

RESOLUTION 2026/02

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA ADOPTING A SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY COMMENT POLICY

WHEREAS, the City of Beaufort utilizes official social media platforms to provide timely, accurate information regarding City services, programs, projects, meetings, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, the City's social media platforms are intended to serve primarily as informational resources and not as public discussion forums or customer service channels; and

WHEREAS, the City values public engagement and transparency, while also recognizing the need to maintain respectful, orderly, and legally compliant communication channels; and

WHEREAS, increasing public use of social media platforms has presented challenges related to misinformation, uncivil discourse, spam, and content unrelated to municipal business; and

WHEREAS, the City has a legitimate governmental interest in establishing reasonable, content-neutral, and viewpoint-neutral standards governing public interaction on its official social media platforms; and

WHEREAS, adoption of a formal Social Media Community Comment Policy promotes transparency, consistency, and accountability, and provides clear notice to the public regarding acceptable use of City-managed social media accounts; and

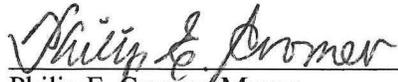
WHEREAS, the proposed Social Media Community Comment Policy, attached hereto as Exhibit "A," establishes standards for public comments, outlines enforcement provisions consistent with applicable law, and identifies alternative avenues for citizen engagement with the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Beaufort, South Carolina, as follows:

1. The Social Media Community Comment Policy attached hereto as Exhibit "A" is hereby adopted as the official policy of the City of Beaufort.
2. The City Manager, or designee, is authorized to implement and administer the policy and to take such actions as are reasonably necessary to ensure consistent application in accordance with applicable law.
3. If any provision of this resolution or the attached policy is determined to be invalid or unenforceable, such determination shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.
4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED this 10th day of February, 2026.

CITY OF BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA


Philip E. Cromer, Mayor



ATTEST:


Traci Guldner, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A



City of Beaufort, South Carolina

Social Media Community Comment Policy

The City of Beaufort maintains official social media pages to provide timely, accurate information about City services, programs, projects, meetings, and public safety. These platforms are intended primarily as informational resources, not as public discussion forums or customer service channels.

While the City values public engagement, staff capacity does not allow for monitoring or responding to every comment or question posted publicly. Residents seeking clarification, assistance, or formal responses are encouraged to contact the City directly via Facebook Messenger, email, phone, or by speaking at public meetings, which remain the appropriate and most effective avenues for communication.

Nature of Public Comments

Comments posted by members of the public on City social media pages do not represent official City positions and may not always be accurate. Public comments may include personal opinions, speculation, or misinformation. For official information, residents should rely on City-issued posts, the City's website, or direct communication with City staff.

The City is not responsible for the content of comments posted by the public and does not guarantee the accuracy of user-generated content.

Comment Guidelines

To maintain a respectful, safe, and constructive environment, all users must adhere to the following standards when commenting on City social media pages:

Comments must be:

- Respectful and civil, and must not include obscene, profane, threatening, or abusive language.
- Free of personal attacks upon or harassment of any person.
- Non-discriminatory, and must not target or insult any individual or group based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, or any other protected status.
- Non-commercial, meaning they may not include advertising, solicitations, endorsements, or promotion of businesses, services, or products.
- Free of spam, repetitive posts, or content intended to disrupt or dominate discussion.
- Free of confidential, private, or legally protected information, including personnel matters or ongoing investigations.

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Enforcement

Comments that violate this policy may be hidden or removed in accordance with applicable law. Users who repeatedly violate the policy may be restricted from commenting on City social media pages.

Appeal Process

Users whose comments have been hidden, removed, or who have been restricted/blocked from commenting on City social media pages may appeal the decision if they believe it was made in error or does not align with this policy.

- Appeals must be submitted in writing (via email to the city manager or designee within 5 business days of the action.)
- The appeal should include:
 - The user's name and contact information.
 - A description of the specific comment or action being appealed (e.g., link to the post, screenshot, or date/time if available).
 - An explanation of why the user believes the comment does not violate the City's Social - Media Community Comment Policy or applicable law.
 - Any supporting details or context.
- Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the City manager or designee will review the appeal, the original comment/action, and this policy.
- A written decision will be provided to the user (via the contact method provided) within 10 business days of receipt, explaining whether the original decision is upheld or reversed.
- If reversed, the comment will be restored, or the restriction will be lifted, allowing the user to repost or resume commenting (subject to ongoing compliance with the policy).
- Decisions are final, though repeated violations may still result in further restrictions under the Enforcement section.
- This appeal process is intended to ensure fair and consistent application of the policy.
- Users are encouraged to use alternative engagement avenues (listed in the policy) for official inquiries or concerns while an appeal is pending.

Public Records Disclaimer

All comments will be retained in accordance with applicable records retention schedules and will be producible in response to a lawful FOIA request.

Alternative Avenues for Engagement

Residents are encouraged to engage with the City through:

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- Direct messages via official City social media accounts
- Email or phone contact with City departments or staff
- Public comment at City Council and board meetings, both in person and via live-streamed meetings

These channels allow for accurate responses, appropriate follow-up, and respectful dialogue.