



## Portage County Treasurer's Office

### *Social Media Use and Management Policy*

#### **I. Purpose**

This policy is intended to provide the public with a clear understanding of the ways in which the Portage County Treasurer's Office intends to utilize social media for the conduct of official government business, and to provide employees of the Treasurer's Office with guidelines for utilizing social media in light of their association with the office.

#### **II. Vision**

Social media is a powerful tool for reaching individuals where they are with information they can use. It enables individuals to interact more fully with their government, improving communication and understanding and creating opportunities for engagement with the community.

By maintaining an active presence on the social media landscape, the Portage County Treasurer's Office strives to increase its transparency, to improve access to critical financial information for taxpayers, and to facilitate collaboration with constituents and other governmental entities in the service of stewardship.

#### **III. Definitions**

- a. Social Media** – Primarily internet and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information. This term most often refers to activities that integrate technology and/or telecommunications with social interaction, utilizing words, pictures, video, and audio. Social media includes, but is not limited to:

- i. Weblogs (blogs, vlogs, microblogs, presence applications, etc.);
- ii. Wikis;
- iii. Web fora;
- iv. Social bookmarking tools (Reddit, Tumblr, etc.);
- v. Social communication sites (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.);
- vi. Podcasts;
- vii. Photo sharing sites (Instagram, SnapChat, etc.);
- viii. Video sharing services (including vlogs and livecasts, YouTube, etc.);
- ix. Real-time web communications (chats, chat rooms, etc.); and
- x. Other services designed to facilitate person-to-person, remote communication.

**b. Social Media Venue** – A website or application that leverages social media and communications tools for visitors.

#### **IV. Office Accounts**

##### **a. Authorized Social Media Venues**

The Portage County Treasurer's Office will maintain a presence on Facebook beginning in late Summer 2015. This presence will take the form of a moderated office Page.

Future accounts on other venues may be approved by the process highlighted in this policy.

#### **V. Content Management**

##### **a. Information Topic Areas**

Content on Treasurer's Office social media accounts will be informational in nature, and focused on providing the public of with notice of office operations, services, and events.

Postings may include, but are not limited to, tax filing deadlines, payment options, delinquency processes, foreclosure prevention techniques, investments, Land Bank information, military member programs, money management techniques, scam alerts and

reporting, senior programs, student information, tax rates, tax reduction programs, tax bill explanations, voter registration, taxpayer surveys, public appearances by the Treasurer related to the Treasurer's official duties, and any other information deemed to be in the public interest and related to office operations.

From time to time, the content manager may post comments on posts to respond to citizens' questions, correct misinformation, or direct questioners to other entities which may be better equipped to provide a complete response.

**b. Update Frequency**

Treasurer's Office accounts will be updated as frequently as deemed necessary by the content manager to develop and maintain community networks. At a minimum, the content manager will seek to update the office Facebook Page at least weekly.

**c. Content Monitoring and Review**

All published content will be documented on a regular basis, and stored electronically consistent with the office's records retention policy.

Profiles and accounts used by the Treasurer's Office shall contain a disclaimer noting the profile/account's purpose, and instructing taxpayers to contact the office directly to conduct official business. Profiles and accounts will prominently feature contact information for the Treasurer's Office, and link to the Treasurer's website. Profiles will also contain, where possible, a copy of the most recent version of this social media policy.

**d. Colors, Logos, and Images**

The official seal of the Portage County Treasurer's Office will serve as the office's avatar (or icon) where such an image is required.

Alternatively, a professional image of the current office holder may be utilized at the discretion of the account content manager.

Secondary branding on Treasurer's Office accounts will reflect the brand identity of Portage County, including County logos, color schemes, mottos, and any other relevant information consistently utilized by other entities to identify themselves specifically with Portage County, Ohio.

Images utilized in connection with Treasurer's Office accounts shall, to the extent practicable, be in the public domain. Where possible, permission from the owner of an image will be obtained prior to its use.

## **VI. Employee Use**

### **a. Authorized Users**

The Treasurer and Chief Deputy Treasurer shall be the primary content managers for the office's social media accounts. Other employees may post content, provided that content has been pre-approved by the Treasurer or Chief Deputy Treasurer prior to publication.

Employees should primarily post to office accounts using office equipment, during office hours. Where necessary (i.e. to respond to urgent citizen concerns or to provide time-sensitive information), content managers may post from personal equipment during off-hours.

### **b. Personal Social Media Use**

The Treasurer's Office believes in a free and full exchange of information with the public online, and believes employee internet use is an important part of that dialogue. That said, such communications create the possibility for the exposure of sensitive information. Where employee communications include the posting of inappropriate material about taxpayers, the office, or its

employees, employees may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with the County's existing personnel protocols.

Employees are reminded to be careful what they disclose online, including on social media sites. Employee use of social media accounts is subject to the following prohibitions:

1. Comments or displays about co-workers, supervisors, or taxpayers that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, discriminatory or hostile on account of age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, disability, military status or other protected classes, statuses, or characteristics.
2. Statements or uses of the Treasurer's seal or insignia or of titles indicative of the authority of the office that are not authorized by the Treasurer or Chief Deputy Treasurer.
3. Uses of the Treasurer's seal or official office accounts or profiles to express support for a particular candidate, political campaign, political party, or political organization. This prohibition on supporting candidates utilizing office accounts or insignia extends to the activities of the current office holder, where those activities fall outside of the Treasurer's official duties.
4. Disclosure of confidential information acquired in the course of employment.
5. Communications that demonstrate a substantial risk of negatively impacting the office's reputation, mission, or operations, or employees' abilities to perform their job duties.

If an employee believes that an online communication violates this policy, such violation should be reported immediately to the Treasurer or Chief Deputy Treasurer for investigation and possible disciplinary action consistent with the County's existing personnel protocols.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to restrict communications protected by the U.S. or Ohio constitutions.

## **VII. Public Use and Conduct**

### **a. Forum Moderation and User/Post Removal**

While the Treasurer's Office seeks to create robust communications with the public in all possible venues, the content manager reserves the right to remove any material tending to reduce the civility or accuracy of the forum.

The content manager will remove any postings containing confidential personal information, or infringing on copyrights, trademarks, or other intellectual property where permission for use has not been granted by the property holder.

No personally identifiable pictures of individuals under the legal age of consent will be posted or permitted without written permission from a parent or legal guardian.

The content manager reserves the right to remove any material appearing to be spam, malware, or other material potentially harmful to County property.

Content likely to be removed includes vulgarity, personal attacks, and content that discriminates or harasses on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, genetic testing, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other intrinsic personal characteristics.

Statements advocating illegal activity or advertising commercial products or services will not be tolerated, and are also subject to removal.

The list of potentially prohibited items contained in this policy is not exclusive. The content manager may remove any content that defames or disseminates false information.

Repeated postings of content that violates the standards established in this policy may lead to the blocking or banning of offending parties.

**b. Removal Documentation Policy**

In the event information must be deleted, the content manager will note why the content was deleted in an electronic document, organized by date. This deleted content file will be maintained consistent with the office's records retention policies.

**VIII. Account Creation and Deactivation**

**a. New Account Approval Policy**

New office accounts and profiles on social media services may be created by the Treasurer on an as-needed basis, or by the Chief Deputy Treasurer with the consent and counsel of the Treasurer.

Prior to establishing new accounts, proposed accounts will be vetted with the County's Chief Information Officer and Prosecutor's Office to identify best uses and possible pitfalls. The Treasurer retains the right to create, manage and delete social media accounts in service of the official duties of the office.

To ensure continuity of content and access, where possible accounts will be created using official Portage County email addresses and contact information. Password records and other access information for all official accounts will be stored in the Treasurer's Office.

**b. Account Wind Down and Closure**

Where the Treasurer (or Chief Deputy Treasurer acting on the Treasurer's behalf) determines that continued use of a social media account or profile no longer serves the office's purposes, the account/profile may be wound down and deleted.

Prior to account deletion, the content manager must post a message/statement on the account or profile stating the reason for and scheduled date of the deletion at least 5 business days prior to completing deletion. All content posted as of the scheduled deletion date must be documented and maintained in accordance with the office's records retention policy.

## **IX. Records Maintenance**

### **a. Method of Maintenance**

No less than once per week, the content manager should capture all content posted on the Treasurer's Facebook Page by printing the content as a PDF and saving the document electronically. Such records should be maintained by date in a folder designated for that purpose. The naming convention for such files should be "Treasurer Facebook Capture MO-DA-YEAR".

Content to be captured should include, at a minimum, posts, pictures, videos, polls, comments, replies, and activity logs. As the office utilizes additional services, its records maintenance policies will be adjusted to accommodate differences in how those services manage user data.

Alternatively, the office may utilize a professional third party archival product or service, provided that product or service accomplishes substantially the same or better quality data capture and availability.

## **X. Policy Revision Process and Version History**

This policy is subject to revision as need requires. Updates will be approved by the Treasurer prior to inclusion in the policy, and the most recent version of this policy shall be posted on the Treasurer's website.

The policies included herein were last revised on the date specified below.

Original Policy: August 31, 2015

Last Updated: October 30, 2023