



# CITY OF SIMI VALLEY

*Home of The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library*

E-Government Committee  
Special Meeting  
February 4, 2019  
5:30 p.m.

City Manager's Conference Room  
2929 Tapo Canyon Road  
Simi Valley, CA 93063

## AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions**
- II. **Public Statements**
- III. **Approval of Minutes**
- IV. **Discussion of E-Government Issues**
  - a. Discussion of City's Social Media Utilization
- V. **Committee Comments**
- VI. **Adjournment**

/s/  
Eric J. Levitt, City Manager

If any interested individual has a disability, which may require accommodation to participate in this meeting, please contact Sue Klepper in the City Manager's Office at (805) 583-6701. Upon advance notification of the need for accommodation, reasonable arrangements will be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.



## E-Government Committee Meeting

October 3, 2016

4:00 p.m.

### MEETING MINUTES

#### I. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Committee Members

Mayor Huber  
Council Member Judge

Staff

Eric Levitt  
Samantha Argabrite  
Jody Kershberg  
Garry Boswell

Public

Gloria Bowman

#### II. Public Statements

Gloria Bowman, representing the Youth Employment Service Advisory Board requested that the E-Gov Committee consider granting approval for a Youth Employment Service Facebook page where the Interview Skills Workshops and Annual Job Expo can be promoted directly to youth. Attendance at the Job Expo has been down in recent years and the Board believes that having the ability to promote the event on social media will increase attendance.

#### IV. Discussion of E-Government Issues

##### a. Discussion of City's Social Media Utilization

Staff presented options for increasing the use of the City's Facebook page. Staff recommended that individual programs in Departments have the ability to create their own Facebook page, including the Senior Center, Neighborhood Councils, Youth Council and Youth Employment Service. Staff was directed to create a process by which Departments can submit a request to create an additional Facebook page for a program and the City Council will have 10 days to appeal the request. Staff was also directed to present an enhanced Social Media Policy to the City Council for consideration at a future meeting.

#### V. Committee Comments

There were no additional Committee comments

#### VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

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Samantha Argabrite  
Deputy City Manager

# CITY OF SIMI VALLEY • MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 4, 2019  
**TO:** E-Gov Committee  
**FROM:** Samantha Argabrite, Deputy City Manager  
**SUBJECT:** DISCUSSION OF CITY'S SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the E-Gov Committee discuss the City's current use of social media and recommend to the City Council the City move forward with a primary City of Simi Valley Facebook page, Twitter page and Instagram page and recommend that the City Council consider an amended Social Media Policy as described below.

## DISCUSSION

In conjunction with the adoption of the City's Social Media Policy (page 4), on August 13, 2012, the City Council authorized the implementation of a social media presence for the City, which was launched with the Simi Valley Police Department's Facebook page. The Police Department utilizes their page to share important information with followers, such as traffic accidents or incidents, road closures, Nixles, events, and success stories from the Department. The page has gathered over 19,500 followers.

In total, the City has four Facebook pages, three Instagram accounts, and six Twitter pages for individual Departments or programs:

### Facebook:

- Simi Valley Public Library (over 2100 followers): In 2013 when the City began operating the Simi Valley Public Library as a City Library, part of the agreement with Library Systems and Services was that Library staff would maintain a Library Facebook page to promote programs and events.
- Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center (over 4,800 followers): The Cultural Arts Center created a Facebook page which is used to promote upcoming events and performances and share content relevant to the arts.
- Simi Valley H2O (over 1,300 followers): This is the City's water conservation page operated out of the Public Works Department. At the time that the Governor instituted strict water conservation mandates across the State, the City Council adopted more stringent watering guidelines, and the City was mandated



to conserve water at a rate of 28% less than 2013 usage, the City Manager authorized the creation of a water conservation Facebook page, Simi Valley H2O. This page now focuses on conservation as a way of life and promotes water conservation tips, educational events and relevant content.

#### Instagram:

- Simi Valley Public Library (over 460 followers): This page promotes activities and events at the Library.
- Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center (over 390 followers): The Cultural Arts Center created an Instagram account which provides updates on events at the Center and performances.
- Simi Valley Youth Council (350 followers): The Simi Valley Youth Council created an account to promote activities of the Youth Council, but also events at the City as a whole.

#### Twitter:

- Simi Valley Public Library (over 350 followers): The page provides library updates, re-Tweets information of regional interest, and other City Twitter updates.
- Simi Valley Cultural Arts Center (over 320 followers): The Cultural Arts Center created a Twitter page which is used to promote upcoming events, performances and ticket promotions.
- Simi Valley Transit (over 20 followers): This page provides updates to followers on the status of the Simi Valley Transit routes, stop closures, and promotional information.
- SimiValleyH2O (over 290 followers): This account promotes water conservation as a way of life and promotes water conservation tips, educational events and relevant content.
- SVPD (over 5,500 followers): This platform is used to share information from Nixle on traffic incidents, criminal activity to keep the community informed.
- SVEOC (over 675 followers): This page is used to provide updates to the community in the event of an emergency and in preparation for significant weather events.



The City archives the activity of its social media platforms through a contract with an outside vendor which allows the City to retrieve the data in a "friendly" format should a Public Records Act request be received for any of the content.

Staff recommends that the Committee consider a City Facebook page, Instagram account and Twitter feed. This would serve as a clearinghouse of City information so followers would not have to "like" all of the City's unique pages in order to receive updates on areas of general interest. Individuals will still have the option to "like" as many, or as few, City pages as they wish. The City currently has a "City Hall" page that people check in to and use to send messages to, which staff responds to. However, the page is not utilized to provide updates on issues of citywide interest such as roads projects, significant development projects, public meetings, and opportunities for resident involvement, not to mention updates in the event of an emergency.

Currently, residents post information or questions about issues occurring in the City on individual/private community forum pages that may not necessarily be accurate, and/or are seeking information from other residents regarding these issues. A general City Facebook page could proactively provide the correct information and potentially decrease misinformation, provided these same individuals "like" the City's page. It would be a resource for residents as more people look to social media as a news source.

While there are many positives to engaging in the social media realm, it does come with downsides. A general City page could be used as a forum for "trolls." A troll intentionally posts statements to start arguments or provoke others. The standard advice for professional pages is to respond twice to a "troll" with the accurate information, and after that, cease engaging with the individual. Additionally, if a page has an active community associated, followers will typically come to the defense of the page.

Facebook has become a platform where people turn to for news and information. According to the Pew Research Center, 66% of Facebook users get news on the site, and 67% of U.S. adults are on Facebook, which amounts to 44% of the total population. Extrapolating that to Simi Valley, over two thirds of our population is estimated to be on Facebook, and just a little under half, utilize it for news.

All nine other Ventura County cities have general City Facebook pages: Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Oxnard, Ventura, Ojai, and Port Hueneme. Additionally, the neighboring cities of Santa Clarita, Calabasas, and Burbank have general City Facebook pages.

Staff also recommends that the City engage a general Instagram account and a Twitter page. The content would not always be the same, and in fact, it is best practice not to post the same content across platforms, as different platforms engage different audiences. Additionally, if the same information is posted across platforms, there is a

decreased incentive to follow the various platforms. However, in the event of an emergency, being able to share community wide information across all platforms would be beneficial. Creating content of interest and engaging users before an emergency ensures the widest reach when it is most critical.

The Committee could consider that the City use the Facebook page to “push out” information” and turn off the comments feature. The City of Camarillo has set up its page to distribute information rather than to allow for comments. The cities of Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Oxnard, Ventura, Ojai, and Port Hueneme allow for comments. While it takes some of the “social” out of social media, it would be a way for the City to engage the platforms in consideration of the current staff resources available to manage them.

Should the Committee wish to allow for comments on Facebook, timeliness is critical in social media, and users expect responses quickly, if not immediately. The previous direction that decentralized the City’s social media pages works well within that framework as managing the City’s entire social media presence does not fall to one person. However, it is recommended that a City Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter accounts be managed by the City’s PIO.

The PIO is currently meeting with departments to better understand what outreach they currently conduct for their programs and areas of responsibility and how social media could be utilized to assist in that outreach and public awareness.

Should staff receive approval to move forward with a more robust utilization of social media; staff will create a calendar of posts in cooperation with the City’s departments to ensure the timeliest information is being shared. However, managing the City’s responses to comments will take time. Staff has already created an auto response for the City’s City Hall page to ensure that people who send in a message receive a response immediately and then staff can respond during business hours or upon identifying the information the person is seeking.

Another option available is a firm that will manage the City’s social media interactions for a fee ranging from \$2,500 per month or \$30,000 annually (one account) - \$3,500 per month or \$42,000 annually (three accounts). For this fee, the firm will create a social media strategy, follow, friend, like posts, create and implement a monthly calendar, draft content (3 – 5 posts per week), share content from other sources to increase relevancy to users (7-10 posts per week), create up to four images per month, monitor the account and respond within four hours, and provide an analysis of engagement including the popular posts with the most engaged followers.

There are pros and cons with using a firm such as that mentioned above, for example, if there are questions that the firm cannot answer on behalf of the City, they will still be referred to staff to provide a response. Additionally, the amount of outreach would be limited to what is provided for in the agreement. While a staff member can provide a



more organic approach to the social media content, the staff that is currently assigned has this as only one portion of their responsibilities.

Finally, staff has identified areas of the City's Social Media Policy that should be addressed as the City's Social Media presence expands. For example, the Policy does not speak to whether staff should respond to each and every comment posted, a timeframe for responses, the number of times to respond to a negative poster, or how many times per week a posting should be made to an individual page to ensure that followers stay engaged. This will assist in gauging the amount of staff time required to manage and maintain the City's Social Media presence.

According to the City's Social Media Policy, the City Manager designates the Administrator(s) to manage and oversee the content of the Social Media site(s). While not specifically stated in the policy, staff recommends that an amendment be made to the Policy that any Administrator be a City staff member and access to City social media accounts not be granted to board members or volunteers unless previously approved. Additionally, it is recommended that "voice and tone" be addressed. Currently, the City's Social Media Policy states that "All information posted to Social Media sites on the City's behalf must: present the City in a positive light and professional manner;" but does not further discuss voice or tone.

Prepared by: Samantha Argabrite, Deputy City Manager



**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Director/Sanitation Services, and Maintenance Superintendent  
(Streets) as eligible for reimbursement.

Subject:	POLICY A9: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY		
Policy No:	A9	Effective:	August 9, 2012
	(Renumbered January 1, 2013)		
Originator:	City Council	Supersedes:	A-025

**POLICY**

This policy establishes guidelines for the establishment, use, and administration of Social Media sites by the City of Simi Valley as a means of conveying City of Simi Valley information to its citizens. This policy addresses the rapidly growing and changing landscape of the Internet, which also includes the use of Social Media or “Web 2.0.” The City encourages the use of Social Media outlets to further the goals of the City and the objectives of its departments, as appropriate, to communicate its message to a broader audience in the community.

**PROCEDURE**

**Definitions**

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

1. "Social Media" or "Social Media site(s)" refers to various activities that integrate web based and mobile technology, social interaction, and content creation into an interactive dialog. Social Media sites allow people to create web content, organize content, edit or comment on content, combine content, and share content. Social Media sites use many technologies and forms. Examples of Social Media sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, LinkedIn, Delicious, wikis, and Flickr.
2. "Comments" include, but are not limited to, information, articles, pictures, videos, or any other form of communicative content posted on a City of Simi Valley Social Media site.
3. "Content" or "Digital Content" refers to information stored in digital media technologies, such as question-answer databases, digital video, blogging, podcasting, forums, review- sites, social networking, and digital images and photography.
4. "Users" refer to any and all persons who have access to Social Media sites.
5. "Administrator" refers to any and all persons who have administrative control over Social Media sites, including Public Information Officers ("PIOs"). Examples of administrative control include, but are not limited to, the ability to delete other Users' content, restrict or expand User access to Social Media sites, delete the City's entire presence within a Social Media site, or other rights as provided by the Social Media site.

**General Policies**

1. Creation of any City of Simi Valley Social Media sites shall be done only with the written approval of the City Manager, or his/her designee, who has the sole authority to establish and/or terminate any City of Simi Valley Social Media sites, accounts, and pages.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

2. The City of Simi Valley's website at <http://www.simivalley.org> will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence.
3. Wherever possible, content posted to City of Simi Valley Social Media sites will also be available on the City's main website to maintain a consistent message to the community. City Social Media sites should link back to the official City of Simi Valley website directing users to forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with the City of Simi Valley whenever possible.
4. The City Manager shall designate an Administrator(s), who will manage and oversee all content on each Social Media site to ensure adherence to the City of Simi Valley's Social Media Policy, including appropriate use, message, and branding that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the City of Simi Valley.
5. The City of Simi Valley's Social Media Policy shall be displayed to users or be made available by hyperlink on all Social Media sites, when possible.
6. Those designated to authorize or administer Social Media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. Those responsibilities include adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, California Public Records Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, acceptable use of City owned or controlled digital equipment, Internet access, and information security policies established by the City of Simi Valley.
7. Those designated and authorized to administer Social Media sites do so under the premise that they are representing the City of Simi Valley via Social Media outlets and must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Simi Valley and in accordance with all City policies. This policy also includes site administration outside of the workplace.



**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

8. All City of Simi Valley Social Media sites shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City and shall prominently display City contact information. Branding the City's Social Media pages an official site of the City of Simi Valley is required. For example, "This is the official (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) page for the City of Simi Valley (Department Name), California."
9. All City maintained Social Media pages shall include the Official City Seal and/or Logo, when possible.
10. All content posted on Social Media sites may be subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a Social Media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers, posted communication, and communication submitted for posting, may be a public record subject to public disclosure. There should be no expectation of privacy in regards to the information posted on any City Social Media sites. The City Manager or his/her designee must approve any other image used on City Social Media sites.
11. Ownership of content varies on Social Media sites based on the site's policy. It is the responsibility of Public Information Officer(s) to understand, communicate, and adhere to those policies.
12. Any violation of the City of Simi Valley's Social Media Policy standards may result in the removal of City pages from Social Media sites. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
13. The City of Simi Valley's Social Media Policy may be revised at any time by the City Manager or his/her designee.

**Account Set Up and Settings Policy**

1. City account profiles must contain a valid City of Simi Valley e-mail address.

**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

2. Official account names or user names on Social Media sites shall be established using “(Site Name) cityofsimivalley: or “simivalleyca” as the leading identifier, where “(Site Name)” is the name of the Social Media site. For example, “FacebookCityOfSimiValley.” The department name, purpose, or individual name may also be included or appended.
3. Profiles or posted content must never contain a personal e-mail address or any other personal information, except the name of the employee whose job duties include being available for contact by the public via a City e-mail account.
4. The City Manager or his/her designee has the authority to remove content and accounts and, therefore, must be provided user names and passwords. Upon creating an approved Social Media account, staff shall provide the City Manager with the account URL, user name, password, and/or all other login information.
5. For the security of the City’s network, staff may not use the same password for Social Media sites as used for logging into the City’s network.
6. Staff shall not share City Social Media account passwords with anyone not authorized to post in an official capacity on that space or with that account.

**Comment and Content Policy**

1. As a public entity, the City must abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.
2. The intended purpose behind establishing City of Simi Valley Social Media sites is to disseminate information from the City, about the City, to its citizens.
3. All information posted to Social Media sites on the City’s behalf must:
  - a. Present the City in a positive light and a professional manner;
  - b. Contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by a City policy or state or federal law;

**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

- c. Not contain any personal information except the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public;
  - d. Comply with any current or future local, state, and federal laws.
4. Comments and/or posts containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted on City of Simi Valley Social Media sites and are subject to removal and/or restriction by the City Manager or his/her designee:
- a. Comments or content unrelated to the original topic or article;
  - b. Profane, obscene, or pornographic content and/or language or links to such language or content;
  - c. Comments or content in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns or ballot measures;
  - d. Solicitations of commerce, including but not limited to, advertising of any business or product for sale;
  - e. Comments or content that encourages illegal activity;
  - f. Actual or potential legal claims, lawsuits, or other legal issues;
  - g. Personnel matters;
  - h. Crime investigations and content about a crime scene;
  - i. Emergency situations including, but not limited to, actual or perceived threats to public health, safety, or property (unless the person authorized to post content represents the Police Department);
  - j. Any information or links that are illegal or that might compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
  - k. Comments or content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as copyright, of another party;
  - l. Defamatory or personal attacks;
  - m. Threats to any person or organization;



**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

- n. Comments or content that violates any federal, state, or local law;
  - o. Comments or content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, parentage, marital status, medical condition, sexual identity, sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws.
5. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Simi Valley are subject to removal by the City Manager or his/her designee.
  6. If comments do not violate any other provisions in this policy and are in the context to the topic at hand, then the content should be allowed to remain, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to the City of Simi Valley.
  7. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Simi Valley Social Media site is the opinion of the commenter or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of or agreement by the City of Simi Valley, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Simi Valley.
  8. The City of Simi Valley reserves the right to deny access to City of Simi Valley Social Media sites for any individual who violates the City of Simi Valley's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
  9. Departments shall monitor their Social Media sites for comments requesting responses from the City and for comments in violation of this policy. Any comments or content in violation of this policy shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Administrator(s) responsible for the site.
  10. When a City of Simi Valley employee responds to a comment, in his/her capacity as a City of Simi Valley employee, the employee's name and title should be made available; however, employees shall not share personal information about

**CITY OF SIMI VALLEY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

themselves or other City employees.

11. Employees administering a Social Media site on behalf of the City of Simi Valley are expected to understand the current terms of service for that site.
12. The City of Simi Valley reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to be in violation of this Social Media Policy or any applicable law. City Manager, or his/her designee, review and/or authorization is required prior to any content restriction or removal from Social Media sites, in consultation with the City Attorney.
13. All restricted and/or removed content shall be preserved and maintained according to the City's Records Retention Schedule.

## HISTORY

August 9, 2012	Policy approved by the City Council
January 1, 2013	Policy A-025 converted to current format as Policy A-9