

Shelburne Town Council adopts social media policy

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shelburne Town Council has adopted a social media policy.

During their meeting on Monday (April 25), council received a report from chief administrative officer, Denyse Morrissey, on the new policy.

"Social media as we all know is a very popular way of sharing information, it's certainly one that the town has embraced and continues to use. We have a number of platforms that we use on a regular basis within our corporate structure," said Morrissey. "While social media has tremendous benefits not only for corporations but for the ability of the community to stay informed in a very timely manner, to be engaged, and participate, it certainly also comes with some risks and some provisions that we need to address in a policy."

In September of 2021, council received a presentation from consulting firm Amberley Gavel, who recommended they develop a social media policy ahead of the 2022 election.

According to the report, the policy supports the use of social media as a communication tool to promote programs and services, educate the public, share information, gain public feedback and response to queries, and alerting the community in emergency situations.

The report notes that the Town of Shelburne social media accounts will be operated through a "one window" approach meaning there will only be one municipal account per social media site.

"Department specific or any group specific accounts are not permitted without prior authorization. Administration of all social media tools and sites by the Town will be centralized with social media account staff. Social media account staff will also monitor and post to social media sites on behalf of the town," read the policy.

The policy also says all those who fall under it are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner both during work and personal time.

"The most important part of this protocol is to provide guidelines in terms of respect and continuity in terms of behaviour and where the town's responsibilities lie," said Morrissey.

Conduct on social media not permitted under the policy includes; comments not related to the topic or issues being commented on; account spamming, posts that solicit sales, products or goods and services; profane, hateful, defamatory, or abusive language or content; inaccurate material or misrepresented facts, and information that may compromise the privacy, safety, or security of the town or public.

The Town's social media policy will apply to both staff and council as well as volunteers and committee appointees for the Town of Shelburne.

The Town's social media policy went into affect as of April 25.