

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF PINEY

“Social Media Policy”

Subject: Social media

Effective Date: March 11, 2020

Replaces Policy: January 14, 2014 Policy

Resolution No.: 80 **Resolution Date:** March 10, 2020

A. DEFINITION :

Social Media: Content created by people using highly accessible publishing technologies. Social media is distinct from traditional media such as newspapers, television, and film. Social media comprises relatively inexpensive and accessible tools that enable anyone to publish or access information – other media generally require significant resources to publish information.

Social Media may include, but not be limited to:

- social network sites (Facebook, Myspace, etc;)
- video and photo sharing websites (Instagram, YouTube, etc;)
- personal or business blogs, or posting comments on media outlet blogs
- micro-blogging and instant messaging (Twitter, SMS, etc;)
- forums, discussion boards/groups, online gaming sites (Google, Yahoo games, etc;)

B. PURPOSE:

To establish a social media policy that provides guidance for employees, municipal representatives, volunteer firefighters, MRE employees (Municipal Reporting Entities) and external contractors, on their professional and personal use of social media. For the purpose of this policy, those positions outlined shall be referred to as “employees” for terminology and inclusion in the rules outlined herein only and by the very use of the term does not establish an employee employer relationship. The intention of this policy is to establish a culture of openness, trust, and integrity in our online activities. All employees are responsible for knowing and understanding the policy.

C. **POLICY**

1. Rules of Engagement:

Before engaging in social media as a representative of the Rural Municipality of Piney, you must become authorized to comment on RM matters. Authorization shall be provided by Council or the CAO. Once authorized to do so, you must:

- Disclose you are an employee/contractor of the RM of Piney, and use only your own identity, or an approved official account or avatar
- Disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information
- Ensure all content published is accurate, non-misleading, and adheres to relevant policies
- Ensure you are not the first to make an announcement (unless authorized to do so)
- Comment only on your area of expertise and authority
- Ensure comments are respectful of the community in which you are interacting online

If you are authorized to comment as a RM of Piney representative, you must not:

- Post or respond to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, etc;
- Use or disclose any confidential or secure information
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the departments or Municipality's reputation or bring it into disrepute

Personal social media accounts:

- No employee shall post matters relating to RM operations or business on their personal social media account;
- When commenting or posting as a representative of the RM, all posts shall be done on the Municipality's social media accounts. Employees shall not use their personal social media account to post or comment on RM matters without written approval from Council or the CAO;
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the departments or Municipality's reputation or bring it into disrepute;

2. Identifying Inappropriate Use:

If you notice inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to the Rural Municipality of Piney, or content that may have been published in breach of this policy, you should report the circumstances via email to: martin@rmofpiney.mb.ca or call 204-437-2284.

Inappropriate use of social media does not include the release of information determined by statute, provincial act or regulation to be provided to the owner of the information or information deemed public by a statute, provincial act or regulation. Inappropriate use shall not include activities by others to fraudulently acquire information.

D. INFRACTIONS:

All infractions shall be followed up by the immediate supervisor in conjunction with the CAO. First and second infractions shall result in a written warning by the Municipality. Third infraction may result in termination without notice.

All infractions which result in the release of personal information, including any vehicle identification, street address, house numbers or any information which can be used to determine identity may result in immediate dismissal.

E. CONCLUSION:

Social media can be an effective tool for use to communicate with the public and should be part of an overall communication strategy. Once any content is posted to social media sites, it can be immediately re-used and shared by others making it impossible to effectively stop errors or misinformation. Advance approval of content before posting reduces the risk of misinformation or errors. Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, sexual harassment, discrimination, or any other governing laws. Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement.