

**Township of Lawrence  
County of Mercer**

**Resolution No. 314-19**

**Social Media Policy  
Township of Lawrence  
(Mercer County) New Jersey**

**PURPOSE:**

This policy sets forth guidelines for the establishment and use by the Township of Lawrence (hereafter, the "Township") of all social media sites (including but not limited to Facebook and Twitter) as a means of conveying Township-related information to its residents, employees and visitors.

For purposes of this policy, "*social media*" is understood to be content created by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. For purposes of this policy, "comments" include information, articles, and pictures. It also includes other communication medium created by the Township including but not limited to Nixle, reverse 911 and/or PEG-TV (Public, Educational, and Government Access Television).

**SCOPE:**

This policy shall apply to all municipal agencies and departments as well as any affiliated government or non-government agency or official and/or commission or council permitted by the Township to post on Township social media sites.

**GENERAL POLICY:**

1. No Township of Lawrence social media site shall be established without prior approval of the Municipal Manager. The use by any municipal department of the Township's social media sites are subject to approval by the Municipal Manager or his/her designees. All Township social media sites shall be administered by the Municipal Manager and/or his/her designee.
2. The Township social media sites shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the Township and that they follow this Social Media Policy.
3. Wherever possible, the Township social media sites should link back to the official Lawrence Township website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with Lawrence.
4. The Township social media sites are not to be used for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, giving notice required by any statute by, ordinance or regulations such as, but not limited to, notices of claim. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Township social media site, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.
5. This social media policy shall be placed on the Lawrence Township Website and all social media sites.

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- 6. The Municipal Manager and/or his/her designee shall monitor Township social media sites to ensure adherence to both this Social Media Policy and the interest and goals of the Township. The Township has the right and will restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained by the Municipal Manager and/or her/her designee pursuant to the applicable Township retention policy, including the time, date and identity of the poster, when available.**
- 7. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.**
- 8. The Township will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.**
- 9. The Lawrence website at [www.Lawrencetwp.com](http://www.Lawrencetwp.com) will remain the Township's primary and predominant Internet presence.**
- 10. The Township social media sites and this Policy are subject to all applicable federal and New Jersey laws and regulations, as well as applicable record retention requirements.**
- 11. Employees representing The Township's government via its social media sites must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of The Township and in accordance with all its policies.**
- 12. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Township Council.**

**COMMENT POLICY:**

- 1. As a public entity the Township must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.**
- 2. The intended purpose behind establishing the Township social media sites is to disseminate information from the Township, about Lawrence, to its residents, employees and visitors.**
- 3. Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on the Township social media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the Municipal Manager and/or his/her designees.**
  - a) Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language, or sexually suggestive or links to such materials. Any image or link containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situations will be reported to law enforcement.**
  - b) Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, or national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;**
  - c) Defamatory attacks;**
  - d) Threats to any person or organization;**
  - e) Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;**
  - f) Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law;**
  - g) Encouragement of illegal activity;**

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- h) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or**
- i) Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party the Township does not permit or allow copyright infringing activities and/or infringement of intellectual property rights on its website or social media sites and will remove any and all content and submissions if properly notified that such content and/or submission infringes on another's intellectual property rights.**
- j) Private contact information such as names, addresses and phone numbers no matter how easily obtained elsewhere.**
- k) Personal information of a person other than the poster.**
- l) Spamming or repetitive content.**
- m) Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the children's Online Privacy Protection ACT. By posting on a Township media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old;**

**4. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Township social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the Township, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Township.**

**5. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Township's internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrator will be denied access to the sites.**

**6. The Township reserves the right to deny access to its social media sites for any individual, who violates the Lawrence Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.**

**7. Municipal Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comments requesting responses from the Township and for comments in violation of this policy.**

**8. When a Township employee responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a Township employee, the employee's name and title should be made available, and the employee shall not share personal information about himself or herself, or other Township employees.**

**9. All comments posted to any Lawrence Township Facebook site are bound by any applicable terms and conditions Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, located at [www.facebook.com/terms.php](http://www.facebook.com/terms.php), and the Township reserves the right to report any violation of Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities to Facebook with the intent of Facebook taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action. All Township policies are applicable to interactions on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Township.**

**BREACH OF POLICY:**

**1. Staff may be required to remove internet postings on Township social media sites which are deemed to constitute a breach of Policy, as determined by the Municipal Manager subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements.**

**2. Any social media site created by a Township employee, Township official and/or Township entity and/or commission and/or Township official, in the performance of their employment and on behalf of the Township,**

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remains the property of the Township, including all the followers and friends generated by the site. If the person who created the site leaves the employment of the Township, or leaves a Township commission, they must relinquish everything related to the site including user names, passwords and/or access codes or information.

**TERMS OF DISCLOSURE** (to be posted on all Township Social Media Sites)

**1. *Information Disclaimer.*** By visiting this site, you understand and agree that the Lawrence government site is provided "AS IS". Lawrence government makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information on this website. The information contained herein is not official nor in any way shall it be deemed to constitute legal notice where such legal notice is required by law. The information contained in this site is provided as a service and convenience to people needing information about Township of Lawrence government. Portions of the information on this site may be incorrect or not current. Township of Lawrence government, its officers, employees or agents shall not be liable for damages or losses of any kind arising out of or in connection with the use or performance of information, including but not limited to, damages or losses caused by reliance upon the accuracy or timeliness of any such information, or damages incurred from the viewing, distributing, or copying of those materials.

**2. *Linking Policy Links to External Sites.*** The Township of Lawrence government site contains links to outside websites. These websites are not owned, operated, controlled or reviewed by the Township of Lawrence government. These links are provided solely as a courtesy and convenience to you, the visitor.

The Township of Lawrence government, its officers or employees, exercise no control over the organizations, views, accuracy, copyright or trademark, compliance or the legality of the material contained in these outside websites. The Township of Lawrence government, its officers or employees, do not sponsor, endorse, or approve the information, content, proceeds, materials, opinions or services contained on such outside websites. The visitor proceeds to these outside websites at his/her own risk. The Township of Lawrence government specifically disclaims any and all liability from damages, which may result from the accessing of a third-party site, which is linked to the Township of Lawrence government website or from reliance upon only such information.

**3. *Endorsement Disclaimer Reference*** in this website to any specific commercial products, processes, or services, or the use of any trade firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by Township of Lawrence government or its officers, employees or agents.

**4. *Copyright and Trademark Limitations.*** Township of Lawrence government makes no warranty that materials contained herein are free of copyright or trademark claims or other restrictions or limitations on free use or display. Making a copy of such material may be subject to copyright or trademark laws.

**5. *Use of material from this site*** the Township of Lawrence government has made the content of these pages available to the public and anyone may view, copy or distribute Township of Lawrence government information found here without obligation to the Township of Lawrence government for non-commercial, personal use only, unless otherwise stated on particular material or information to which a restriction on free use may apply.

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**6. *Unauthorized Modifications.* Unauthorized attempts to modify or otherwise alter any information or image stored on any Township of Lawrence government website may result in criminal prosecution.**

**Adopted:           October 1, 2019**

**RECORD OF VOTE**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>MOVE</b>	<b>SECOND</b>
Mr. Kownacki	✓						
Ms. Lewis	✓					✓	
Dr. Maffel	✓						
Mr. Powers	✓						
Mayor Bobbitt	✓						✓