

Town of Lovettsville **Social Media Policy**

Purpose:

The Town of Lovettsville acknowledges the sizable impact and quick reach of social media for public notifications, information pertaining to events, and the ability to inform residents of urgent information. The ability to effectively and efficiently convey a significant amount of information and feedback on behalf of the Town of Lovettsville, equally, imparts an obligation to ensure that all related accounts and communications are maintained in accordance with best practices from both a security and a messaging standpoint.

Scope:

This policy is to be applicable to all communications from official town accounts, including those private accounts held out to the public to represent individuals representing the Town of Lovettsville in an official capacity (For example: “Lovettsville Town Council Member Soandso” or “Lovettsville Town Manager Soandso”). This policy shall be applicable to communications as they pertain to business concerning the Town of Lovettsville, its events, solicitation of feedback or information from constituents, and official notices. This policy is not applicable to individuals acting within their individual capacity as residents of the Town of Lovettsville (Private social media use).

1. Endorsement of the Town of Lovettsville

- a. The Town of Lovettsville formally endorses social media for the purpose of promoting the Town of Lovettsville’s tourism and events, notifying the public in a timely manner of public meetings, operations, and services, calls for volunteers or notifications of public service opportunities, and direct communication with the public during emergencies.
- b. The Town of Lovettsville does not endorse, nor does it condone, utilization of social media to constitute a public hearing, meeting, or official forum for the discussion of town policy.
- c. The Town of Lovettsville does not monitor, maintain, or endorse the creation of separate social media for elected officials. However, in recognition of the legal obligations and liabilities around such sites, the Town of Lovettsville does recommend that any such accounts held out to the public as official representations of an elected official should abide by the principles contained in this Policy and comply with all necessary laws governing decorum, conduct of official governmental activity, and in any event, shall abide by the Town of Lovettsville’s Ethics and Standards of Conduct policy.

2. Maintenance of Credentials

- a. Individuals utilizing official Town of Lovettsville social media accounts shall be limited to only individuals bearing indicia of public authority such as executive Town Staff, current members of the Town Council, the Mayor, or, as applicable, Chairs of committees (“Authorized Users”).
- b. All login credentials and administrative rights shall be maintained by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk shall ensure that all necessary security obligations – such as resetting or changing passwords and permissions in the

event that access is given to a Town Council member, Mayor, or a Committee Chair has had access and leaves their official capacity.

- c. Authorized Users found in violation of this policy or compromising Town of Lovettsville social media assets shall have their access revoked and, where possible, be removed from their positions or censured as appropriate. The Town of Lovettsville reserves all rights to pursue any additional recourse available to them dependent upon the nature of the violation.

3. Official Town of Lovettsville Recognized Social Media Pages

- a. The Town of Lovettsville, as of the date of this draft of the Town Social Media policy, recognizes the following pages as Official Town of Lovettsville social media assets:

Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Town of Lovettsville - Lovettsville Oktoberfest - Lovettsville Mayfest - Lovettsville’s Summer on the Green - Lovettsville Winter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town of Lovettsville - @LovettsvilleOktoberfest - @LovettsvilleSummer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - @FunLovettsville (Town of Lovettsville) - @Lovetoberfest

- b. Any new Town of Lovettsville social media assets must be approved by the Town Manager, or his designee, and the Commerce and Business Development Committee.
 - i. Creation of such new accounts shall be done through the Town Manager’s office and credentials shall be established and secured confidentially.
 - ii. See Addendum 1.

4. Approved Use and Content Limitations

- a. Town of Lovettsville social media assets are exclusively for the purpose of conveying factual information to the Town of Lovettsville as it pertains to business dealings and emergency communications effecting the town. This means that all communications shall abstain from characterizations, hyperbole, speculation, or knowingly false statements. Further, users should abstain in debating the content of posts as utilization of these assets is strictly for the conveyance of information.
- b. As a consequence of the public record nature of social media posts, all communications through Town of Lovettsville social media assets shall contain the following disclosure: ***All Town of Lovettsville social media content, including comments, are subject to public disclosure and transparency obligations.***
- c. *Provided that such an action is within budget for an event or committee,* advertising is appropriate for Town of Lovettsville social media assets to increase the reach or awareness of specific events or critical information.
 - i. Such advertisements shall be subject to the review of the Town Council Chair of the relevant committee or the Town Manager for Town business.
- d. Posts associated with Town of Lovettsville social media assets shall not, under any circumstances, contain disclosure of confidential information,

defamatory remarks, violate intellectual property claims, disclose non-public or privileged information, appeal to the prurient interest, be violative of any protected class recognized under federal or Virginia law, or engage in political advocacy.

5. Content Curation Policy

- a. The Town of Lovettsville’s content curation policy adheres to the principle that citizens have a right to voice their opinion on any issues in any way that comports with principles of free speech. No authorized user shall engage in censorship which constitutes viewpoint discrimination.
 - i. Authorized users may delete or remove content which:
 - 1. Constitutes threats against the health and safety of a user, others, or the public;
 - 2. Is, as understood by a reasonable person, pornographic, overtly sexual, or violently graphic;

6. Records Retention and Compliance With Laws

- a. All Authorized Users and official pages of elected officials are hereby notified that communications on social media, and the interactions and posts by the public thereto, are subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Va Code § 2.2-3700, *et seq*) (“FOIA”). Such posts shall be preserved and maintained as a matter of public record and not otherwise deleted or removed except, as applicable, for the removal of content in violation of the Content Curation Policy in Section 5.
- b. Content posted to Town of Lovettsville social media assets are matters of public record and subject to retention obligations of FOIA and the Library of Virginia’s public records laws (Va Code §42.1-76 *et seq*). Posts shall be subject to retention for no less than the longest statutory minimum obligation as it pertains to any specific record or subject.

Addendum 1
Request for Additional Social Media Assets

Name:	
Contact Information:	
Committee/Event:	
Social Media Site(s):	
Proposed Name(s):	
Reason for Need:	
I certify that I have read and agree to the Town of Lovettsville's Social Media Policy.	
Signature:	
For Town of Lovettsville Purposes:	
Approved by the Business and Commerce Committee:	Date:
	Signature:
Approved by the Town Manager:	Date:
	Signature: