

<b>Social Media Policy</b>		Effective:	October 22, 2024
		Approved:	October 22, 2024
<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Social Media</b>	By-law:	N/A
Section:		Resolution:	2024-286
Application:	All Employees	Supercedes:	n/a

### 1.0 Policy

1.1 Township of Cramahe’s website (www.cramahe.ca) is the primary source of online information exchange with the public and is the Township’s official internet presence. The Township also uses social media to enhance communication and information-sharing with the public and other audiences. It is the policy of the Township of Cramahe to support and promote the use of social media as a tool to deliver effective and accessible communication about municipal news, programs, and services to the community.

### 2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and standards to ensure the appropriate use and management of social media on behalf of the Township of Cramahe. This policy shall encompass the Township of Cramahe’s primary social media accounts across selected social media channels, which provide communication for all municipal departments and functions. These accounts are managed, maintained, and populated by the designated staff member responsible for overseeing the corporate social media accounts.

### 3.0 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all Township of Cramahe employees and elected officials who make public statements on municipal social media sites and social networks that discuss, share or comment on the Township of Cramahe’s social media pages. This policy also applies to members of the public who use, comment or post on Township of Cramahe social media sites and channels.

Appendix A includes a list of current social media accounts owned and operated by the Township of Cramahe. This appendix will be updated on an as-needed basis to align with the current social media tools and platforms being used by the Township.

Municipal employees must comply with all employment-related obligations in both their personal and professional activity, including standards for workplace behaviour, privacy, confidentiality, conflict of interest, nonpartisan services, and political activity. These obligations apply to social media use, even on personal accounts unaffiliated to the workplace.

The Township of Cramahe as the employer must comply with legislation that regulates workplace behavior, such as the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

#### 4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 **“Accessibility or Accessible”** Shall mean the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, environment) can be used and enjoyed by persons with a disability.
- 4.2 **“Corporate Account”** Shall mean the Township of Cramahe’s primary social media accounts within each of the selected Social Media channels, that provides communication for all municipal departments and functions, and is managed, maintained, and populated by the staff member designated to be responsible for the corporate accounts.
- 4.3 **“Council or Councillor”** Shall mean the Council of the Township of Cramahe and any individual elected member of the Council of the Township of Cramahe.
- 4.4 **“Department Head”** Shall mean the CAO or a Director of a department of the Township of Cramahe, and who is a member of the Senior Management Team.
- 4.5 **“Employee”** Shall mean any person that is employed by the Corporation of the Township of Cramahe.
- 4.6 **Information Technology (IT) System** Shall mean all electronic communication devices used by the Township of Cramahe Council, employees, or contractors which include, but are not limited to, all computer and telephone networks, devices and applications as well as mobile devices (e.g. tablets, smart phone devices).
- 4.7 **“Objectionable Material”** Shall mean content that contradicts the principles established by the Ontario Human Rights Code or materials of a pornographic, profane or sexually explicit nature, as well as content that may offend based on race, ancestry, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, family status, religion or disability.
- 4.8 **“Official Record”** Shall mean a municipal record being any document

or data created, received, or maintained by a local government or municipal agency in the course of conducting its official business.

- 4.9 “Online Communication”** Shall mean the exchange of information using the Internet or mobile communication network for any purpose (e.g., information sharing, marketing, public engagement, etc.).
- 4.10 “Separate Account”** Shall mean a social media account set up by a municipal department, board, or committee that is in addition to the Corporate Account. Separate accounts are managed, maintained, and populated by the Social Media Account Administrator of the department.
- 4.11 “Social Media”** Shall mean the various websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. These channels can include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or other public participation forums.
- 4.12 “Social Media Account Administrator”** Shall mean any employee designated by the Township of Cramahe to maintain a particular Corporate or Separate Social Media Account, including writing and publishing content and monitoring, managing, and measuring account activity.
- 4.13 “Transitory Record”** Shall mean any record that has temporary usefulness and is only required for the completion of a routine action or until superseded.
- 4.14 Trolling** Shall mean the activity of making deliberately offensive or provocative online posts with the aim of upsetting someone, eliciting an angry response and/or encouraging unproductive discussion.

## **5.0 Policy Administration**

### **5.1 Assigning Social Media Account Administrators**

The Township of Cramahe CAO is responsible for designating the role of Social Media Account Administrator. The CAO will have full “Administrator” access privileges to social media accounts.

Where possible, staff are designated as the Social Media Account Administrator for each Corporate or Separate account that exists. These staff are responsible for posting, monitoring, and maintaining the account on behalf of the Township. In some cases, an alternate Administrator can be identified.

## **5.2 Account Creation & Management**

Before creating any additional or separate account for a department, board or committee, the Social Media Administrator must obtain permission from the CAO to determine if deemed appropriate.

Any corporate or separate social media account established by the Township of Cramahe prior to the adoption of this policy will be reviewed by the Social Media Account Administrator(s) for use and management compliance to this policy. Any significant recommendations occurring from this review should be forwarded to the CAO for their review and decision.

## **5.3 Acceptable Use of Social Media by Account Administrators**

Social Media Account Administrators are permitted to engage in social media activity for corporate purposes. Social Media Account Administrators must use judgement managing time and balancing the integration of social media within their overall work plans.

### **A) Maintenance**

Social Media Account Administrators must maintain accounts to ensure they are kept current and relevant to the public. Social Media Account Administrators shall undertake regular audits of social media sites. Where applicable inappropriate comments or inappropriate postings will be removed in a timely fashion (e.g., commercial advertisement, disparaging remarks).

### **B) Purpose and Use**

Social media will serve exclusively as an informational tool, focused on disseminating important updates to Cramahe residents. It will not function as a two-way communication platform. The Social Media Administrator will re-direct any direct messages to the appropriate channel. Where possible, municipal social media posts should link back to the municipal website for the purpose of downloading forms, documents, and providing specific or additional information.

### **C) Conduct**

Social Media Account Administrators using social media on behalf of the Township will conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner, including:

- a. Post accurate, credible, and consistent information and links that are aligned with the Township's information, messages, brand identity, and

policies. Staff are responsible for the accuracy and relevancy of any information forwarded to the Social Media Account Administrator for posting.

- b. Post content in a manner that is discreet, does not disclose confidential information or release personal or corporate information, without prior consent. Social Media content must take the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) into consideration.
- c. Must not engage in offensive language, respond in a confrontational manner, or post content that is not professional or that contravenes municipal policies and the Township's Code of Conduct Policy.
- d. Must not use corporate accounts to express personal opinions or further personal agendas.
- e. Ensure proper protocols and permissions are obtained for posting any copyrighted material (including documents, websites, logos, images).
- f. Ensure security of social media accounts is maintained, including password and login information.

Where possible, each social media account used by the Township should contain a disclaimer clearly advising visitors to the site that third party comments are not official communications of the Township of Cramahe. The disclaimer should also note that the Municipal Website [www.cramahe.ca](http://www.cramahe.ca) is the official destination for municipal information and that social media accounts are monitored Monday to Friday during regular operating hours.

**Disclaimer example:**

“Comments made by members of the public are not official communications of the Township of Cramahe and are owned by the contributing commenter. These comments are not reflective of the Township's views, opinions, and/or policies.

This page is primarily monitored during regular operating hours, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Friday. The Corporate website at [www.cramahe.ca](http://www.cramahe.ca) should be used as the official resource for municipal information.

Any direct messages received that are related to an inquiry or request for service, shall be referred to the Township's *Report a Concern* portal, per the Customer Service and Inquiries Policy.”

A link to the Customer Service and Inquiries Policy shall follow this disclaimer.

#### **D) Sharing/Re-posting Content**

The Social Media Account Administrator may share or re-post content from a social media account that is not owned by the Township of Cramahe when:

- a) The post connects the public to information and services provided by upper tier governments or government-funded agencies or boards in Canada.
- b) Provides further information on subject matter found on the Township's website. Such information must be provided by an official and/or accredited source.
- c) The post shares information about a municipally affiliated organization, service club or registered charity (direct partnership by way of funding, sponsorship, staff resources or in-kind contributions).
- d) The post is shared by a professional association as determined by staff
- e) Any organization approved by Council and/or the CAO.

Any posts that include links to a personal account/website, individual business account/website, political party/candidate account/website, or objectionable material as defined in this policy must not be shared or reposted on a municipal social media account.

Additionally, Social Media Account Administrators may share social media content promoting events that are:

- f) Organized or funded by another level of government.
- g) Organized by a government-funded agency or board.
- h) Organized by a Township of Cramahe affiliated organization/group.
- i) Funded in full, or in part, by the Township of Cramahe.
- j) Sponsored by the Township of Cramahe.
- k) Organized by a registered charitable organization operating within the Township of Cramahe or the County of Northumberland.
- l) Organized by a service club operating within the Township of Cramahe performing work that benefits Cramahe residents.
- m) Located in a facility owned by the Township of Cramahe.

Any posts that promote events that are for individual businesses, include objectionable material, do not comply with municipal, provincial, or federal legislation, are political in nature, or promote an individual religion or religious service must not be shared or reposted on a Municipal social media account.

#### **6.0 Personal Use of Social Media by Councillors and Employees**

6.1 Municipal employees who are not Social Media Account Administrators are not permitted to publish or comment via social media in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with or as representatives of the Township of Cramahe and any such content is not endorsed by the Township.

Incidental or occasional personal use of social media on personal or workplace devices is allowed, providing such limited use will not result in any measurable expense to the Corporation in time, material, or productivity, and is subject to the limitations of this policy.

**A) Conduct**

The Township expects all employees and Councillors who use social media to do so without breaching their duties to the Township and adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct.

Employees and Councillors should consider the following:

- a) Even if you do not explicitly identify yourself as a Municipal employee or Councillor, others may identify you as an employee or Councillor by your name, your place of work, a photograph, or by the content you post.
- b) Identifiable Municipal employees should make it clear that their position does not officially represent the Township's position. Use phrases such as "in my personal view" or "Personally..." to communicate that you are expressing personal views.
- c) Do not use visual cues that suggest you represent the Township. Do not post Township owned logos, photographs, graphics, or other media without the Township's explicit authorization.
- d) Do not circulate any organizational or confidential information, such as internal deliberations about how decisions are made, personal information, such as stakeholder or employee information, or negative comments about the Township of Cramahe, Councillors, employees, or residents.
- e) Do not disparage or embarrass the Township, individual Councillors, employees, or others associated with the Township.
- f) Do not engage in workplace discrimination or harassment, or activity that includes inappropriate comments, photographs, links, etc.
- g) Overall, employees and Councillors are expected to conduct themselves professionally both on and-off duty. Even when an employee does not publicly associate themselves with the Township on social media, all materials associated with their page may be perceived to reflect upon the Township.

Further, employees and Councillors should not expect confidentiality or privacy in relation to their online activities as they pertain to the Township of Cramahe. Within a traditional legal context, it has generally been found that posting content on social media sites about an employer is considered a publication and not private activity. Councillors and employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online as it relates to the Township.

**B) Municipal Councillor and Other Government Accounts**

If a Councillor, MP, or MPP representing the Township of Cramahe, Northumberland County, or the Northumberland-Peterborough South riding has a personal social media account, the Township's social media accounts are permitted to like/follow the account. Accounts belonging to municipal Councillors must be created and maintained by the Councillor and not Municipal employees.

**7.0 Security and Monitoring of Corporate Use**

**7.1 Log-in and Password Management**

The Township of Cramahe's Corporate and Separate social media accounts are owned by the Township.

All credentials and details for Corporate and Separate accounts must be communicated to the Township's IT staff. The Township's IT staff will maintain a master list of the Township's social media login information. Password changes must be immediately communicated to IT staff.

Accounts created to represent the Township of Cramahe must be associated with a valid municipal email address (@cramahe.ca).

**8.0 Citizen Conduct**

Users and visitors to the Township's social media accounts/pages should be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a communication platform and information-sharing tool between the Township and the public.

A hyperlink to the Township of Cramahe Social Media Policy will be posted on the respective social media account/page where possible.

The Township reserves the right to remove inappropriate, inaccurate, irrelevant or unproductive content (i.e. posts, images, and comments) from social media accounts. If the user continues to post inappropriate, irrelevant, inaccurate, or unproductive content, the Township may ban/block the user from the site at the discretion of staff .

Comments, posts, or articles containing the following content on any social media channel, page or site (i.e. Facebook, X (Twitter), and YouTube accounts, website (Cramahe.ca), LetsTalkCramahe etc.) will not be allowed:

- a) Comments not topically related to the topic and/or issue being commented upon.
- b) Account spamming, trolling or over posting.
- c) Posts that are meant to solicit sales, products, or goods and services.
- d) Profane, aggressive, hateful, defamatory, insulting, rude, abusive or violent language or content.

- e) Content that includes or includes links to objectionable material, as defined in this policy.
- f) Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- g) Information that may compromise the privacy, safety, or security of the Township, public, or public systems.
- h) Comments or posts that includes inaccurate material or misrepresent facts as known by the Corporation.
- i) Comments or posts that impersonate or misrepresent someone else, including public figures, municipal staff or municipal officials.
- j) Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

The Township of Cramahe is not responsible for any comments or use of material posted by users.

## **9.0 Legal**

Comments and content uploaded to a social media account may be permanently available for viewing and printing and can be republished in other media without the Township's permission.

As a result, Social Media Account Administrators must ensure that privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and data protection laws are adhered to.

All Corporate and Separate social media accounts must adhere to applicable provincial, federal, and local laws (i.e. copyright laws, the Privacy Act, etc.) regulations, and policies, including other applicable municipal policies.

Any content removed based on the guidelines in the Citizen Conduct section will be retained by the Social Media Account Administrator, and have supporting documentation, including the time, date, identity of poster, reason for removal, and any required incident reporting.

## **10.0 Policy Communication**

This policy will be communicated internally with staff and posted on the municipal website for public use. The policy will also be hyperlinked onto the Township's social media accounts, where possible. This policy will be available to staff on an ongoing basis and as part of the new Councillor orientation sessions.

## **11.0 Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed once per Council Term or more often as needed.

## **12.0 Compliance**

In cases of policy violation, the Township may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

Employees may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for violating this policy.

Members of Council may be subject to action for violation of the Code of Conduct.

These guidelines provide additional information to assist in ensuring compliance with legislation and supplement existing Township of Cramahe policies and directives that may apply when an employee uses social media in their personal life or as part of his or her professional responsibilities.

These guidelines do not address every situation related to social media. Employees should use their best judgment when using social media, both personally and professionally. When in doubt, seek clarification from your manager or supervisor.

## Appendix A

### Township of Cramahe Corporate Social Media & Engagement Platforms

<b>Facebook</b> Cramahe Township <a href="http://www.facebook.com/CramaheClerk/">www.facebook.com/CramaheClerk/</a> The Township of Cramahe <a href="http://www.facebook.com/CramaheTownship/">www.facebook.com/CramaheTownship/</a>
<b>YouTube</b> Township of Cramahe <a href="http://www.youtube.com/@townshipofcramahe8337">www.youtube.com/@townshipofcramahe8337</a>
<b>Public Participation Forum</b> Let's Talk Cramahe <a href="http://www.letstalkcramahe.ca">www.letstalkcramahe.ca</a>

### Separate Accounts affiliated with the Township of Cramahe

<b>Facebook</b> Cramahe Fire Department <a href="http://www.facebook.com/CramaheFireDepartment">www.facebook.com/CramaheFireDepartment</a> Keeler Centre <a href="https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063094158194&amp;sk=about">https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063094158194&amp;sk=about</a>
<b>X (Formerly known as Twitter)</b> Cramahe Fire Dept <a href="http://www.twitter.com/CramaheFireDept">www.twitter.com/CramaheFireDept</a>

This appendix will be updated on an as-needed basis to align with the current social media tools and platforms being used by the Township.