



CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA CITY COUNCIL Staff Report

March 3, 2025
ORDERS OF BUSINESS

TO:	Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
SUBMITTED BY:	Emily Garay, Administrative Analyst
APPROVED BY:	Chip Rerig, City Administrator
SUBJECT:	Resolution 2025-025, Adopting Policy 2025-01 “Social Media Policy” establishing guidelines and procedures for the City’s participation in social media and authorizing the City Administrator to administer the City’s social media program (Estimated time - 20 min)

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution 2025-025, Adopting Policy 2025-01 “Social Media Policy” establishing guidelines and procedures for the City’s participation in social media and authorizing the City Administrator to administer the City’s social media program.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

More and more, people rely on online sources that resonate with their interests, and social media provides an open and transparent way for local governments to connect directly with their communities. As social media continues to grow in reach and influence, local governments are increasingly using these platforms to deliver services more efficiently, reaching diverse demographic groups and meeting operational goals faster than traditional communication methods may allow. By utilizing social media sites such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram, local governments can engage in meaningful dialogue with the public, share important information, and provide access to essential services by redirecting or linking to official City resources.

Recognizing that social media is a widely used form of communication and may serve as a tool to reach a wide audience of the Carmel-by-the-Sea community, the City Council identified “Develop and Implement a Social Media Plan” as a City Council strategic priority. City Council directed staff to research social media use by municipalities and social media policies adopted by neighboring cities.

Staff’s research in developing this Social Media Policy (“Policy”) included examining neighboring Cities’ social media policies, development of social media programs, best practices, and management strategies to enable the City to develop and implement a successful social media program. In order to take advantage of these new communications tools effectively and in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including without limitation such as the free speech laws, the Brown Act (specifically, Assembly Bill 992, and the California Public Records Act, staff will develop administrative training, “Best Practices,” standards of content and consistent engagement, and a social media “handbook” for authorized

social media staff to refer to and implement into their respective department's social media presence.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of information posted on City social media and in deciding what is "announced" or "spoken" on behalf of the City on social media sites. The City encourages the use of social media by designated staff to facilitate communication, foster transparency, community engagement, and further the goals of the City and the mission of its departments.

The Policy will establish the social media policy guidelines and procedures for the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea's participation in, administering, and City staff use of City social media sites created, operated, maintained, and managed by City staff and any authorized designated individuals conveying information to members of the public on behalf of the City.

Establishing a social media presence creates an opportunity for the City to disseminate accurate information to members of the community wherever they are; to create a reliable and concise channel for City information. The City's website (ci.camel.ca.us) will remain the City's primary means of internet communication and City social media sites will redirect or link to the City's website for more detailed information, appropriate documents, forms, etc.

The City will utilize social media to enhance traditional methods of communication to engage with the community and convey accurate information and updates, where appropriate. The adoption of this Policy enables the City to establish a social media presence and supplement current outreach and engagement to build awareness of projects, initiatives, events, and meetings, as well as to promote civic pride within the community.

Social media offers a unique opportunity for local governments to improve communication, build trust, promote their work, and engage with people who are directly impacted by decisions. This Policy sets the framework for effective and responsible social media use to strengthen the City's connection with the community.

The City Attorney has reviewed and approved the attached policy. Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Social Media Policy to authorize the City Administrator to build and administer the City's social media program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There will be no direct fiscal impact with the adoption of Policy A2025-01 "Social Media Policy", at this time, other than staff time to develop and implement the program.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1) Resolution 2025-025
Attachment 2) Social Media Policy