

**Resolution No. 06-02-14-01**

A Resolution adopting a Policy for Communications and Social Media

**Whereas**, the Human Resources policies for the Village of Fontana on Geneva Lake, Walworth County, WI previously have not included a specific policy for official communications and social media; and,

**Whereas**, the following policy was drafted for consideration by the Board of Trustees, and reviewed without any concerns or further comments being submitted; and,

**Now therefore be it resolved**, that the Village of Fontana on Geneva Lake does hereby adopt the “Policy for Communications and Social Media, Village of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake, Wisconsin, Communications Policy for Employees” that is attached to this Resolution as “Exhibit A”.

**Be it further resolved**, that this Resolution is to be effective upon adoption.

Approved and Adopted this 2nd day of June, 2014.

Village of Fontana on Geneva Lake  
Board of Trustees

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Arvid Petersen, President

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dennis Martin, Clerk/Administrator

“Exhibit A”

**Policy for Communications and Social Media**

**Village of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake, Wisconsin  
Communications Policy for Employees**

***PURPOSE***

The Village of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake, WI (hereinafter referred to as Village) strives to provide the public accurate and timely information, communicated in a professional manner, and in accordance with the laws regarding public information and data practices.

This policy provides guidelines for all external communications from the Village using various mediums including:

- Printed materials such as newsletters, articles, and brochures.
- Electronic materials such as email, postings to web sites or social media sites.
- Media relations such as requests for interviews, news releases, and media inquiries.

The Village also recognizes that employees may sometimes comment on Village matters outside of their official role as an employee of the Village. Therefore, this policy also provides guidelines for employees when communicating as a private citizen on matters pertaining to Village business.

***GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS  
(OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL)***

All Village employees have a responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to the public in a professional manner. Any employee who identifies a mistake in reporting should bring the error to the Village Administrator. Regardless of whether the communication is in the employee’s official Village role or in a personal capacity, employees must comply with all laws related to trademark, copyright, software use etc. Examples of relevant policies include:

- **Technology and Computer Use Policy.** For example, Village employees may use Village technology for personal reasons on a limited basis provided it doesn’t interfere with normal work. The Village reserves the right to inspect any electronic data made by a Village-owned computer or related system. This policy should be reviewed and complied with in full.
- **Respectful Workplace Policy.** For example, employees cannot publish information that is discriminatory, harassing, threatening, or sexually explicit. This policy should be reviewed and complied with in full.
- **Data Practices Policy.** For example, employees cannot disclose private or confidential information and must route data practices requests to the responsible authority. This policy should be reviewed and complied with in full.

- **Political Activity Policy.** For example, employees cannot use Village resources or participate in personal political activity while on Village time or while discharging Village responsibilities. No employee may act in a manner that suggests that the Village either supports a particular candidate or political issue, or endorses the personal political opinions of the employee. This policy should be reviewed and complied with in full.

## ***ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL VILLAGE COMMUNICATIONS***

### **Handling General Requests:**

All staff is responsible for communicating basic and routine information to the public in relation to their specific job duties. Requests for private data or information outside of the scope of an individual's job duties should be routed to the appropriate department head or to the Village Administrator.

### **Handling Media Requests:**

With the exception of routine events and basic information that is readily available to the public, all requests for interviews or information from the media are to be routed through the Village Administrator. Media requests include anything intended to be published or viewable to others in some form such as television, radio, newspapers, newsletters, and web sites. When responding to media requests, employees should follow these steps:

- If the request is for routine or public information (such as a meeting time or agenda) provide the information and notify the Village Administrator of the request.
- If the request is regarding information about Village personnel, potential litigation, controversial issues, an opinion on a Village matter, or if you are unsure if it is a "routine" question, forward the request to the Village Administrator. An appropriate response would be, "I'm sorry, I don't have the full information regarding that issue. Let me take some basic information and submit your request to the appropriate person who will get back to you as soon as he/she can."
- Ask the media representative's name, questions, deadline, and contact information.

### **Communicating on behalf of the Village:**

The village administrator and department heads are authorized to communicate on behalf of the Village in interviews, publications, news releases, on social media sites, and related communications. Other employees may represent the Village if approved by one of these individuals to communicate on a specific topic. When speaking on behalf of the Village:

- Employees must identify themselves as representing the Village. Account names on social media sites must clearly be connected to the Village and approved by the village administrator.
- All information must be respectful, professional and truthful. Corrections must be issued when needed.
- Personal opinions generally don't belong in official Village statements. One exception is communication related to promoting a Village service. For example, if an employee posted on the Village's Facebook page, "My family visited Duck Pond this weekend and really enjoyed the new Pavilion". Employees who have been approved to use social media sites on behalf of the Village should seek assistance from the village administrator on this topic.
- Employees need to notify the Village Administrator if they will be using their personal technology (cell phones, home computer, cameras, etc) for city business. Employees should be aware that the data transmitted or stored may be subject to the data practices act.

## ***ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS***

It is important for employees to remember that the personal communications of employees may reflect on the Village, especially if employees are commenting on Village business. The following guidelines apply to personal communications including various forms such as social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, etc), letters to the editor of newspapers, and personal endorsements.

- Remember that what you write is public, and will be so for a long time. It may also be spread to large audiences. Use common sense when using email or social media sites. It is a good idea to refrain from sending or posting information that you would not want your boss or other employees to read, or that you would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper.
- The Village expects its employees to be truthful, courteous and respectful towards supervisors, co-workers, citizens, customers and other persons associated with the Village. Do not engage in name-calling or personal attacks.
- If you publish something related to Village business, identify yourself and use a disclaimer such as, "I am an employee of the Village of Fontana-on-Geneva Lake, however, these are my own opinions and do not necessarily represent those of the Village."
- Village resources, working time, or official Village positions cannot be used for personal profit or business interests, or to participate in personal political activity. For example, a building inspector could not use the Village's logo, email, or working time to promote his/her side business as a plumber.
- Personal social media account names or email names should not be tied to the Village (e.g. VillFonCop.)

## ***QUESTIONS:***

Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Village Administrator.