library: Managed by Librarian or designate
  
- C. The Township of Bonfield Social Media accounts are an extension of the workplace and the Township is committed to providing a safe, secure, and respectful environment for our Municipal Officials, residents, and visitors by:
  - a. Mandating a harassment and violence free space,
  - b. Monitoring behaviour and taking appropriate action, and
  - c. Ensuring the use of respectful language.

## 5. Rules for Engagement

- A. The Township's Social Media sites are not a platform for individuals or municipal officials to share their personal agendas or spread misinformation
  
- B. Departments are encouraged to proactively identify relevant programs and services as content for the Town's social media pages in advance to the CAO or designate for formatting, messaging, and branding prior to posting
  
- C. Municipal Officials are welcomed and encouraged to participate in social media, through their own accounts, while respecting the municipal Code of Conduct and applicable Township Policies, Provincial and Federal legislation.
  
- D. Municipal Officials posting or commenting on Township owned social media must ensure compliance with all Township Policies, and that privacy, confidentiality, copyright and data protection laws are adhered to, and must not make comments that are considered defamatory or libelous or in any way detrimental to the municipality.
  
- E. As a representative of the Township of Bonfield, it is expected that any time a public *statement is made regarding the Township (including on personal social media accounts), that the Official/individual making the statement will be held to the same standards* of professionalism that they would on Township owned/operated social media accounts.
  
- F. Municipal Officials shall not make negative remarks or express opinions which could be viewed as disparaging of the Town on any social media sites.
  
- G. Municipal Officials are encouraged to share Township posts on their personal social media pages.
  - i. If their friends/followers make negative comments about the Township on their page, employees are encouraged to remove such comments.
  - ii. Township posts shall not be shared or directly posted on other group pages/sites unless the employee is the administrator for that group and

shares directly from the Township social media site, not their personal accounts.

- iii. Officials posting on their personal social media should be mindful that duty of confidentiality continues to apply and shall not :
  - 1. reveal confidential/private or personal information gained through work/volunteering, even if no longer affiliated with the Township,
  - 2. use visuals (images, logos, etc.) that suggest the account represents the Township of Bonfield
  - 3. Undertake any action which could compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the public service.
- H. Municipal Officials are not permitted to act on behalf of the Township as spokespeople using their personal accounts on any social media site, website, forum, or other online communication channel.
- I. Passwords will be changed on all Social Media accounts when an official leaves the Township that has access as a designate to the Township's Social Media accounts.

#### **6. Internal/External Content and Commenting Standards**

All municipal social media sites must contain a link to the Township's Social Media Policy which contains the terms and conditions of use.

- A. To help ensure a respectful dialogue for the public and municipal officials any comments, posts, and messages that contain any of the following may be hidden or deleted:
  - i. Profane, obscene, racist, or otherwise discriminatory content,
  - i. Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language,
  - ii. Plagiarized material or copyrighted material,
  - iii. Solicitation of commerce or for personal gain,
  - iv. Violations of municipal by-law, provincial or federal law, or encouragement of illegal activity,
  - v. Information that may compromise safety, or security of the public, municipal property, or staff.
  - vi. Confidential information published without prior consent,
  - vii. Promotion of any Political Materials including candidates, platforms, etc..
  - viii. Comments not germane to the original post,
  - ix. Comments that are inaccurate, misleading, off-topic, spreading misinformation or disinformation regarding Township Services, programs, operations, staff, or Council
  - x. Content considered inappropriate by the Township, If you believe a submission to any municipal social media site violates the guidelines, please report it immediately to the Township by emailing [cao.clerk@bonfieldtownship.com](mailto:cao.clerk@bonfieldtownship.com) or calling 705-776-2641

- B. The Township may block or ban anyone from the Township of Bonfield Social Media sites who posts comments as described above.
- C. All posts are monitored by municipal staff daily, Monday to Friday  
The Township will make every reasonable effort to respond to concerns and questions directed to its social media accounts; however, at its discretion the Township may request the discussion be redirected to a more appropriate channel: phone, email or visit the municipal office. The reason(s) for this request may include but are not limited to:
  - i. privacy concerns (resident or official),
  - ii. character limitations for messaging,
  - iii. amount of information required to resolve an inquiry, and
  - iv. to ensure customer enquiries and concerns are addressed by the proper department.
- D. Posts and inquiries from the public are not to be individual requests or questions. Residents and the public shall continue to send private and specific information requests to the municipal office either by attending in person, telephone or email. Social media accounts are not intended to replace mainstream communication methods. Municipal Officials will not respond to private inquiries from Social Media Accounts.
- E. The Township of Bonfield Social Media is a platform for sharing events, municipal news and notices and community wide posts of interest for non-profit.

#### **7. References and Related Documents**

- Code of Conduct Members of Council, Committees and Local Boards
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Employee Confidentiality
- Protection of Personal Information (MFIPPA)
- Discrimination, Violence and Harassment Free Workplace
- Progressive Discipline

#### **7. Consequences of Non-Compliance**

- A. An employee's failure to comply with this Policy may result in progressive discipline up to and including termination of employment.
- B. Any violations of the Code of Conduct by Council / Committee/Board Members will be dealt with according to the resolution process outlined in the Code and in consultation with the Township Clerk.

#### **9. Review Cycle**

The policy will be reviewed on an as needed basis.