

P O L I C Y



Department Communications	Policy No. AD(42)	Page 1 of 3
Policy Title Social Media - Council	Date: March 28, 2019	Resolution No. C/119/19

Policy Statement:

Social Media outlets are tools to provide information, ask for feedback, hear concerns, and address questions. This policy is designed to support Councillors in their use of social media.

General Considerations

- Councillors are bound by the Council Code of Conduct both online and offline.
- Councillors are individually responsible for their comments on social media.
- Statements made by Councillors, whether personal or work-related, will reflect on the reputation of the Councillor and Lacombe County. As such, all posts are required to be made in a professional manner.

Official Spokesperson

The Reeve is the official spokesperson for the County. Announcements, official statements, and media responses come from the Reeve (unless another Councillor is asked by the Reeve to comment on a specific topic).

In the absence of the Reeve, the Deputy Reeve will be the spokesperson.

Social Media Posting

Members of Council are encouraged to use social media accounts to:

- Promote municipal and community activities, events, groups, and associations;
- Repost items from the County's official social media pages or publicly available documents. This is best practice to ensure a clear and consistent message;
- Invite comments from the public to support two-way communication;
- When a decision has been made by Council, the announcement should be made by the official spokesperson in conjunction with the official communications from the County. While the information could be in the public realm prior to the announcement through live streaming or public meeting attendance, proper County messaging should be considered before public discussion by the County/Council.

Members of Council should refrain from using social media accounts for the following:

- Discussion of any in-camera or confidential matters, including general discussion on the subject matter of an in-camera item unless the matter was dealt with in an open Council motion;
- Posting information on County news/Council meeting decisions prior to the release through Lacombe County official channels;
- Engaging in debate or argument through social media;
- Posting information on emergency situations (with the exception of reposting/sharing information from Emergency Operations Centre/County communications);
- Posting information to official County social media pages to promote individual and/or political opinions and/or campaigns;
- Post any information regarding ongoing investigations or police matters.

Council members using Facebook and Twitter personally, or as a separate Council page, are encouraged to post the following caveat into the information section of their profiles:

Facebook:

The views here are my own and may not represent official Lacombe County communication. The County's official Facebook page is [facebook.com/LacombeCounty](https://www.facebook.com/LacombeCounty).

Twitter:

Tweets posted by me are my opinion, and may not necessarily represent official @LacombeCounty communication.

Opinions

- Opinions of Councillors are their own, however, opinions expressed about other individuals become the property of those individuals (as per the FOIP Act).
- Prior to making personal opinions known, Councillors shall preface it by stating the opinion is their own and does not necessarily reflect the views of the rest of Council.
- If a Councillor decides to express opinions on a matter prior to debate, they are expected to keep an open mind on the item when it is presented to Council. Statements should not be made prior to debate that would tie one's hands when it comes to a decision being made.

GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

Members of Council are responsible for the content shared and posted through their individual social media accounts and must follow the below standards and guidelines.

How to use social media as a Councillor

- Post information in a polite and professional manner.
- Invite and encourage discussion.
- Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Listen to dissenting opinions and respond in a respectful manner.
- Repost items provided by the municipality, other municipal organizations, or other Councillors to enhance the awareness of municipal initiatives.

- i.e., “RT @LacombeCounty Join us for the grand opening of Anderson Park on Gull Lake.
- Regularly post and respond to comments in a timely manner.
- Post pictures of yourself at community events.
- Advise residents to speak with you in person if they wish to follow up further
 - i.e., “Thank you for sharing your views. If you’d like to discuss/provide me with further details, please PM me or feel free to give me a call”
- Provide links to information if false information is circulating or being discussed.
 - i.e., “We do have a policy that prioritizes snow removal in the County, which is located on our www.lacombecounty.com under Operations.”
- Share Emergency Operations Centre/County communications during an emergency. If this is being done, please also include where residents can get up to date information as it’s released.

How NOT to use social media as a Councillor

- Engage in debates or arguments.
- Post decisions prior to them being announced through official channels.
- Provide your own messaging on projects or issues. Please refer to the County messages or let the County Manager know if an issue has not been addressed.
- Write negative or derogatory comments towards people or other organizations.
- Comment on confidential matters or emergency situations as outlined in the policy.

Approved: March 28, 2019

Revised: