**SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Goal:**

The City of Highland’s (City) goal for the use of social media is to engage in government speech by providing content to the community members about city issues and services, leading to a more responsive government and a higher level of public confidence. The use of social media shall support the objectives of the City and present the City in a professional manner.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to address the ever changing landscape of social media. Departments within the City may wish to engage in government speech and may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media outlets to further the goals of the City and the objectives of its departments, where appropriate. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, however it is vital that all City employees are aware of their actions, the requirement to fulfill records retention requirements and, be able to successful respond to freedom of information acts.

This policy shall outline the ways in which the City and departments can retain free and healthy dialogue with constituents while complying with State and local statute.

**Applicability:**

This policy applies to all regular and part-time employees, volunteers, interns and contractors. This policy pertains to any current or proposed social media site or platform. This policy shall not apply to any person using personal social media out of working hours on personally-owned equipment.

**Background:**

The term ‘social media’ refers to media designed to disseminate content (information, images, audio, video, etc.) through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable Web publishing techniques. Social network sites allow individuals and organizations to construct a profile to create and share content with others. Examples of social media include but are not limited to: Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, Wikis. Discussion boards, forums and bulletin boards of all types are also considered social media.

**Definitions:**

For the purpose of this policy, the following terms are defined:

Aggregating Platform: a third party service that allows users to access, update and manage multiple social media sites through a single platform or interface. Aggregating platforms include Hootsuite, FriendFeed, Streamy and Nixie.

Blog: Website where a blog author can post information on a specific topic to a specific audience. A blog, if commenting is enabled, allows registered members of the pubic to post comments about posts by the blog author. A blog many contain a variety of content, such as text, images, audio, video and hyperlinks.

Comment: A response to a post on a City social media site submitted by a commenter.

Commenter: City official or member of the public who posts a comment in response to content already posted on a City-related social media site.

Discussion Forums: Online bulletin board that may also be referred to as a discussion group or board, a message board, or an online forum. On a forum, a registered user can post messages on the bulletin board from other registered users.

Employee: Regular employee, part-time employee intern, or volunteer for the City of Highland.

Micro Blogging: Form of blogging that allows registered users to post short updates about themselves and their activities, often utilizing a mobile device (Twitter is an example).

Moderator: An employee designated by their respective department director for maintaining one or more social media sites on behalf of the department. A moderator’s responsibilities may include, but are not limited to: adding, editing, and reviewing posts, as well as reviewing, flagging, and possibly removing comments in accordance with established policies.

Personal account/profile: An account or profile that is established by, and for the sole use of, an individual using non-City owned equipment, outside of normal working hours. Personal accounts or profiles are not affiliated with the City in any way and shall not include City contact information anywhere in the account profile.

Post: Content posted on a City social media site as a new posting, not a response.

Social Media: Content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the Internet. Social media websites focus on creating and fostering online social communities for a specific purpose and connect users from varying locations and interest areas. Examples of social media include: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, instant messaging, video conference, website link sharing, web feeds, etc. Websites and other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and for social interaction.

**SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT**

Use of social media for official City purposes raises legal issues that are unique to local government that generally do not impact a private person. To that end, it is important that users become familiar with and follow all provisions of this Policy. The City will determine, at is discretion, how its social media resources will be designed, implement and managed. The city resources the right to change, modify or amend all or part of this Policy at any time.

The City manager shall designate a group of employees to provide oversight for the implementation and management of the social media resources for the City. This group shall be responsible for implementing this Policy across the organization in a uniform manner, coordinating any necessary training for moderators or supervisors, reviewing and making recommendations for updates to this Policy, working with department directors to address issues, and serve as a technical resource for questions related to social media.

This policy should be reviewed annually and modified as needed to address changes within social media and other emerging technologies.

**Consistency in Communication**

The City’s website (highlandil.gov) will remain the City’s primary means of internet communication. Content posted to the City’s social media must first be posted to the City website and must contain hyperlinks back to the organic information.

The website should contain more in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City when possible.

The City has implemented a branding strategy where titles, descriptions, banners and key images adhere to certain standards. Following this steps will help to ensure consistent communication, assist the citizens will a full understanding of City business and also, abidance to aforementioned legal requirements for City to citizen communication.

**Accountability and Transparency**

City social media sites shall clearly state that such sites are maintained by the City and that they site comply with the City’s social media policy. This policy shall be displayed via hyperlink to City website for all users to access at all times.

Illinois Public Records Act: The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the principal Illinois law governing the inspection of public records (defined as: means any book, paper, map, photograph, born-digital electronic material, digitized electronic material, electronic material with a combination of digitized and born-digital material, or other official documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, produced, executed or received by any agency or officer pursuant to law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by such agency or officer, or any successor thereof, as evidence of the organization, function, policies, decisions, procedures, or other activities thereof, or because of the informational data contained therein. Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included within the definition of public record. Paper copies of registration records, as defined in Section 1 of the Library Records Confidentiality Act (75 ILCS 70/1), shall not be considered public records once the information contained in the paper registration records is transferred into a secure electronic format and checked for accuracy.   
(Source: P.A. 99-147, eff. 1-1-16.) FOIA requires any

Employee Responsibility: Only employees authorized by the City manager, or his designees, are authorized to post content on a City social media site on behalf of the City. Employees may only post content that is in accordance with department procedures and City Policy. Any employee authorized to post items on any of City’s social media sites shall not express his or her ownpersonal views or concerns through such postings. Instead, these postings shall reflect the views of the City. Employees must not misrepresent their identity and their role within the City. Each employee is responsible for the content that they place on a City social media site or send over the City’s technical resources. Employees must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all Human Resources policies. Employees may access only the files, sites, or programs for which they have received permission to use.