

## VILLAGE OF BOTKINS

Ordinance No. 10-07

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR THE EMPLOYEES, ADMINISTRATION, APPOINTED OFFICIALS, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR THE VILLAGE OF BOTKINS.

**WHEREAS**, the Village of Botkins (“Village”) is currently updating its website which includes the establishment of an official Village social network presence; and

**WHEREAS**, the Village believes social networking would provide valuable access to both current and potential residents, businesses, and those who have moved away;

**WHEREAS**, social networking technology, the behavior of its users, and its consequences on sound and responsible government are all concerns;

**WHEREAS**, the Village Council has deemed it necessary to establish a social media policy which addresses many of these concerns;

Now, therefore, be it ordained by the Council of the Village of Botkins, the majority of the members concurring herein that the Village of Botkins does establish the following as its Social Media Policy:

### SOCIAL MEDIA

#### **Section 1. Definition**

Social Media is defined as user-generated content presented via the Internet. Social media platforms such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc., provide zero publishing costs and access to anyone with Internet capabilities.

#### **Section 2. Purpose**

The Village has decided that Social Media is relevant technology for modern communication. The Village will never utilize Social Media as its only form of communication, but, rather, use it as a tool to complement its already established statutory and voluntary communication outlets. The Village believes that certain citizens are more comfortable communicating through and receiving information from a Social Media platform.

#### **Section 3. Vision**

Social Media provides an interactive capability that allows residents and supporters of the community to come together and share information, praise, and criticism. The real-time aspect of Social Media lends itself to crises situations, event reminders, general current events. For this same reason, the Village realizes that the Social Media platform is not well suited for all types of discussion. Complex issues or new issues that the Village faces should be avoided since human interaction is always best to resolve questions and conflicts. Some material, for both practical and legal considerations, may be inappropriate for this medium. Finally, in providing a platform such as this, the Village recognizes that criticism may arise from time to time. Posts that offer thoughtful criticism of the organization and its initiatives, and not individuals, are welcome and shall not be removed or altered except as provided for in the following policy.

#### **Section 4. Ownership and Maintenance of Village-owned accounts**

Section 4.1 The Village of Botkins will utilize one central account with desired Social Media networks. Individual departments and employees, including the Fire and Police Departments, will utilize the central account to convey desired communication.

Section 4.2 Management of Social Media accounts and initiatives shall lie primarily within the realm of the Village Administrator.

Section 4.3 A limited number of employees shall have access to Social Media accounts and passwords and permission to post as “Village of Botkins.”

Section 4.4 Elected officials and other employees are not to post, without advance approval, to the Village of Botkins pages as representatives of the organization.

Section 4.5 Other Village staff members may request that authorized staff post a message from the Village of Botkins on their behalf.

Section 4.6 Posts to Village pages/accounts from employees’ personal accounts are permitted. Employees are encouraged to disclose their relationship/employment with the Village.

Section 4.7 The Village will strive to share information honestly and openly to receive comments and feedback with an “open mind” in a spirit of collaboration.

Section 4.8 The Village will not post untruthful and purposefully inaccurate information. If an inadvertent inaccuracy is posted, a correction will be published as soon as possible.

Section 4.9 The Village will not edit others’ posts.

Section 4.10 At all times, employees shall use good judgment when posting. Employees shall refrain from posts that may be interpreted as offensive, obscene, demeaning, or inflammatory. Confidential information shall not be posted.

Section 4.11 At times, employees may determine other means/tools are more appropriate ways to respond to citizen/fan posts or may determine that is best not to respond to a post at all.

Section 4.12 In general, individual complaints, concerns, or service requests will not be addressed via social media.

Section 4.13 Staff members shall resist the temptation to engage in back-and-forth conversation regarding topics that are complex, controversial, heated, or otherwise sensitive.

Section 4.14 Village employees, in consultation with the Village Administrator, will determine when an issue raised by others has reached a “critical mass” that requires a Village response on the account.

## **Section 5. Guidelines and limitations for all users**

Section 5.1 The conversation shall remain civil and respectful always.

Section 5.2 Inaccurate information posted by non-employees may be addressed and corrected, on a factual basis only.

Section 5.3 Personal attacks, vulgar language, discriminatory or inflammatory posts by others are strongly discouraged. If a post is determined to be in violation of this policy, such posts may be removed.

Section 5.4 Elected officials may not post as “Village of Botkins” and are discouraged from discussing campaigns, issues, and other political matters on Village accounts.

Section 5.5 Campaigning – on behalf of political candidates or in support or opposition to issues – is discouraged.

Section 5.6 Political candidates are encouraged to establish their own fan pages and Social Media accounts and are discouraged from using Village of Botkins accounts, pages, etc.

Section 5.7 Repeated violations to this policy may result in removal of access to the service.

Section 5.8 This Social Media Policy shall be revised as needed. Posts to the Village of Botkins Social Media accounts shall constitute acceptance of this policy.

*-This ordinance borrows heavily from the City of Suwanee, Georgia.*

Adopted this 30th day of March, 2010.