

## **Personnel Manual & Employee Handbook**

### **Social Networking Policy**

This policy provides guidelines for (A) the establishment and use by the Borough of any and all social media sites as a means of conveying Borough-related information to its residents, Borough employees, and visitors; as well as (B) providing guidance for Borough employees concerning their personal web pages, websites, and electronic social networking. The Borough has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is “spoken” on behalf of the Borough on its social media sites.

For purposes of this policy, a social network is defined as an internet-based resource and content by an individual, that integrates user-generated content and user participation using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, such as websites and applications through and on the internet. The type of network and its design vary from site to site. Examples of the types of internet-based social networking activities include: networking (e.g., Facebook, Instagram), photo and video sharing (e.g., YouTube, TikTok), blogging and microblogging (e.g., Twitter, Tumblr), wikis (e.g., Wikipedia), podcasting, dating sites, and message boards, as well as posting comments on the sites. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site or activity does not limit the extent of the application of this provision.

This policy shall apply to (A) all Borough agencies, departments, boards, commissions, committees, employees, and volunteers, as well as any affiliated governmental or non-governmental agencies, and; (B) any and all elected officials permitted by the Borough to post on Borough social media sites.

### **Use of Borough Social Media Sites**

The objective of the use of social media by the Borough or its departments is to expand and facilitate dissemination of information from the Borough to its residents.

1. No Borough social media shall be established without the prior approval of the Borough Council.
  - a. The following are approved social media sites:
    - i. The Garwood Borough Facebook Page
    - ii. Garwood Recreation Committee Facebook Page
    - iii. Garwood Celebrations Facebook Page
    - iv. Garwood Fire Department Facebook Page
    - v. Garwood Fire Department Instagram
    - vi. Garwood Police Department Facebook Page
    - vii. Garwood Police Department Twitter Account
    - viii. Garwood Police Department Instagram

ix. Garwood Green Team

2. The Borough's social media shall be administered by the Borough Administrator and/or the Borough Administrator's designee.
3. The Borough's social media shall clearly set forth that they are maintained by the Borough and that they follow this Social Networking Policy.
4. Whenever possible, the Borough's social media should link back to the official Borough website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the Borough. The Borough Administrator and/or the Borough Administrator's designee shall monitor Borough social media sites to ensure adherence to this Policy. The Borough has the right and will restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines will be retained by the Borough Administrator and/or the Borough Administrator's designee pursuant to the applicable Borough retention policy, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available. These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by a hyperlink.
5. The Borough will authorize volunteers on the Green Team, Celebrations and Recreation Facebook pages to post on their respective pages. The fire department will authorize two of its members to post on their respective pages. A list of all authorized page editors must be submitted to the Borough Administrator and the volunteers must sign off on the personnel manual.
6. The Borough will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, Borough-wide.
7. The Borough website at [www.garwood.org](http://www.garwood.org) will remain the Borough's primary and predominant internet presence.
8. The Borough's social media are not to be used for making any official communications to the Borough, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, requesting an inspection, giving notice required by any statute, ordinance, or regulation such as, but not limited to, notices of claim. Prominent notice of this paragraph shall be displayed on every Borough's social media, along with the appropriate contact information for submitting official communications.
9. The Borough Administrator and/or the Borough Administrator's designee shall monitor all of the Borough's social media to ensure adherence to this Policy.
10. Employees and Volunteers representing the Borough's government via its social media must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the Borough and in accordance with all its policies.

11. The Borough's social media and this Policy are subject to all applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations and policies, as well as all applicable record retention requirements.
12. No "friending" or other special relationship between a Borough's social media and a third party is permitted on any Borough social media.
13. All site names, passwords, and/or access codes or information or changes to all the Borough's social media shall be maintained with the Borough Administrator and updated within two (2) days of any change.
14. If the person who created the social media leaves the employ of the Borough, the passwords and/or access codes to the social media shall be changed and the new information maintained with the Borough Administrator within two (2) days of the change.
15. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Borough's Internet or social media will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrators will be denied access to the sites.
16. This Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Borough Council.

### **Social Media Comments**

1. The purpose of the Borough's social media is as a means of conveying Borough-related information to residents and visitors of the Borough. It is not meant to be a public forum for discussion.
  - a. The Borough of Garwood Facebook page commenting is turned off.
2. This Policy may be revised at any time by approval of the Borough Council.
3. The Borough is not responsible for, and neither endorses nor opposes, public comments placed on any of the Borough's social media. Commenters are personally responsible for their own comments, user name, and/or any information placed on this page by the commenter. The Borough does not monitor this page on a continuous basis and may or may not remove any particular material at any time or ever. The Borough expects that commenters be courteous and civil towards others in their comments.
4. All comments on the Borough's social media may be subject to the New Jersey Open Public Records Act as well as discovery in litigation. Comments on the Borough's social media may be retained by the Borough, in its discretion and as required by applicable law or Borough policy.
5. Any advertisements appearing on the Borough's social media are not controlled by the Borough and do not reflect any endorsement by the Borough.

### **Prohibited Content**

The following forms of content shall not be permitted on the Borough's social media and are subject to removal and/or restriction.

1. Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language, or sexually suggestive or explicit content or links to such materials.
2. Images or links containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situations. These will be reported immediately to law enforcement.
3. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age religion, gender, or national origin, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
4. Defamatory attacks.
5. Speech presenting a grave and imminent threat.
6. Fighting words.
7. True threats.
8. Fraud.
9. Threats to any person or organization.
10. Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale, with the exception of Borough-sponsored events and/or items.
11. Solicitation of political support or political contributions.
12. Promotion in favor of, or in opposition to, a candidate campaigning for election to a political office, a ballot measure, or a political organization.
13. Opinion or commentary on any state bill, pending legislation, or existing law.
14. Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
15. Encouragement of illegal activity.
16. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
17. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright or other infringement on intellectual property rights. The Borough will remove such content if properly notified that such content infringes on another's intellectual property rights.
18. Private contact information such as names, addresses, and phone numbers no matter how easily obtained elsewhere, or personal information of a person other than the properly designated poster.
19. Spamming or repetitive content.
20. Content that incites violence.
21. Comments unrelated to the particular post.

22. “Robo spam” and/or comments by “social bots” (e.g., content posted by automatic software programs, or “bots”).

### **Use of Personal Social Media by Borough Employees**

The use of the internet and social networking sites is a popular activity; however, employees must be mindful of the negative impact of inappropriate or unauthorized postings upon the Borough and its relationship with the community. This provision identifies prohibited activities by employees on the internet where posted information is accessible to members of the general public, including, but not limited to, public postings on social networking sites, as well as best practices Borough employees should adhere to in posting on personal social media sites and applications.

1. The use of personal social media during working hours is prohibited.
2. Borough employees shall not actively participate or engage in social media in their official capacity, or as representatives of the Borough if such participation violates any of the Borough’s rules and/or regulations including but not limited to this social media policy.
3. Borough employees may not use their personal social media or social media in their personal capacities in any way that negatively affects the workplace or the employee’s public employment in violation of any state or federal laws, workplace or public employment standards of conduct, including but not limited to the Conflict of Interests Law, Uniform Ethics Code, or any Borough policies including the prohibition of discrimination in the workplace. This includes actions or statements which reflect negatively on the employee’s judgment, character, integrity, or ability to fulfil their public employment in a fair and competent manner.
4. The Borough reserves the right to investigate postings, private or public, that violate workplace rules, such as the prohibition of sexual harassment and other discriminatory conduct, where such postings lawfully are made available to the Borough by other employees or third parties.
5. Employees should use common sense in all communications, particularly on a website or social networking site accessible to anyone. If you would not be comfortable with your supervisor, coworkers, or the management team reading your words, you should not write them. Additionally, employees should not utilize their position/office with the Borough on social media or a website to influence or solicit outside and/or additional employment.
6. Employees can be disciplined for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment. You can also be sued by agency employees or any individual who views your commentary, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment.
7. What you say or post on your site could potentially be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

8. Nothing in this social networking policy is designed to interfere with, restrain, or prevent social media communications during non-working hours by employees engaging in protected concerted activities regarding wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment pursuant to the New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act or to prevent communications which are protected by the First Amendment freedom of speech clause, unless such communications are made as part of the employees' official job duties.

### **Breach of Policy**

Postings on Borough social media sites that are deemed to constitute a breach of this Policy, as determined by the Borough Administrator, and/or the Borough Administrator's designee, or the Borough Council, shall be removed, subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements.

Any entity found by the Borough Administrator, and/or the Borough Administrator's designee, or the Borough Council, to have violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on social media for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Borough.

An employee who uses social media while they are working, or if it discovered the employee used social media while working, that employee will face discipline in accordance with the employee handbook.

A Borough employee who violates any portion of this policy will face discipline in accordance with the employee handbook.