

# **Health and Public Safety Committee**

Karen Bargy

Brenda Ricksgers, Chair

Melissa Zelenak

## **Minutes October 16, 2018**

Members present: Brenda Ricksgers, Karen Bargy, Melissa Zelenak

Members absent:

Others present: Pete Garwood, Mathew Cooke, Ed Boettcher, Christian Marcus, Sheryl Guy, Sherry Comben, Dean Pratt, Val Craft, Stephanie Murray, Patty Niepoth, John Strehl

### **1. The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Brenda Ricksgers**

### **2. Public Comment**

None.

### **3. Working Communications Committee**

#### Social Media Policy

Pete Garwood, County Administrator, distributed a draft of a social media policy for Antrim County (see attached pgs. 4-5). The policy was drafted by Stephanie Murray, Human Resources Director, and Valerie Craft, Information Technology (IT) Director. Karen Bargy noted that this policy does not address how the public could interact with County social media accounts. The Committee discussed that there is no use policy for the public to follow (e.g. guidelines for comments for public). Ms. Craft confirmed this policy was drafted specifically for County employees. She noted there have been cases of elected officials implementing their own policies for their employees (particularly the Sheriff's Department).

It was mentioned that there could be a separate policy to address the public's interaction with County social media sites. It was also mentioned that RAVE Systems could be used to inform the community of events. Ed Boettcher, Chairman of the Board, said he had concerns that overuse of RAVE would ruin its effectiveness for emergencies.

Regarding a social media policy that would include the public, Ms. Bargy thought these following subjects should be addressed:

- Purpose of social media policy;
- Guidelines for public posting;
- A disclaimer;
- Criteria for removal of content;
- Posting criteria and violations;
- Contact information.

Ms. Craft said the IT Department is currently an administrator for all County related Facebook pages. She also added that the draft policy states that the IT Department oversees all official department social media accounts. Melissa Zelenak stated she thought that the roles of Facebook pages should be spelled out in the policy. Ms. Bargy and Ms. Zelenak agreed that the

Administration Office should also be listed as an Administrator on the Facebook pages should there be an emergency.

Ms. Bary suggested including a disclaimer that the County Facebook pages are not monitored 24/7 but do offer the appropriate contact information and business hours. Sherry Comben, Treasurer, asked how retention policies would be met within this policy. Ms. Craft indicated the department head/elected official would make the determination depending on the required retention policy for the information involved. Ms. Craft also suggested that before a policy goes to the Administration Committee, it should go to department heads first. It was the consensus of the Committee that the process for the Social Media Policy will be to go to Health and Public Safety Committee, then to department heads, and then to Administration Committee for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. The Committee discussed consequences for violating policies.

Ms. Craft, Ms. Murray, and Mr. Garwood will continue to work on this policy.

#### Addressing Public Concerns and Requests

Ms. Zelenak said she thought the issue of addressing public concerns and requests was more about dealing with public comment. The Committee discussed erring on the side of caution with responding to public comment which could lead to debate. They discussed thanking citizens who make public comment and directing them to the appropriate office who may be able to handle their problem. Mr. Garwood said oftentimes when he receives citizen complaints or questions, he is able to direct them to the appropriate organization, committee, or department. He noted most of the time he is able to resolve their inquiry. Mr. Boettcher said that the Commissioners should work on giving full attention to members of the public speaking during public comment.

Mr. Boettcher and Sheryl Guy will work on language that will be added to the Board of Commissioners agendas thanking citizens for public comment section on the agenda and directing them to the Administration Office for further consideration and/or action on their issue. An update will be brought to the Health and Public Safety Committee meeting.

#### Communications Training

Mr. Garwood indicated he has directed Stephanie Murray, Human Resources Director, to look into communication training opportunities. He also mentioned the possibility of contacting an individual who gave a workshop he attended last spring at a Michigan Association of Counties Administrative Officials event. Ms. Bary suggested using Lohrman which has worked with municipalities in our region. She also mentioned attending a session (with Ms. Guy and Ms. Zelenak) about difficult conversations put on by Networks Northwest and Traverse City Rotary. She added that the person putting on the session had other sessions which could be useful. Ms. Guy will send the contact information to the Administration Office for the person referenced by Ms. Bary. Ms. Zelenak said that she would like any opportunities to be available for all County employees. Ms. Bary mentioned that MSU Extension has someone who talks about Robert's Rules of Order and other roundtables. She also asked about the County having a similar function as the Health Department's Workplace Wellness Committee. The Committee expressed interest in options available and what is of interest to employees. Ms. Bary said that she would like to see opportunities available for all employees, rather than segmented by departments.

The Administration Office will gather information on potential communication training opportunities and bring them to a future Health and Public Safety Committee meeting.

#### Code of Ethics

*Melissa Zelenak left the meeting at 3:21 p.m.*

Mr. Garwood said he thought a code of ethics could follow suit with increasing accountability and communications. Ms. Bary mentioned that we already have something similar with the Board

Procedures and Rules. Mr. Boettcher said things could be added to the Board Procedures and Rules if they seem to fit. Mr. Garwood said a code of ethics would help address communications from commissioners to staff, and commissioner to commissioner, and could help avoid making embarrassing comments during public meetings which would be better served outside of meetings. The Committee discussed examples of behavior that a code of ethics could potentially help combat and help improve communications among the Board members as well as and board-staff relations. Ms. Guy said she believes that this could help with public view of the Board of Commissioners, particularly how they are viewed during meetings. Chairwoman Brenda Ricksgers expressed enthusiasm for the concept.

This will be discussed further at the next Health and Public Safety Committee meeting.

The following items will be addressed during future communications discussions:

- Public Interaction and Communications Training/ Dissemination of Information to the Public
- Development of Ongoing Training Opportunities

#### **4. Various Matters**

Ms. Comben asked whether there would be issues if RAVE were to be used for non-911 purposes since it is paid for by the 911 millage. Ms. Bargo said she would see it as a proportional expense split between departments. She added that Leslie Meyers could advise the Committee on what RAVE can be used for, since she attended a RAVE training.

#### **5. Public Comment**

None.

*The meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.*

# **ANTRIM COUNTY Social Media Policy Adopted:**

## **1.0 Purpose**

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for Antrim County. 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. Antrim County supports the use of social media technology to enhance and improve communication, collaboration, information exchange, and transparency with the public. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist in making responsible decisions about the use of social media, we have established these guidelines for its appropriate use.

## **2.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all Antrim County employees or volunteers that create or contribute to social media for Antrim County.

## **3.0 Guidelines**

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 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 Antrim County, as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in Antrim County policies and three basic beliefs 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, adversely affects employees or members of the community, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Carefully read these guidelines, the Antrim County Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy, and the Discrimination & Harassment Policy to ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **4.0 Use of Social Media**

### **4.1 Personal**

- Refrain from using social media while at work or while using Antrim County devices, unless it is work-related as authorized by your Director.
- Do not use a County email address when using social media in personal capacities.
- If you identify yourself as an Antrim County employee when conducting personal social media activities, consider stating in your profile that your comments are not representative of Antrim County.

## **4.2 Professional**

- Only authorized agents may post content to social media pages on behalf of a department.
- Maintain the confidentiality of Antrim County private or confidential information. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal confidential communications.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to an Antrim County website without identifying yourself as an Antrim County employee.
- Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **5.0 Authorized Use**

Elected Officials and Department Heads are responsible for designating who is authorized to use social media on behalf of the department and for determining appropriate access levels. The Information Technology Department will oversee all official department social media accounts.

## **6.0 Site Content**

Departments are responsible for establishing and maintaining content posted to their social media sites.

## **7.0 Records Retention**

Because social media sites are not government sites, they do not follow the State of Michigan Record Retention Laws and Policies for Local Government. Social media conducted on behalf of the County is subject to these laws and policies and to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). You must follow the State's record retention laws and policies.

Departments are responsible for the creation, administration and deactivation of social media accounts. Be prepared to treat each comment, post, photo, and list of individuals connected to a social media site as an open record. Do not assume third-party platforms such as Facebook and Twitter will keep accurate records of your content.

Content deemed inappropriate shall be promptly documented (screenshot/printout), and saved per the retention policy and then removed immediately.

## **For more information**

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact your Human Resources representative.