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JEFFERSON COUNTY  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTING A }  
REVISED SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY }

RESOLUTION NO. 30 21

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2021 Jefferson County settled a lawsuit with James Scarantino; and

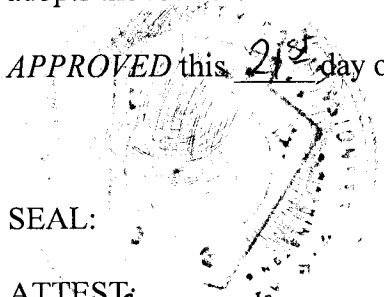
WHEREAS, the settlement required that the county make certain revisions to its Social Media Policy;  
and

WHEREAS, those revisions and other clarifying revisions have been made;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Resolution 14-20, Adopting a Jefferson County Social Media Policy, is hereby rescinded, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Jefferson County Board of Commissioner hereby approves and adopts the revised Social Media Policy as reflected in Attachment A.

APPROVED this 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2021.



SEAL:

ATTEST:  
*Carolyn Gallaway*  
Carolyn Gallaway,  
Clerk of the Board

JEFFERSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*Kate Dean*  
Kate Dean, Chair  
*Greg Brotherton*  
Greg Brotherton, Member  
*Heidi Eisenhour*  
Heidi Eisenhour, Member

**Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy**  
**Adopted June 2021**

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# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## 1. PURPOSE

The role of technology in the 21st century workplace is constantly expanding. Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs can improve interactivity between government agencies and the public, reaching new and different populations from traditional media sources. The goal of the County's social media channels is to serve as an online information source focused on county issues, projects, news and events, and is not intended as a public forum.

Jefferson County departments and elected offices desiring to use social media should choose a combination of traditional and social media that complement each other and distribute information to appropriate audiences. This policy is designed to inform employees and the public, and to ensure transparency and consistency when incorporating social media into Jefferson County communications and outreach efforts.

All Jefferson County communications, including social media, are public records and must be managed in compliance with public records law, as discussed further in Section 8.

## 2. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to employees of Commissioner departments and elected offices that create or contribute to social media on behalf of Jefferson County.

Elected officers that choose to create or operate social media accounts that are not in compliance with this policy are not acting in good faith within the scope of their official county duties for purposes of Chapter 2.05 JCC and, therefore, are not entitled to a defense or indemnity from the county for any claims or lawsuits against them.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Authorized Agent:** Employee or stakeholder who has been authorized to post social media content on behalf of a Jefferson County Department.
- 3.2 Block:** Preventing a person from participating on an official social media account or an official social media account web page.
- 3.3 Brand and Style Standards:** Refers to the design ethic that governs the use of Jefferson County and department logos, nameplates, color schemes, and visual identities. Government style standards can be found here: <https://www.usa.gov/style-guide/style-guidance>.
- 3.4 Central Services Director:** Designated Jefferson County employee responsible for social media governance, implementation and strategy; works directly with departments and authorized agents to drive social media initiatives across Jefferson County.

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- 3.5 Consultants:** Refers to individual contractors and employees who work for organizations other than Jefferson County, including agencies, partners, stakeholders, and other government entities.
- 3.6 County Administrator's Office:** Leadership representing commissioner departments which includes, among others, the Central Services Department.
- 3.7 Departments:** Commissioner departments and all elected offices.
- 3.8 Hide:** Making a comment on an official social media account web page inaccessible from public view, while preserving the comment.
- 3.9 Jefferson County Information Services (JCIS):** Commissioner department responsible for information management and governance, system maintenance and security; network design and maintenance.
- 3.10 Limited Public Forum:** A public limited forum created by the government for expressive activity that that the government intentionally has opened to certain groups or for the discussion of certain topics, where content neutral regulation is permissible if it preserves the purposes of that limited public forum, but viewpoint regulation is presumed impermissible when directed against speech.
- 3.11 Mobile Apps:** Technologies that can be downloaded to smartphones and tablets and accessed on the go; provides publishing abilities to authorized agents who work at a Jefferson County worksite or offsite.
- 3.12 Official Social Media Account:** A social media account created after approval of a Social Media Action Plan.
- 3.13 Records Management:** Operations staff that assists departments in meeting their obligations to the citizens of Jefferson County through responsible public records management as outlined in Chapter 40.14 RCW and its implementing regulations.
- 3.14 Restrict:** Restrict includes both blocking and hiding comments.
- 3.15 Social Media:** Online technologies used to communicate, share information and listen to public feedback. This includes third-party accounts such as Facebook and Twitter as well as vendors such as GovDelivery and Peak Democracy. Some social media are intended to be interactive, such as Twitter. Other social media sites serve specific purposes. One example is LinkedIn, which is a professional networking, job seeking and recruiting platform for professionals and organizations seeking qualified recruits for vacant job opportunities.

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**3.16 Social Media Action Plan (SMAP):** Official document departments are required to complete before creating new social media accounts; outlines key questions related to the use of social media, including target audience, goals and resources.

## 4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 Jefferson County Administrator's Office.

The Jefferson County Administrator's Office will be advised of approved social media accounts that have been approved by the Central Services Director.

### 4.2 Central Services Director.

The Central Services Director will:

- Develop brand/style standards for Jefferson County.
- Approve official social media accounts for use by departments, and review new types of social media for effectiveness, efficiencies and security, after submission of a Social Media Action Plan.
- Work directly with departments to coordinate social media strategies and tactics, including digital communications for specific events and programs.
- Keep up with trends in social media and provide training materials and workshops for departments and authorized agents who use social media regularly.
- Provide training opportunities for employees on best practices and implementation on an ongoing basis.
- Manage the program for documenting authorized agents, account logins and passwords for the purpose of emergency management.
- Evaluate effectiveness of social media, working with departments to determine success metrics.
- Consider records retention and public records issues whenever implementing social media.
- Conduct an audit of social accounts every six months, to ensure they are being maintained in compliance with this policy.

### 4.3 Elected Officials.

Elected Officials will:

- Comply with this policy if they wish to use an official social media account.
- Separate personal and candidate social media accounts from official social media accounts when using social media accounts.
- Avoid electioneering on official social media accounts.
- Avoid content on an official social media account that endorses or opposes political candidates or ballot propositions, including links to any campaign sites.
- Avoid content on an official social media account that promotes or advertises commercial services, entities or products.

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## 4.4 Departments.

Departments will:

- Submit to the Central Services Director a Social Media Action Plan (SMAP) and obtain prior approval from Central Services before creating any social media accounts.
- Oversee and manage official social media accounts in use by staff.
- Designate and train authorized agents in proper use of social media; refer to this policy and employee training created by Central Services.
- Monitor the access levels of consultants working with the department on official social media accounts.
- Provide Central Services with up-to-date lists of official social media accounts, account logins and passwords for the purpose of emergency management.
- Change official social media passwords every 90 days per security best practices, or immediately if authorized agents are removed as administrators or leave Jefferson County employment.
- Manage records retention of official social media in conformity with Jefferson County and Washington state record keeping requirements.

## 4.5 Authorized Agents.

Authorized Agents will:

- Uphold standards and values when representing a department on social media.
- Manage proactively all interactive official social media accounts.
- Work with Central Services to employ best practices for official social media use.

Consistent with available resources and staffing, Authorized Agents will endeavor to:

- Answer questions or respond to inquiries when appropriate and as authorized by the department, as soon as practicable during the standard work week (*see Section 7.4*).
- Flag concerns for the attention of the department when appropriate.
- Monitor and measure official social media accounts and their web pages, analyzing effectiveness and making recommendations to the department for continuous improvement.

## 4.6 Records Management.

Records Management will work with departments to identify appropriate retention periods of official social media accounts based on the legal, fiscal, administrative, and historical value of the information.

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## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Creating New Official Social Media Accounts.

When planning to launch new official social media accounts, departments will work with Central Services to complete a Social Media Action Plan (SMAP) that addresses key questions, including:

- Overall vision for social media strategy
- Why a specific official social media account is the right fit
- Goals and objectives
- Target audiences
- Resources and staff time needed
- Marketing and public feedback opportunities
- Equity considerations
- Records retention
- Success metrics

All SMAPs must propose a prominent warning to all users of each official social media account about the dangers of links in comments from the public to content which may contain malicious software, including but not limited to a computer virus, or malware.

A SMAP may allow comments to be posted for the public to view them only if the Department demonstrates: (a) Why two-way communication is needed on an official social media account; and, (b) How the Department will ensure compliance with this policy.

Once a SMAP is submitted, the Central Services Director will evaluate requests for official social media accounts, determine whether two-way communication should be authorized, verify authorized agents, and identify which trainings need to be completed before moving forward.

### 5.2 Existing Social Media Accounts.

Departments using social media accounts created prior to the publication of this policy must work with Central Services to complete an updated SMAP that complies with all of the requirements of Section 5.1 of this policy and obtain approval from the Central Services Director for an approved official social media account within 60 days of the adoption of this policy.

### 5.3 Working with Consultants.

Departments may work with outside consultants, agencies, partners, stakeholders, and other government entities to promote services and engage in public outreach. While these relationships are crucial to Jefferson County's success, consultants will not manage official social media accounts on behalf of Jefferson County departments due to security and compliance concerns, unless a contract for such management is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Contact Central Services for questions about working with consultants and vendors.



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## 6. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### 6.1 Professional Use.

Only authorized agents may post content to official social media accounts on behalf of a department. Authorized agents should consult their department's leadership regarding official social media account use within their department to ensure all content on social media is consistent with the department's communications strategy.

Authorized agents using official social media accounts to comment on other social media accounts will obtain the approval of their manager or department director before posting such comment.

Authorized agents will not endorse any commercial enterprise, candidate for election, ballot title, or any outside organization or cause without the approval of their manager or department director.

Authorized agents should verify that written material, visual images, graphics and other content posted to official social media accounts is not copyrighted or otherwise protected from authorized use. Appropriate releases from content owners should be obtained before using such protected material on official social media accounts or appropriate credit must be given to the owners of such content on an official social media account.

Do not disclose on social media confidential or proprietary information acquired by way of your official position with Jefferson County. This restriction applies whether the information is disclosed on official social media accounts or personal social media accounts, or by any other method.

Do not use personal social media accounts for work purposes. This is to facilitate compliance with public records law and protect information on your personal social media accounts from public disclosure.

You should always consider whether it's appropriate to post an opinion online, commit your department to a course of action, or discuss areas outside of your expertise.

Members of the Board of County Commissioners, as well as any member of a multimember board, advisory board, commission, committee, council, or other policy or rule-making body created or appointed by an act of the Board of County Commissioners (members) shall fully comply with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 42.30 RCW) when posting to a social media site. Members whose boards are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act shall limit their comments on a County social media post to avoid constituting a quorum for a public meeting or creating a virtual public meeting. When discussing County business, members shall also limit their comments on non-official social media platforms, to avoid constituting a quorum for a public meeting or creating a virtual public meeting. When in doubt, and until they can obtain advice from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, members should assume their boards are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act.

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Hourly employees should not work on official social media accounts after hours without prior approval. This is considered overtime, and failure to obtain prior authorization may be cause for corrective action.

Inappropriate use of social media in violation of these professional and personal guidelines can be grounds for corrective action, including disciplinary action.

## 6.2 Personal Use.

You may access your personal social media accounts at work for limited personal communications as long as use occurs before or after normal work hours or during breaks and the lunch period and prior approval has been obtained from your supervisor or department director. Please refer to the Jefferson County Personnel Administration Manual regarding de minimis use of Jefferson County equipment.

Do not use a Jefferson County email address when using social media in personal capacities. For example, do not create a personal Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn account using your co.jefferson.wa.us email address.

If you identify yourself as a Jefferson County employee when conducting personal social media activities, consider stating in your profile that your comments are not on behalf of Jefferson County government. Examples include:

- Twitter bio: Tweets are my own, not those of Jefferson County.
- Blog or website bio: While I work for Jefferson County, anything I publish is my personal opinion and not necessarily the opinions or position of Jefferson County government.

Whether or not you specify on your personal social media accounts that you work for Jefferson County, your employment with the County is public record. Be mindful that whenever you discuss issues online, whether in a personal or professional capacity, your comments can be tied back to your employment with Jefferson County.

Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent an employee from exercising his or her right to make a complaint of discrimination or other workplace misconduct, engage in lawful collective bargaining activity, or to express an opinion on a matter of public concern that does not unduly disrupt Jefferson County operations.

## 7. ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

### 7.1 Standards.

Social media posts made on behalf of Jefferson County should include no form of profanity, obscenity or threatening language.

Social media posts should be news-worthy, informative, timely, and direct the reader to more information.

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Be mindful of the images and content you use on social media, and do not violate another's copyright or trademark restrictions. Inappropriate use of social media can be grounds for corrective action, including disciplinary action.

It is not appropriate to engage in arguments with members of the public who may be critical of your department. Once you make comments or posts on social media sites, they can typically be seen by anyone and will be archived.

If there is any question regarding whether the content of a comment or post violates the Jefferson County Comments Policy in Section 7.2, below, ask your supervisor, department head, or Central Services.

Official social media accounts managed by Jefferson County departments will include a terms of use statement approved in advance by Central Services, such as:

*Jefferson County reserves the right to remove comments that include content that violates the Comments Policy in the Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy and those which violate a copyright, trademark or the terms of service of the social media platform.*

## 7.2 Comments Policy.

Jefferson County accepts comments from the public, however, comments are subject to Washington's Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW), and must comply with this policy. The County's posting guidelines make it clear that official social media accounts and their web pages are limited public forums. This means that Content neutral regulation is permissible if it preserves the purposes of an official social media account, but viewpoint regulation is impermissible when directed against speech. Each official social media site will provide a link to the County's posting guidelines here: <https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1404/Social-Media-Posting-Guidelines>.

No one may restrict the participation of a person in an official social media account, except as provided for below.

If an Authorized Agent believes it is necessary to restrict an individual from interacting with County-sponsored social media accounts, the Authorized Agent must consult with the Central Services Director or designee before doing so. In determining whether an individual will be restricted, the Central Services Director or designee may consider, among other factors, whether restricting is allowed under these procedures, applicable laws, the nature of the incident on the County sponsored social media account that prompted review, whether restricting would entail viewpoint discrimination, and whether other actions could be attempted to stop or prevent further violations without restricting an individual. If a person is restricted on authority of the Central Services Director or designee, documentation must be kept, such as screenshots of the data that prompted the restriction and the reason for the restriction.

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Comments of the type mentioned below may be hidden. When a comment is hidden, an Authorized Agent will explain within 5 business days that the comment was hidden because it did not comply with the County's posting guidelines. All comments, including hidden comments, must be archived in accordance with records retention standards published pursuant to Chapter 40.14 RCW.

The Authorized Agent for each official social media account is responsible for monitoring all comments daily. The Central Services Director shall delegate to an employee the responsibility to monitor and archive comments on a weekly basis.

Comments will be screened and may be hidden for violations of the County's posting guidelines or the following as soon as practicable:

- Potentially libelous comments.
- Profane, obscene or explicit comments.
- Hateful or mean-spirited comments.
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language either against the County, others in the community or those commenting on County social media sites.
- Plagiarized material, or material that violates intellectual property rights.
- Private, personal information published without consent.
- Commercial promotions, solicitations, or spam.
- Links to content which may contain malicious software, including but not limited to a computer virus, or malware.
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- Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns or ballot measures.
- Repeated, identical or very similar comments.
- Comments that may encourage illegal activity.
- Comments that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public.

## 7.3 Privacy Policy.

Jefferson County, as a government entity, conducts public business and its records generally are available for public review pursuant to the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW). Nevertheless, Jefferson County is committed, to the extent allowable by law, to protect and secure your personal information contained in Jefferson County records.

Third-party social media accounts such as Facebook and YouTube have their own privacy policies. Please refer to those accounts' privacy policies for more information, as you are no longer on a Jefferson County website when on third-party social media and you are subject to the privacy policy and conditions of that website.

## 7.4 Customer Service.

Departments should have a documented plan (that includes quality control) for managing customer service on official social media accounts.

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Authorized agents are responsible for managing customer service inquiries for their departments. Social media authorized agents should respond to comments or questions as soon as possible and when appropriate, on the account in which it was originally published. For example, if the department is answering a question on Twitter it should reply on Twitter. It is a department's responsibility to decide if and how to address comments on a case-by-case basis, based on the guidance below.

Social media accounts are an increasingly important avenue for the public to provide feedback and engage with the government of Jefferson County.

Not all comments/questions need to be responded to. Questions of general interest may be answered. However, commenters with questions of a personal nature should be directed to the appropriate Jefferson County contact by providing a phone number or email address. You may also respond to correct factually incorrect information provided by a commenter.

Regardless of whether traditional communications are needed (a phone call, for example), as full a response as possible should be shared with the person on social media as soon as possible during the normal work week.

## 8. PUBLIC RECORDS ACT AND RECORDS RETENTION

### 8.1 Records Retention.

Be prepared to treat each comment, post, photo, and list of individuals connected to a social media account as an open record. Do not assume third-party platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WordPress will keep accurate records of your content—they are under no obligation to do so.

Content published on social media accounts that relates to the conduct of government actions will be retained and managed by departments in compliance with Jefferson County records retention and Washington state recordkeeping requirements. Departments should set all privacy settings on social media accounts to public.

The public may not be aware of the state's public records law, so departments must include a statement similar to the following on their social media accounts, where applicable:

*This is a Jefferson County government account and all content is a public record and may be subject to public disclosure under the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW).*

### 8.2 Public Records Act Applies.

Keep in mind that social media accounts used for county business, including personal accounts, may be subject to the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW), even if the work was done on personal time and equipment.

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## 8.3 Social Media Archiving.

Jefferson County uses applications to archive Jefferson County web content, WordPress blogs, and authorized official social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Departments must contact Central Service to have their accounts registered with the archiving application (currently PageFreezer) prior to activating the account.

To search for archives in the archiving application, you will need login credentials. Contact Information Services to receive access to the archives.

The archiving application may not archive content for all social media platform accounts. Records for accounts not included in the County's archiving application must be managed separately. Please contact Central Services for more information.

## 9. SECURITY

Departments must change official social media passwords every 90 days and immediately after the password or social media site accessed using the password has been, or is suspected of being, compromised. Departments must also change passwords immediately if authorized agents are removed as administrators or leave county employment.

Do not use automated login options on social media accounts, such as Facebook's "Keep me logged in" feature. Additionally, if you use a third-party program such as Last Pass to remember your passwords, make sure to configure the account so that you must log into Last Pass each time you open a web browser. This is to prevent unauthorized access to official social media accounts should a computer or digital device be compromised or stolen.

If additional security guidance is needed by a department, contact Information Services.

## 10. SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

### 10.1 Desktop Applications.

Third-party applications can help make managing social media accounts easier. Hootsuite, for example, is a desktop application that allows users to manage Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media accounts all in one place—this is called a social media dashboard.

As a best practice, authorized agents should not include professional and personal social media accounts in the same dashboard. This helps prevent the accidental posting of personal information from official social media accounts.

If employees use desktop applications such as Hootsuite to manage official social media accounts, they must use their co.jefferson.wa.us email address and a password that's unique to the application (not the same as your Jefferson County email password).

Employees must use a personal email address to access a separate dashboard for personal social media use.

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## 10.2 Mobile Apps.

Authorized agents should use different mobile apps for professional and personal use of social media. If an employee uses Twitter's official mobile app to manage a Jefferson County account, for example, they should not use the same mobile app to send personal tweets. This helps prevent the accidental posting of personal information to Jefferson County social media accounts.

Authorized agents with smartphones should download the Facebook Page Manager mobile app to post information to Jefferson County accounts. This app is different than the popular Facebook mobile app that you would use to manage your personal account. The Page Manager mobile app allows you to post to your Jefferson County Facebook account without accessing your personal account. This keeps your personal and professional accounts separate and helps prevent the accidental posting of personal information to Jefferson County social media accounts.

Jefferson County's primary social media archiving mobile app may not be available on all mobile device operating systems. Contact Central Services for questions about mobile apps and social media use.

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**Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy**  
**Adopted June 2021**

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Elected officers that choose to create or operate social media accounts that are not in compliance with this policy are not acting in good faith within the scope of their official county duties for purposes of Chapter 2.05 JCC and, therefore, are not entitled to a defense or indemnity from the county for any claims or lawsuits against them.

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- Work directly with departments to coordinate social media strategies and tactics, including digital communications for specific events and programs.
- Keep up with trends in social media and provide training materials and workshops for departments and authorized agents who use social media regularly.
- Provide training opportunities for employees on best practices and implementation on an ongoing basis.
- Manage the program for documenting authorized agents, account logins and passwords for the purpose of emergency management.
- Evaluate effectiveness of social media, working with departments to determine success metrics.
- Consider records retention and public records issues whenever implementing social media.
- Conduct an audit of social accounts every six months, to ensure they are being maintained in compliance with this policy.

### 4.3 Elected Officials.

Elected Officials will:

- Comply with this policy if they wish to use an official social media account.
- Separate personal and candidate social media accounts from official social media accounts when using social media accounts.
- Avoid electioneering on official social media accounts.
- Avoid content on an official social media account that endorses or opposes political candidates or ballot propositions, including links to any campaign sites.
- Avoid content on an official social media account that promotes or advertises commercial services, entities or products.

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## 4.4 Departments.

Departments will:

- ~~Obtain~~ Submit to the Central Services Director a Social Media Action Plan (SMAP) and obtain prior approval from Central Services before creating any social media accounts.
- Oversee and manage official social media accounts in use by staff.
- Designate and train authorized agents in proper use of social media; refer to this policy and employee training created by Central Services.
- Monitor the access levels of consultants working with the department on official social media accounts.
- Provide Central Services with up-to-date lists of official social media accounts, account logins and passwords for the purpose of emergency management.
- Change official social media passwords every 90 days per security best practices, or immediately if authorized agents are removed as administrators or leave Jefferson County employment.
- Manage records retention of official social media in conformity with Jefferson County and Washington state record keeping requirements.

## 4.5 Authorized Agents.

Authorized Agents will:

- Uphold standards and values when representing a department on social media.
- Manage proactively all interactive official social media accounts.
- Work with Central Services to employ best practices for official social media use.

Consistent with available resources and staffing, Authorized Agents will endeavor to:

- Answer questions or respond to inquiries when appropriate and as authorized by the department, as soon as practicable during the standard work week (*see Section 7.4*).
- Flag concerns for the attention of the department when appropriate.
- Monitor and measure official social media accounts and their web pages, analyzing effectiveness and making recommendations to the department for continuous improvement.

## 4.6 Records Management.

Records Management will work with departments to identify appropriate retention periods of official social media accounts based on the legal, fiscal, administrative, and historical value of the information.

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## 5. IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Creating New Official Social Media Accounts.

When planning to launch new official social media accounts, departments will work with Central Services to complete a Social Media Action Plan (SMAP) that addresses key questions, including:

- Overall vision for social media strategy
- Why a specific official social media account is the right fit
- Goals and objectives
- Target audiences
- Resources and staff time needed
- Marketing and public feedback opportunities
- Equity considerations
- Records retention
- Success metrics

Once All SMAPs must propose a prominent warning to all users of each official social media account about the dangers of links in comments from the public to content which may contain malicious software, including but not limited to a computer virus, or malware.

A SMAP may allow comments to be posted for the public to view them only if the Department demonstrates: (a) Why two-way communication is completed, needed on an official social media account; and, (b) How the Department will ensure compliance with this policy.

Once a SMAP is submitted, the Central Services Director will evaluate requests for official social media accounts, determine whether two-way communication should be authorized, verify authorized agents, and identify which trainings need to be completed before moving forward.

### 5.2 Existing Social Media Accounts.

Departments using social media accounts created prior to the publication of this policy must work with Central Services to complete a SMAP and an updated SMAP that complies with all of the requirements of Section 5.1 of this policy and obtain approval from the Central Services Director for an approved official social media account within 60 days of the adoption of this policy.

### 5.3 Working with Consultants.

Departments may work with outside consultants, agencies, partners, stakeholders, and other government entities to promote services and engage in public outreach. While these relationships are crucial to Jefferson County's success, consultants will not manage official social media accounts on behalf of Jefferson County departments due to security and compliance concerns, unless a contract for such management is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Contact Central Services for questions about working with consultants and vendors.

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## 6. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### 6.1 Professional Use.

Only authorized agents may post content to official social media accounts on behalf of a department. Authorized agents should consult their department's leadership regarding official social media account use within their department to ensure all content on social media is consistent with the department's communications strategy.

Authorized agents using official social media accounts to comment on other social media accounts will obtain the approval of their manager or department director before posting such comment.

Authorized agents will not endorse any commercial enterprise, candidate for election, ballot title, or any outside organization or cause without the approval of their manager or department director.

Authorized agents should verify that written material, visual images, graphics and other content posted to official social media accounts is not copyrighted or otherwise protected from authorized use. Appropriate releases from content owners should be obtained before using such protected material on official social media accounts or appropriate credit must be given to the owners of such content on an official social media account.

Do not disclose on social media confidential or proprietary information acquired by way of your official position with Jefferson County. This restriction applies whether the information is disclosed on official social media accounts or personal social media accounts, or by any other method.

Do not use personal social media accounts for work purposes. This is to facilitate compliance with public records law and protect information on your personal social media accounts from public disclosure.

You should always consider whether it's appropriate to post an opinion online, commit your department to a course of action, or discuss areas outside of your expertise.

Members of the Board of County Commissioners, as well as any member of a multimember board, advisory board, commission, committee, council, or other policy or rule-making body created or appointed by an act of the Board of County Commissioners (members) shall fully comply with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 42.30 RCW) when posting to a social media site. Members whose boards are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act shall limit their comments on a County social media post to avoid constituting a quorum for a public meeting or creating a virtual public meeting. When discussing County business, members shall also limit their comments on non-official social media platforms, to avoid constituting a quorum for a public meeting or creating a virtual public meeting. When in doubt, and until they can obtain advice from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, members should assume their boards are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act.

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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Hourly employees should not work on official social media accounts after hours without prior approval. This is considered overtime, and failure to obtain prior authorization may be cause for corrective action.

Inappropriate use of social media in violation of these professional and personal guidelines can be grounds for corrective action, including disciplinary action.

## 6.2 Personal Use.

You may access your personal social media accounts at work for limited personal communications as long as use occurs before or after normal work hours or during breaks and the lunch period and prior approval has been obtained from your supervisor or department director. Please refer to the Jefferson County Personnel Administration Manual regarding de minimis use of Jefferson County equipment.

Do not use a Jefferson County email address when using social media in personal capacities. For example, do not create a personal Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn account using your co.jefferson.wa.us email address.

If you identify yourself as a Jefferson County employee when conducting personal social media activities, consider stating in your profile that your comments are not on behalf of Jefferson County government. Examples include:

- Twitter bio: Tweets are my own, not those of Jefferson County.
- Blog or website bio: While I work for Jefferson County, anything I publish is my personal opinion and not necessarily the opinions or position of Jefferson County government.

Whether or not you specify on your personal social media accounts that you work for Jefferson County, your employment with the County is public record. Be mindful that whenever you discuss issues online, whether in a personal or professional capacity, your comments can be tied back to your employment with Jefferson County.

Nothing in this policy is meant to prevent an employee from exercising his or her right to make a complaint of discrimination or other workplace misconduct, engage in lawful collective bargaining activity, or to express an opinion on a matter of public concern that does not unduly disrupt Jefferson County operations.

## 7. ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

### 7.1 Standards.

Social media posts made on behalf of Jefferson County should include no form of profanity, obscenity or threatening language.

Social media posts should be news-worthy, informative, timely, and direct the reader to more information.



# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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Be mindful of the images and content you use on social media, and do not violate another's copyright or trademark restrictions. Inappropriate use of social media can be grounds for corrective action, including disciplinary action.

~~Direct and private messaging on official social media accounts is strongly discouraged. When possible, use system settings to auto-reply stating that we do not reply to direct messages and redirecting the user to an appropriate contact person's phone number or email address.~~

It is not appropriate to engage in arguments with members of the public who may be critical of your department. Once you make comments or posts on social media sites, they can typically be seen by anyone and will be archived.

~~Departments should have an approved plan to address offensive remarks on official social media accounts.~~ If there is any question ~~or hesitation~~ regarding whether the content of a comment or post violates the Jefferson County Comments Policy in Section 7.2, below, ask your managersupervisor, department head, or Central Services.

Official social media accounts managed by Jefferson County departments will include a terms of use statement approved in advance by Central Services, such as:

*Jefferson County reserves the right to remove comments that include content that violates the Comments Policy in the Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy and those which violate a copyright, trademark or the terms of service of the social media platform.*

## 7.2 Comments Policy.

Jefferson County accepts comments from the public, however, comments are subject to Washington's Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW), and must comply with this policy. The County's posting guidelines make it clear that official social media accounts and their web pages are limited public forums. This means that Content neutral regulation is permissible if it preserves the purposes of an official social media account, but viewpoint regulation is impermissible when directed against speech. Each official social media site will provide a link to the County's posting guidelines here: <https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1404/Social-Media-Posting-Guidelines>.

No one may restrict the participation of a person in an official social media account, except as provided for below.

If an Authorized Agent believes it is necessary to restrict an individual from interacting with County-sponsored social media accounts, the Authorized Agent must consult with the Central Services Director or designee before doing so. In determining whether an individual will be restricted, the Central Services Director or designee may consider, among other factors, whether restricting is allowed under these procedures, applicable laws, the nature of the incident on the County sponsored social media account that prompted review, whether restricting would entail viewpoint discrimination, and whether other actions could be attempted to stop or prevent further violations without restricting an individual. If a

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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person is restricted on authority of the Central Services Director or designee, documentation must be kept, such as screenshots of the data that prompted the restriction and the reason for the restriction.

Comments of the type mentioned below may be hidden. When a comment is hidden, an Authorized Agent will explain within 5 business days that the comment was hidden because it did not comply with the County's posting guidelines. Hidden All comments, including hidden comments, must be archived in accordance with records retention standards published pursuant to Chapter 40.14 RCW.

The Authorized Agent for each official social media account is responsible for monitoring all comments daily. The Central Services Director shall delegate to an employee the responsibility to monitor and archive comments on a weekly basis.

Comments will be screened and may be hidden for violations of the County's posting guidelines or the following as soon as practicable:

- Potentially libelous comments.
- Profane, obscene or explicit comments.
- Hateful or mean-spirited comments.
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language either against the County, others in the community or those commenting on County social media sites.
- Plagiarized material, or material that violates intellectual property rights.
- Private, personal information published without consent.
- Commercial promotions, solicitations, or spam.
- Links to ~~other web~~ content which may contain malicious software, including but not limited to a computer virus, or malware.
- Comments that embed images from external sources.
- Comments in support of, or opposition to, political campaigns or ballot measures.
- Repeated, identical or very similar comments.
- Comments that may encourage illegal activity.
- Comments that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public.

## 7.3 Privacy Policy.

Jefferson County, as a government entity, conducts public business and its records generally are available for public review pursuant to the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW). Nevertheless, Jefferson County is committed, to the extent allowable by law, to protect and secure your personal information contained in Jefferson County records.

Third-party social media accounts such as Facebook and YouTube have their own privacy policies. Please refer to those accounts' privacy policies for more information, as you are no longer on a Jefferson County website when on third -party social media and you are subject to the privacy policy and conditions of that website.

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## 7.4 Customer Service.

Departments should have a documented plan (that includes quality control) for managing customer service on official social media accounts.

Authorized agents are responsible for managing customer service inquiries for their departments. Social media authorized agents should respond to comments or questions as soon as possible and when appropriate, on the account in which it was originally published. For example, if the department is answering a question on Twitter it should reply on Twitter. It is a department's responsibility to decide if and how to address comments on a case-by-case basis, based on the guidance below.

Social media accounts are an increasingly important avenue for the public to provide feedback and engage with the government of Jefferson County.

Not all comments/questions need to be responded to. Questions of general interest may be answered. However, commenters with questions of a personal nature should be directed to the appropriate Jefferson County contact by providing a phone number or email address. You may also respond to correct factually incorrect information provided by a commenter.

Regardless of whether traditional communications are needed (a phone call, for example), as full a response as possible should be shared with the person on social media as soon as possible during the normal work week.

## 8. PUBLIC RECORDS ACT AND RECORDS RETENTION

### 8.1 Records Retention.

Be prepared to treat each comment, post, photo, and list of individuals connected to a social media account as an open record. Do not assume third-party platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WordPress will keep accurate records of your content—they are under no obligation to do so.

Content published on social media accounts that relates to the conduct of government actions will be retained and managed by departments in compliance with Jefferson County records retention and Washington state recordkeeping requirements. Departments should set all privacy settings on social media accounts to public.

The public may not be aware of the state's public records law, so departments must include a statement similar to the following on their social media accounts, where applicable:

*This is a Jefferson County government account and all content is a public record and may be subject to public disclosure under the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW).*

# Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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## **8.2 Public Records Act Applies.**

Keep in mind that social media accounts used for county business, including personal accounts, may be subject to the Washington Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW), even if the work was done on personal time and equipment.

## **8.3 Social Media Archiving.**

Jefferson County uses applications to archive Jefferson County web content, WordPress blogs, and authorized official social media accounts such as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Departments must contact Central Service to have their accounts registered with the archiving application (currently PageFreezer) prior to activating the account.

To search for archives in the archiving application, you will need login credentials. Contact Information Services to receive access to the archives.

The archiving application may not archive content for all social media platform accounts. Records for accounts not included in the County's archiving application must be managed separately. Please contact Central Services for more information.

## **9. SECURITY**

Departments must change official social media passwords every 90 days and immediately after the password or social media site accessed using the password has been, or is suspected of being, compromised. Departments must also change passwords immediately if authorized agents are removed as administrators or leave county employment.

Do not use automated login options on social media accounts, such as Facebook's "Keep me logged in" feature. Additionally, if you use a third-party program such as Last Pass to remember your passwords, make sure to configure the account so that you must log into Last Pass each time you open a web browser. This is to prevent unauthorized access to official social media accounts should a computer or digital device be compromised or stolen.

If additional security guidance is needed by a department, contact Information Services.

## **10. SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS**

### **10.1 Desktop Applications.**

Third-party applications can help make managing social media accounts easier. Hootsuite, for example, is a desktop application that allows users to manage Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media accounts all in one place—this is called a social media dashboard.

As a best practice, authorized agents should not include professional and personal social media accounts in the same dashboard. This helps prevent the accidental posting of personal information from official social media accounts.

## Jefferson County, WA Social Media Policy

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If employees use desktop applications such as Hootsuite to manage official social media accounts, they must use their co.jefferson.wa.us email address and a password that's unique to the application (not the same as your Jefferson County email password).

Employees must use a personal email address to access a separate dashboard for personal social media use.

### **10.2 Mobile Apps.**

Authorized agents should use different mobile apps for professional and personal use of social media. If an employee uses Twitter's official mobile app to manage a Jefferson County account, for example, they should not use the same mobile app to send personal tweets. This helps prevent the accidental posting of personal information to Jefferson County social media accounts.

Authorized agents with smartphones should download the Facebook Page Manager mobile app to post information to Jefferson County accounts. This app is different than the popular Facebook mobile app that you would use to manage your personal account. The Page Manager mobile app allows you to post to your Jefferson County Facebook account without accessing your personal account. This keeps your personal and professional accounts separate and helps prevent the accidental posting of personal information to Jefferson County social media accounts.

Jefferson County's primary social media archiving mobile app may not be available on all mobile device operating systems. Contact Central Services for questions about mobile apps and social media use.

# # #

**JEFFERSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S BRIEFING**

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Mark McCauley, Interim County Administrator/Central Services Director  
Philip Hunsucker, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney  
Ken Hugoniot, Public Records Administrator

**DATE:** June 21, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Resolution: RE: Adopting a Revised Social Media Policy

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**STATEMENT OF ISSUE:**

On May 5, 2021 the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approved a settlement agreement with James Scarantino to avoid the cost of additional attorney's fees and expenses associated with the lawsuit he filed against the county on November 23, 2020. That settlement required that the county make certain revisions to its social media policy.

Staff discussed the required revisions and other revisions that help clarify certain provisions in the originally adopted policy with the BoCC on Monday, June 7, 2021. The BoCC gave staff guidance to be used in preparing the final revised policy to be adopted by resolution.

Staff prepared a draft revised social media policy and circulated it to the departments for comment. Public Health, which is a significant user of social media because social media is required to fulfill its mission and grant requirements, provided thoughtful comments, which were incorporated into the revised resolution and social media policy, attached as Appendix A. There is a clean version and a version with tracked changes show the proposed changes made from the previously adopted resolution and policy.

**ANALYSIS:** The attached proposed resolution and revised policy incorporate the BoCC's guidance and is considered by staff to be ready for adoption by the BoCC.

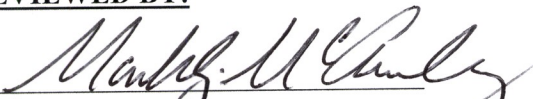
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

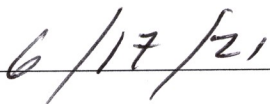
This request has no budget impact.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of County Commissioners approve adopt the revised social media policy by approving the attached adopting resolution.

**REVIEWED BY:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark McCauley, Interim County Administrator

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date