



BERGRIVIER MUNICIPALITY

TOPIC:	Amended Social Media Policy
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BERGRIVIER MUNISIPALITEIT

NOTULE VAN DIE UITVOERENDE BURGEMEESTERSKOMITEE SE VIRTUELE VERGADERING GEHOU OP DONDERDAG 11 JUNIE 2020 OM 10:00 VANAF PIKETBERG.

TEENWOORDIG:

LEDE VAN DIE UITVOERENDE BURGEMEESTERSKOMITEE

Rdh. RM van Rooy	[DA]	:	Uitvoerende Burgemeester
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ANDER RAADSLEDE

Rdh. A de Vries	[DA]	:	Speaker
Rdl. J Daniels	[DA]	:	Voorsitter van Korporatiewe Dienste Komitee (Artikel 79)

AMPTENARE

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Mnr. FM Lötter	:	Direkteur Finansiële Dienste
Mnr. JWA Kotzee	:	Direkteur Korporatiewe Dienste
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UITVOERENDE BURGEMEESTERSKOMITEEVERGADERING: BESLUIT GENEEM OP DONDERDAG 11 JUNIE 2020

BKN019/06/2020

AMENDMENT OF THE COMMUNICATION POLICY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
2/B

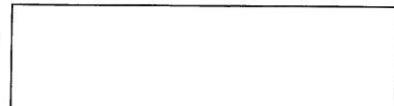
The Chairperson, Alderman Van Rooy gave a brief introduction to the item under discussion.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Executive Mayoral Committee adopts the Amended Communication Policy and Amended Social Media Policy as tabled in terms of the legal framework;
2. That the Amended Communication Policy and Amended Social Media Policy be implemented with immediate effect;
3. That the Amended Communication Policy and Amended Social Media Policy be placed on the municipal website (www.bergmun.org.za) and that it be sent to all employees with access to computers via e-mail; and
4. That a notification be placed on the Bergrivier Municipality Facebook Page with a link to the Amended Communication Policy and Amended Social

**HEAD:
COMMUNICATION**

Media Policy and that the documents be sent to the ICA and via WhatsApp to each member of the Bergrivier Youth Forum.



GESERTIFISEER AS 'N WARE UITTREKSEL VAN DIE NOTULE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Linde', written over a horizontal line.

ADV. H LINDE

MUNISIPALE BESTUURDER

24 JUNIE 2020

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1. Definition of Terms

Account	A valid profile using a social media platform for the purpose of official social media use. Without an account one cannot create a profile.
Apps	An application, especially as downloaded by a user to a mobile device.
Citizen (also referred to as public or general public) Citizen engagement accounts	Any individual that resides in or visits Bergrivier Municipality. Social media platforms used primarily for the communication and interaction with the citizens of Bergrivier Municipality. Such accounts make use of an informal and relaxed tone, but always professional and in good taste.
Digital Divide	An inequality between individuals, groups, socio-economic status, businesses and geographic areas in terms of access to, use of, or knowledge of information and communication technologies (ICT), in particular to computers and the Internet.
Following	The act of a person or entity gaining access to a social media platform via a particular mechanism or the permission of the account owner in order to view content that is of interest to them.
Handle	A handle is another word used to define a username on select social media platforms as chosen by someone using that specific social media platform.
Link / Hyperlink	A segment of text or a graphic that a user can click on, which takes you to different parts of a webpage or between two different websites.
Media channels	The methods used to communicate a message, including spoken words, print, radio, television, or the Internet.
Bergrivier Municipality	A Local Government established in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) (as amended) and established in terms of provincial notice 483/2000.
Networks	Interconnected paths of communication between various social media platforms, people, businesses and groups.
Official channels	A means of communication through which any content passes, is conveyed or disseminated, relating to an office and its administration approved by, recognized by, or issued from authority.
Online community	A group of people using social media tools as a means of sharing content and communicating with each other.

Social media platforms	The tools or mechanisms that are used to facilitate the creation and exchange of content generated for and by users.
Platform	A framework upon which tools of communication such as social media operate.
Post	A piece of content that is shared on a social media platform.
Posted	The act of having shared a piece of content on a social media platform.

Profile	A description of a registered user or organisation about themselves on a social media platform. This may include basic information about the user or organisation, a picture, a description and/or links.
Public space	In the context of social media this refers to areas online where the general public partakes in various forms of engagement in a personal and professional capacity.
Redirect	A webserver function that sends a user from one URL to another more often than not via a link.
Sharing	The act of passing on content to and from individuals, groups and organisations across social media platforms.
Social Media	A collection of interactive online platforms and tools that individuals, groups and other organisations use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself. It allows for the creation and exchange of user generated content. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+, blogs, comments facilities on third party websites, mobile and tablet apps and/or any other form of electronic communication to which it is possible to post messages that are visible to the public.
Social Media Playbook	The Western Cape Municipal Social Media Playbook is a document which municipal employees, contractors and councillors can refer to for practical guidance on how to communicate on social media on behalf of the Municipality.
Social Media Presence	When an individual, group or organisation creates an account on any social media platform.
Subscribing	When an individual or organization selects to have access to an online service in order to receive up to date information.
Tone	This is implied by the words selected and in how the words are arranged. It is also determined by the writer's attitude and knowledge towards the subject and the reader. For example choosing to write in a formal way or using slang.

Transactional engagement	Two-way communication that focuses on positive working relationships in exchange for desirable rewards and where feedback is required. This is not exclusively based on the exchange of anything of monetary value.
Unfollow	To stop following someone's activities or remove oneself as a member of a community on a social media platform.
User-generated content	This term is used to describe any form of content such as video, blogs, images, audio files, and other forms of media that are created by users online and is accessible to other users.
Username	A sequence of characters that is used as identification and is required when logging on to a computer or a social media platform.
Users	An individual or organisation that partakes in any type of engagement or information sharing on a social media platform.
Web server	A web server is a computer system that hosts websites.
ICA	Initiative for Community Advancement
Youth	According to the National Youth Commission Act (Act 1996), any person aged between 14 and 35 falls into the youth category.
Communication	Refers to any communication regarding Bergrivier Municipality with the purpose of sharing information with the public, more specifically the youth, through the various communication methods as stipulated by this document.
IDP	Integrated Development Plan as approved by Bergrivier Municipality from time to time.

2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework, requirements and processes that form the basis of how Bergrivier Municipality will use social media to interact and engage with its citizens. This policy sets out key social media guidelines for how to maintain a social media presence and it forms the basis for the strategy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation documents.

2.2. Scope

This policy covers all facets of social media with regards to Bergrivier Municipality's use thereof, as well as the values, responsibilities, content guidelines, employee interactions, citizen conduct and brand compliance. These are all aspects that have to be adhered to and it is the scope of this policy to define exactly what is expected from all users for each of these key areas.

2.3. Background

Social media has become an acceptable means of communication with citizens over the past few years. Social media has afforded local governments the opportunity to engage with users using a personal and more direct approach, narrowing the gap between local government and communities and ensuring improved service delivery.

As social media has become, in most cases, the chosen medium for communication, it is only natural that Bergrivier Municipality takes a step towards this form of communication in order to keep up with the changes taking place across the rest of the world. In doing so, Bergrivier Municipality can take advantage of the free means of getting information across to the public. By adopting social media as a form of communication it can help Bergrivier Municipality to better inform, understand, respond to and attract the attention of specific audiences. It also enables interactive communication that is not possible via other platforms. Such interactivity allows for the exchange of perspectives and opinions among multiple audiences. It also allows effective and efficient communication to take place where those conversations are already occurring.

Considering that the Western Cape Government has embraced a "better together" philosophy, social media brings forward the opportunity for joint responsibility and participation between Bergrivier Municipality and its citizens by working together to realise our vision: "A prosperous community where all want to live, work, learn and play in a dignified manner".

Social media provides a platform which enables joint responsibility, which is dependent on Bergrivier Municipality, its citizens and businesses, working together in seamless partnerships as envisaged by our philosophy of the three circles: A municipality consists of three equal partners who must work together in sustainable partnerships.

These platforms are drawn on to enhance participation and communicate responsibilities to all involved and relied on to help the Municipality to work as effectively as possible.

With this policy, Bergrivier Municipality is taking responsibility to implement effective communication through social media platforms.



3. Regulatory Framework - National and Provincial legislation:

- 3.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 3.2 Constitution of the Western Cape, 1998;
- 3.3 Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000);
- 3.4 Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act 3 of 2000) ;
- 3.5 The Protection of Information Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013);
- 3.6 The Copyright Act, 1978 (Act 98 of 1978);
- 3.7 Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2005 (Act 36 of 2005);
- 3.8 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000)

4. Why is social media important?

Social media is about communicating directly with the community: sharing Bergrivier Municipality's information and listening to our communities. Responsiveness, openness and mutual respect are essential at all times. The role of social media is to:

- 4.1 Connect the Bergrivier Municipality with the communities we serve in a cost-effective way that promotes good relationships.
- 4.2 Improving service delivery.
- 4.3 Improve relationships between Bergrivier Municipality and key sectors of the community.
- 4.4 Promotion of the Corporate Identity
- 4.5 Allows for two-way communication (in real-time).
- 4.6 Steer traffic to official municipal website.

5. Social media accounts management

- 5.1. Municipal Departments must submit approved content on request or as they require posted on social media platforms to the Head: Communications.
- 5.2. The Communications Section is responsible for ensuring that content on all social media platforms is updated and relevant at all times.
- 5.3. The Communications Section is expected to respond to positive or negative developments from engagement via their social media accounts on the respective social media platforms, where and if applicable.
- 5.4. The Communications Section will be responsible for the monitoring and reporting of the respective social media accounts.
- 5.5. The Communication Section will be responsible for ensuring adherence and reviewing of this policy.

6. Content: Rules and regulations

- 6.1 Content and conversation on social media should be professional and intended to inform and engage. Information posted by the Municipality must be accurate, relevant and consistent with municipal policies and protocols.
- 6.2 Only appointed administrators in the Communications Section will post content and comment on the social media sites.
- 6.3 Administrators will respect confidentiality and sensitivity of the information, including financial and business information, privileged information, legal advice, personal information, home addresses and telephone numbers, or any information not generally available in public.
- 6.4 Bergrivier Municipality invites all stakeholders and interested parties to share and discuss their opinions provided that all comments remain respectful. All posts must be done within a reasonable timeframe and in line with relevant legislation and municipal policies.
- 6.5 Some level of criticism is expected and this presents an opportunity to participate in the on-going conversation, correct misinformation and deliver a quality service. Negative comments should be responded to using constructive feedback rather than censorship.
- 6.6 It is sometimes appropriate, within the professional judgement of the administrator, to allow public commentary to take its course without municipal intervention.
- 6.7 Bergrivier Municipality's website www.bergmun.org.za will remain the primary online source of information. Social media will be used to complement the website and broaden the reach.
- 6.8 As Bergrivier Municipality's social media presence is primarily for residents, local references can and should be made.
- 6.9 The idea is that there needs to be a consistent level of response during office hours.
- 6.10 Without a speedy response-time from departments, social media will not work – urging the buy-in from top management and other managers.
- 6.11 Avoid the use of political jargon or acronyms not likely to be understood by the majority of the audience.
- 6.12 Bergrivier Municipality is politically neutral and should react accordingly to any political comments made.
- 6.13 With negative comments, for e.g. on service delivery, it is important to try to take the conversation to a private channel to avoid prolonged negative conversations in public.
- 6.14 Respond to all service delivery-related queries and any frustrations that can be addressed.
- 6.15 Bergrivier Municipality will not use emoticons or acronyms to communicate with its residents, but will instead use a light and friendly tone where appropriate when communicating and having a conversation with an individual.
- 6.16 Posting is forever, therefore what is written, posted and uploaded is regarded as public information as the content has been broadcasted in a public domain. Therefore, remain mindful that we are speaking on behalf of Bergrivier Municipality.
- 6.17 Continue to monitor sites for inaccurate or inappropriate information.

6.18 Social media is always on. This means that people can post commentary about Bergrivier Municipality outside office hours. Bergrivier Municipality needs to decide the hours that they will monitor and participate in social media, and make this clear on their social media platforms.

6.19 No confidential information will under any circumstance be posted on any social media platform. It is critical that any information shared on the various social media platforms is not sensitive or confidential in any way.

6.20 Content must not discriminate in any way and must not be seen to be biased.

7. Youth Communication Strategy

It has become increasingly prevalent during the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) processes that the voices of young people are not expressed during inter alia the public participation processes. In recent time, Bergrivier Municipality has begun to proactively engage with the youth of Bergrivier through the Bergrivier Youth Forum, to discuss the various challenges facing the youth, and how they can get involved in municipal structures and activities. This process has proved to be meaningful and would go a long way to creating a more inclusive society. In previous years, issues that made its way at ward levels are mostly priorities of persons over the age of 35, and did not necessarily capture the ideas, suggestions or recommendations from the youth 14 – 35 years old). Now, with youth members holding positions in our Ward Committee Structures, improved communication and dialogue between the Municipality and the youth has brought about meaningful progress towards bridging the gap.

7.1 Objectives of the Youth Communication Strategy

To raise greater awareness amongst young people about their important role in government in a way that encourages children and youth to participate.

To encourage the youth to get involved in matters of Bergrivier Municipality by keeping them informed about community development projects, bursaries, local events, virtual platforms and all relevant meetings.

To tailor communication material to suit the needs of the youth and distribute it to them using the most appropriate/popular channels.

To simplify complex information as far as possible when communicating with the youth – be it at public meetings, youth forums or when designing communication material or sharing information via social media.

To increase the number of youth attending public meetings by inviting representatives from the Bergrivier Youth Forum (BYF).

To have dedicated meeting platforms organized by the Bergrivier Youth Forum and enabled by Bergrivier Municipality whereby the youth can formally submit their inputs on the IDP and other community development opportunities available at the municipality. This will make it easier for the youth to actively participate.

Ensure that the youth portfolio of each Ward Committee is filled by a member of the Bergrivier Youth Forum or another young person as elected by the youth constituency in the said ward.

7.2 Core Communication Focus Areas for Social Media

Municipal news (e.g. Free WI-FI spots, Public Participation Processes)

Role of Ward Committees

Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation Information

Sporting events

Entrepreneurial Training/Workshops

Bursaries/Internships/ Vacancies

NB: Bergrivier Municipality's Communication Section to partner with the Initiative for Community Advancement (ICA) and the duly elected Bergrivier Youth Forum operating as a Program of ICA, who will act as the link between the Municipality and the youth. Relevant information would be sent to the ICA, who will then distribute it via its established youth platforms and structures.

7.3 Language Preference

Although the Bergrivier Municipal Area consists of a largely Afrikaans population, there are smaller populations that prefer English as their primary language of communication. Bergrivier Municipality believes in an inclusive living environment and thus, must ensure that where time and budget considerations allow, that all messages are communicated in the official languages appropriate for the key audience.

7.4 Communication Platforms

The Communication Section will distribute relevant information for the youth to the ICA, to then distribute on their dedicated Youth social media platforms. ICA to act as the central point of reference between the youth and Bergrivier Municipality:

WhatsApp – Sharing information, pictures, videos and voice notes;

Facebook – Sharing, information, pictures and videos; and

Bergrivier Youth Forum – Sharing Information, Pictures, Videos, Communication Material and Presentations.

7.5 Youth Inputs/Commentary

Bergrivier Municipality values all inputs from the public relating to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which gives an overall framework for development of the area. This document is designed to improve the quality of life for all the people living in the area. Therefore, it is important that the voices of the youth are included in this process.

Bergrivier Municipality cannot open its social media platforms to receive inputs from the youth for the IDP. Bergrivier Municipality should, however, in partnership with ICA create a dedicated meeting platform whereby the youth can submit their inputs on the IDP to the Department: Strategic Services for further processing.

7.6 Advertising for the Youth

Compliance requires that Bergrivier Municipality advertises all public meetings that are to be held in the various towns we serve. It is, however, important that we seriously consider the way in which we advertise to ensure its effectiveness.

Bergrivier Municipality should advertise in a way that attracts all people, especially the youth, to get involved in public meetings. Youth friendly colors; simple and direct messages, coupled with images is a sure way to attract people's attention to a specific cause.

8. Social media code of conduct

8.1 For Bergrivier Municipal Employees

- Nothing about social media changes the responsibilities and obligations of employees or contractors of Bergrivier Municipality.
- It does not matter if employees or contractors use a private account or access social media outside of work hours – their obligations in terms of their contract of employment, the Code of Conduct, and all other applicable policies apply to all of their conduct on social media.
- Employees or contractors of the Bergrivier Municipality have a legal duty to act in good faith towards the Bergrivier Municipality. They may therefore not do anything that damages or tarnishes the reputation of the Bergrivier Municipality and must always act in the best

interests of the organisation. This duty extends to their use of social media. For example, employees may not comment negatively on social media about anything associated with Bergrivier Municipality.

- Everything employees do and say on social media reflects on the Bergrivier Municipality and its reputation. In conducting themselves on social media, it is important that employees use sound judgment and common sense, act with professionalism and integrity, and adhere to Bergrivier Municipality's values.
- Employees who violate any terms set out in this policy will be subjected to Disciplinary Processes.

8.2 For Political Principals

- Everything Councillors do and say on social media reflects on the Bergrivier Municipality and its reputation. In conducting themselves on social media, it is important that Councillors use sound judgment and common sense, act with professionalism and integrity, and adhere to Bergrivier Municipality's values.
- Councillors should restrict party political messages and campaigning to their personal pages. The Bergrivier Municipality will not share or endorse any political content on any of its social media platforms at any time.
- Councillors should also refrain from divulging administrative information via the social media platform to the general public, if the procedure is still in the process of completion and not yet finalised. This type of information should first be clarified and verified by the Municipal Manager before it can be made public.

9. Skills Development and Resources

9.1 All employees using social media on behalf of Bergrivier Municipality must undergo relevant training before gaining access to any social media accounts. It is Bergrivier Municipality's responsibility to provide training to such employees. This training is facilitated by the Western Cape Government, Department of Local Government: Municipal Communication team. Training from an accredited service provider, or an in-house capable person, is also acceptable, provided clear record is being kept and on approval or instruction by the Municipal Manager.

9.2 Communicators must be provided with the necessary tools in order to manage municipal social media accounts such as a laptop, desktop (computer), tablet and/or smartphone. These tools include: access to social media platforms; budget and/or cell phone allowance to manage municipal social media platforms remotely (i.e. airtime and/or data to manage social media via a smartphone).

10. Content approvals

The nature of social media means that responsiveness is vital. Therefore, it is not feasible to subject every post or response to comprehensive approval processes.

Employees responsible for updating the Bergrivier Municipal social media accounts should be empowered to respond appropriately as they see fit, and to exercise good judgment in accordance with the social media code of conduct, above. Employees should refer to the Western Cape Municipal Social Media Playbook for appropriate responses to members of the public in a variety of situations.

11. Appropriate content and conduct for municipal representatives

No employee or Councillor of Bergrivier Municipality is permitted to share the following:

- Any content that is unlawful, defamatory, racist, sexist, homophobic or insulting.
- Anything that is untrue.
- Any content that features explicit political messages or branding (for example, a councillor wearing a party political T-shirt)
- Content which is harassing, threatening, obscene, pornographic, indecent, lewd, foul language, suggestive or otherwise objectionable.
- Content that criticises individual community members, colleagues, Councillors by name.
- Content which infringes the privacy of others.
- Content that is the property of someone else, without permission to use it.
- Spam (unsolicited sales messages)

The same applies to content posted by members of the public on municipal platforms. If any comment by a member of the public contravenes these rules, the municipality reserves the right to delete it. Accusations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Communicators can refer to the Western Cape Municipal Social Media Playbook for advice on how to proceed/respond to various types of queries.

All conduct on social media and/ or related thereto will be in terms of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and staff as contained in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000).

12. Content Neutrality

- 12.1 All content must not discriminate in any way and must not be seen to be biased.
- 12.2 It is Bergrivier Municipality's responsibility to remain impartial yet informative when communicating to the public about political matters.
- 12.3 Bergrivier Municipality is not to share political opinions of any office bearers on any of the organisation's social media platforms. However official statements made by office bearers which can be published on the municipality's website can be shared on social media platforms. Bergrivier Municipality must not share content of a party political nature. Office bearers must use their personal accounts to publish party political statements.

13. Personal social media accounts

- 13.1 Where municipal employees and/ or councillors use social media platforms and wish to provide personal comments on these platforms, they could contravene the accepted Code of Conduct and bring the municipal service into disrepute or be misinterpreted as being an official representative of Bergrivier Municipality. All employees and/ or councillors must at all times adhere to the Codes of Conduct as pertained in the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000).
- 13.2 Any personal social media accounts, or accounts unrelated to the Bergrivier Municipality, that

currently exist or will be created in future, are not to be registered using a Bergrivier Municipal e-mail address. This applies to any social media platform that requires an e-mail account to register. These accounts must make use of private e-mail addresses and contact details.

- 13.3 Officials cannot use municipal-related usernames or handles when using or setting up their personal accounts, e.g. PublicServantLisa, Mayor_Phillip

14. Confidentiality

It is critical that any information shared on the various social media platforms is not sensitive or confidential in any way. Municipal employees must refer to internal departmental policies and guidelines on what is considered confidential information, and ensure that these policies and guidelines are enforced on social media.

15. Use of devices in council meetings

- From time to time, representatives from the media or members of the public may wish to be present in council meetings to view proceedings. Because these meetings are held to conduct council business, the public has a right to be present.
- Mobile devices with internet access and cameras will therefore be capable of sharing information publically, in real time.
- Media or members of the public will not be prevented from tweeting, updating, photographing proceedings or taking video footage.
- Anyone who intends to share proceedings to social media platforms undertakes to inform all present of their plan to do so.

16. Fundamental Principles and Core Values

16.1 Nothing is private on social media platforms. If staff members share something on any social media platform, even their own, they cannot claim that their privacy has been violated.

16.2 No politics on municipal pages, including photographs of party political T-shirts and branding.

16.3 Employees should keep their tonality professional, while not losing the personal touch. They are people talking to the community they serve.

16.4 Employees should obtain permission before sharing personal details. This applies to photographs as well.

16.5 All posts should be relevant to the community being served by Bergrivier Municipality.

16.6 All responses to public comments must be directed by the authorised personnel on the social media page.

16.7 Core Value 1: We are all part of Bergrivier Municipality.

16.8 Core Value 2: We strive to render good service to ensure that all people can live together in a dignified manner.

16.9 Core Value 3: We are unashamedly pro-poor.

16.10 Core Value 4: We believe in good relationships.

16.11 Core Value 5: We care about our work and our colleagues.

16.12 Core Value 6: We serve with pride.

16.13 Core Value 7: We are disciplined.

16.14 Core Value 8: We believe in social and economic development of the area.

16.15 Core Value 9: We believe in close innovative partnerships.

17. TRANSGRESSIONS AND CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT

Any action or behaviour by Councillors or members of staff, which is in conflict with this Policy, will be deemed a transgression of the Code of Conduct of Councillors or Staff members, as the case may be.