

RUSH TOWNSHIP, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-14

WHEREAS, Rush Township wishes to adopt a policy regarding use of social media;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The attached Rush Township Social Media Policy is hereby adopted; and
2. Each current employee shall be given a copy of the Policy, is directed to read the Policy, and shall sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the Policy thereby representing that he/she has read the Policy, and the signed acknowledgement shall be placed in the employee's personnel file; and
3. Each new employee at the time of hire shall be given a copy of the Policy, shall be directed to read the Policy, and shall sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the Policy thereby representing that he/she has read the Policy, and the signed acknowledgement shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

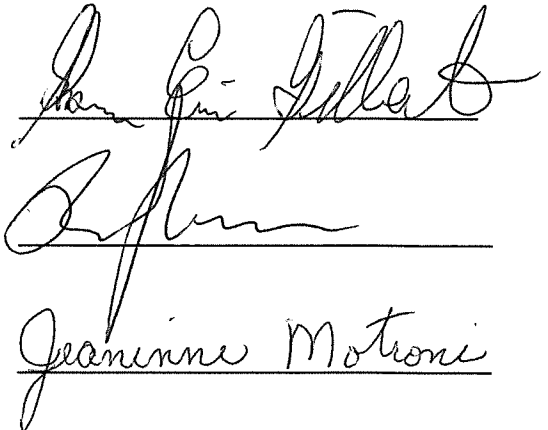
RESOLVED, this 16th day of July, 2020.

Secretary



Attest

Rush Township Board of Supervisors



The image shows three handwritten signatures of the Rush Township Board of Supervisors. The first signature is at the top, the second is in the middle, and the third is at the bottom. The third signature is clearly legible as "Jeanine Motroni".

Rush Township

Social Media Policy

At Rush Township, we understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends and co-workers around the world. Social media can also serve as an important and vital tool to communicate Township business.

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, *social media* can mean many things. *Social media* includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with Township, as well as any other form of electronic communication. Social media at this time refers to a website; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Google+, FourSquare, LinkedIn, Vine, Tumblr and many other sites – along with any other form of online communication that is open to response or comment.

The Township intends to utilize social media to expand and facilitate communication between the Township and community members by establishing and sanctioning official Township social media sites by Township staff, the Board of Supervisors and the general public. The Township's social media sites shall be used to supplement existing forms of communication.

The use of social media presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established this policy for appropriate use of social media. Rules are necessary to ensure that communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form; that communications to the Township by means of social media which can be viewed by the public are appropriate and pertinent; that all communications to the Township are directed to the proper recipient; that the outside sender is clearly and fully informed that a message to the Township or its elected Supervisors received by means of social media is **not** a substitute for required reporting procedures; and that Township employees properly represent and conduct themselves when representing themselves as Township employees on social media sites.

I. Use of Township Social Media

- A. All Township social media sites established and/or posted by the Township will be subject to approval by the Township or its designee.
- B. The Township website (www.rushtownship.org) shall remain the Township's primary and predominant internet presence.
- C. Whenever possible and/or appropriate, content posted to Township social media sites will also be available on the Township's website.
- D. Wherever possible, content posted to the Township's social media sites should contain links directing users back to the Township's official website for in-depth information, meeting agendas, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the Township.

- E. The best, most appropriate Township social media tools fall generally into two categories:
- As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (i.e., emergency information, road closures, power outages, cancellations, or re-scheduling).
 - As marketing/promotional channels that increase the Township's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
- F. The Township Secretary shall be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites, and will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible.
- G. Township employees may make a request to the Township Secretary to place any items or information on the Township website deemed of importance to the general public.
- H. The Township reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law, at any time.
- I. In administering the Township's social media sites, the Township Secretary will maintain a list of social media tools which are approved for use by the Township, maintain a list of all Rush Township social media sites, including login and password information, and ensure, at all times, that the Township, if necessary, is able to immediately edit or remove content from social media sites.
- J. Posting on social media sites of information protected by the copyright laws, without proper authorization by the copyright owner, is prohibited. Copyright protection applies to any document, photograph, video, software, or information unless it is specifically marked as public, not copyrighted, or "freeware." In the absence of any specific copyright markings, material or information should be considered copyright protected. The Township assumes no responsibility for reviewing, ascertaining or policing copyrighted material that may be posted on social media sites by employees or other persons.
- K. Township social media sites are subject to the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Township business, including lists of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record, except to the extent that such content includes information that is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Right to Know Law. Content related to Township business shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a record request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting may be subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Right to Know Law. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the Open Records Officer.
- L. Pennsylvania law and applicable Township records-retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific social media "standards" document, records required to be maintained pursuant to an applicable township records retention schedule shall be preserved for the required retention period on a Township server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.

M. Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between the Township and members of the public. Township social media site articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content are expressly prohibited:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular Township social media article being commented upon;
- b. Comments in support of or opposition to political candidates, campaigns or ballot measures;
- c. Profane language or content;
- d. Content that is threatening, intimidating, hostile, offensive, or that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- f. Solicitations of commerce or for personal gain;
- g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- h. Privileged information or information restricted by the Township;
- i. Any content not otherwise specified herein that violates Federal, state or local laws;
- j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- k. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained in accordance with the applicable Township records-retention schedule, with proper memorialization of the time, date, and identity of the person posting such content, when available.

N. Comments by the public on the Township's sites do not reflect in any way the opinions and position of the Rush Township government, or its officers, elected officials, staff and/or employees. Residents with any questions about the operation of any online moderated discussion site are encouraged to contact the Township Secretary at (570) 668-2938.

II. Employee Use of Personal Social Media

Guidelines

The same principles and guidelines found in the Township policies apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects coworkers, landowners, land development, subdivision or zoning applicants, suppliers, residents, citizens or the Township's legitimate business or governmental interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Prohibition against appropriation of name and address of Rush Township

No Township employee shall create or maintain any social media site with a name or address containing the name "Rush Township" or any variation thereof, the employee's job title with Rush Township, or the department of Rush Township in which the employee works.

Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, co-workers, residents, citizens, landowners, land development, subdivision or zoning applicants, vendors and suppliers. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by bringing them to the attention of the Township Secretary than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage residents, citizens, employees, vendors or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include defamatory posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law.

Be honest and accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Township, fellow employees or co-workers, residents, citizens, landowners, land development, subdivision or zoning applicants, suppliers or vendors.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

- Maintain the confidentiality of Township trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications that are exempt from disclosure under the Right to Know Act.
- Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Township. If the Township is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the Township, fellow employees or co-workers, residents or citizens. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the Township, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Township. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Rush Township.”

Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by the Board of Supervisors. Do not use Township email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is prohibited

The Township prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Media contacts

Employees should not speak to the media on the Township's behalf without contacting the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. All media inquiries should be directed to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.


Enforcement

The violation of this policy by a Township employee may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact the Township Secretary.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
on the 16th date of July, 2020.

By: 
Shawn Gilbert, Chairman