
**NILES TOWNSHIP
COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**ORDINANCE
NUMBER 07-2023**

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AND ESTABLISHING AN ADMINISTRATION OF
NILES TOWNSHIP'S SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES AND ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATION POLICY**

**BONNIE KAHN OGNISANTI, Township Supervisor
CHARLES LEVY, Township Clerk**

**MARK COLLINS
DONALD GELFUND
KITTY KENDRICK
PEGGY TOLLESON
Township Trustees**

**Published in pamphlet form by authority of the Supervisor and Board of Trustees of Niles Township on
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**Prepared by ODELSON, MURPHEY, FRAZIER & McGRATH, LTD. - Township Attorneys
3318 West 95th Street - Evergreen Park, Illinois 60805**

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**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AND ESTABLISHING AN ADMINISTRATION OF
NILES TOWNSHIP'S SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES AND ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATION POLICY**

WHEREAS, Niles Township, Cook County, Illinois (the "Township"), is a duly organized and existing township and unit of local government created under the provisions of the laws of the State of Illinois, and is operating under the provisions of Illinois' Township Code, 60 ILCS 1/1-1, *et seq.*, and all laws amendatory thereto; and

WHEREAS, the Township Supervisor and Township Board of Trustees (the "Township Board") are committed to ensuring the effective administration of government and responsible management of taxpayer dollars; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board seeks to establish policies and procedures governing the proper and consistent manner of administering the Township's social media and electronic communication platforms that are maintained by, belong to, or are affiliated with the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board has caused to be prepared an "Administration of Niles Township's Social Media Pages and Electronic Communication Policy," which will (i) ensure proper controls for use, regulation, and oversight of all Township's social media pages, electronic communication, or other media platforms use to obtain or convey information that is useful to or will further the goals of the Township; (ii) to set clear expectations and responsibilities for Township Employees, Township Elected or Appointed Officials and the public; and (iii) to promote transparency regarding the management of the Township's social media pages and electronic communications; and

WHEREAS, the Township Board finds it to be in the best interests of the Township to establish an Administration of Niles Township's Social Media Pages and Electronic Communication Policy in accordance with the requirements of the Illinois Township Code and any other related legal requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, by the Supervisor and the Board of Trustees of Niles Township, Cook County, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1: That the above recitals and legislative findings contained in the preambles to this Ordinance are true and correct and are hereby incorporated into this Ordinance as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2: The Township Board hereby establishes and approves the Administration of Niles Township's Social Media Pages and Electronic Communication Policy, attached hereto, and incorporated herein as **Exhibit A**, and directs appropriate Township employees and officials to take all actions necessary and proper to implement said policy.

Section 3: If any section, paragraph, clause, or provision of this Ordinance shall be held invalid, the invalidity thereof shall not affect any other provision of this Ordinance.

Section 4: All ordinances, resolutions, motions, or orders in conflict with this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent they are inconsistent with this Ordinance.

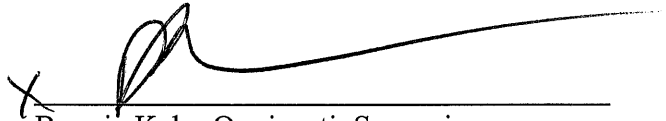
Section 5: This Ordinance shall be in full effect upon its passage and approval.

ADOPTED by the Supervisor and Board of Trustees of Niles Township, Cook County, Illinois this 14th day of August 2023, pursuant to a roll call vote, as follows:

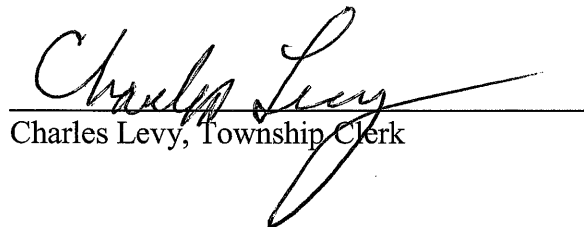
	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Trustee Collins	X			
Trustee Gelfund	X			
Trustee Kendrick	X			
Trustee Tolleson	X			
Supervisor Kahn Ognisanti	X			
TOTAL:	5	-0-	-0-	-0-

APPROVED by the Supervisor of Niles Township, Cook County, Illinois on this 14th day of August, 2023.

APPROVED:

X 
 Bonnie Kahn Ognisanti, Supervisor

ATTEST:


 Charles Levy, Township Clerk

NILES TOWNSHIP ORDINANCE NO. 07-2023

EXHIBIT A

**Administration of Niles Township's Social Media Pages and
Electronic Communication Policy**

Administration of Niles Township's Social Media Pages and Electronic Communication Policy

I. PURPOSE

Niles Township (the "Township") recognizes that social media platforms and other electronic communication platforms have become common methods of communication amongst residents, media outlets, government agencies, businesses, and others. Electronic communication through a variety of platforms proves the Township with additional avenues to share news releases and inform the public of Township news, services, activities, and events. Additionally, social media platforms provide the ability to share other information that supports the Township's goals and provides a means to interact with residents, visitors, media, local businesses, service providers, and others.

This policy establishes this Township's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is meant to address all the Township's social media and electronic communication platforms that are maintained by, belong to, or are affiliated with the Township.

Nothing in this policy shall be applied to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, speech, or expression that is protected or privileged under the law. This includes speech and expression protected under federal, state, or local laws.

II. POLICY

Social media platforms provide a new and potentially valuable means of assisting the Township and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, investigative, prevention, and related objectives. This Policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administrative and supervisory personnel. The Township also recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some Township personnel. This Policy is specifically designed to govern the official use of Township social media and related forms of electronic media communication.

A. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definition shall apply:

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log."

Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

Post: Content that an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. It includes but is not limited to, all web-based applications that permit the sharing and collaboration of information via internet communities, social networking sites (i.e., Facebook), microblogging sites (i.e. Twitter, Threads), photo-and video-sharing sites (i.e. Flickr, YouTube), wikis (i.e., Wikipedia), blogs, news sites, (i.e., Digg, Reddit) and other similar and/or future web-based applications.

Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

Web 2.0: The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable, user-generated content, rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.

Wiki: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

Personnel: any Township Employee, public employee, Township volunteer, Township intern, Township elected official, or any person performing Township functions.

B. Niles Township Sanctioned Presence on Social Media Sites

Niles Township's Social Media Pages or application shall be administered at the discretion of the Township Supervisor or his/her designee. No Township social media site shall be established without prior approval of the Township Supervisor or his/her designee. The following procedures shall adhere to the following procedures:

1. Public Forum Strategy

- a. Township Social Media Pages and applications shall include a statement that clearly specifies that they are maintained by Niles Township and that they follow the Township's Social Media Page and Electronic Communication Policy.
- b. Township Social Media Pages and applications shall clearly specify the Disclaimer, the Comment Policy, the Reporting of Inappropriate Comments, and the Privacy Policy.

- c. The Social Media Pages should link to the Township's official website for forms, documents, online services, and other information necessary to conduct business with Niles Township if the social media platform has such capability.
- d. Township Social Media Pages shall be designed for the target audience(s) such as residents, youth, or potential businesses and employees.

2. Limited Public Forum

The Township's Social Media accounts, pages, and applications are limited public forums. The Township does not make its social medial accounts available for general public discourse, but rather reserves and limits the topics that may be discussed on the social media accounts.

3. Procedures

- a. All Township Social Media Pages, applications, and sites shall be approved by the Township Supervisor or his/her designee.
- b. All Township Social Media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by Niles Township and shall have Township contact information prominently displayed.
- c. Social Media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.
 - i. Content is subject to public record laws. Relevant records retention schedules apply to social media content.
 - ii. Content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with open records laws and e-discovery laws and policies.
- d. Where possible, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Township.
 - i. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that Township reserves the right to remove obscene language, abusive language, and vulgar comments.
 - ii. Sites shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
- e. The Township shall ensure that visitors to the Township's Social Media Pages and applications are notified that the Township's

Social Media Pages, applications, and other electronic media accounts are not monitored 24/7, and as such, posts and responses should not be immediately expected. Accounts are typically monitored during normal business hours. As the Township's social media accounts are not monitored 24/7, users shall be advised NOT to use the Township's Social Media to report a crime, emergency situation, or other circumstances requiring an immediate response by the Township or otherwise. Crime reports and requests for police, fire, or emergency medical assistance must be made by dialing 9-1-1.

4. Social Media Site Pages & Application Usage

- a. Social Media can be used for community outreach and engagement by:
 - i. Providing crime prevention and health tips
 - ii. Offering online incident reporting opportunities
 - iii. Sharing mapping and data
 - iv. Soliciting tips to improve Township services or crime prevention
 - v. Press releases on Township updates, projects, awards and community partners, and community events
 - vi. Township initiatives
 - vii. Niles Township Food Pantry news or information
 - viii. Community outreach to inform residents about economic and development issues
 - ix. Special promotions and marketing tools
 - x. Meetings, agendas, and other announcements
 - xi. Other community outreach and engagement opportunities as deemed relevant by the Township

- b. Social Media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to:
 - i. Road closures
 - ii. Township events or community events

- iii. Weather Emergencies
 - iv. Missing or endangered persons
 - v. Health Emergencies
 - vi. Monthly observances
 - vii. Other time-sensitive notifications as deemed relevant by the Township
- c. Township personnel, including elected and appointed officers, representing the Township via social media outlets shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media and shall comply with all applicable policies, laws, and regulations. No private business or political activities may be conducted through the use of Township Social Media by individuals officially representing the Township on said Social Media. Township personnel and officers may not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any individual or group, or comments concerning pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to employee training, activities, or work-related assignments without express written permission.

5. Social Media User Comment Policy

- a. The Niles Township Website and Niles Township Social Media Pages and Application sites may be available for user comment by electronic submission.
- b. The following will not be tolerated when interaction with the Township or individuals engaging with the Township's social media platforms and other online forums:
 - i. Personal: Personal information of any person such as social security numbers, addresses, bank account information, and phone numbers; private information as defined by state or federal statute, regulations written policies adopted in conformity with the law; comments from individuals under 13 (to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act).
 - ii. Profane: comments containing vulgar, offensive, profane, or physically threatening language, personal attacks, or unsupported accusations; sexual content or links to sexual content.

- iii. Discriminatory: comments that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, gender, age, religion, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation.
- iv. Threats/Safety: language that promotes or provokes violence; content that violates any cyber-crime laws; information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- v. Political: comments in support or opposition to political campaigns, ballot measures, or referendums.
- vi. Advertising: solicitations of commercial links; spamming or repetitive content such as posting the content more than two times in the same location.
- vii. Illegality: conduct or encouragement of illegal activity; content promoting the use of illegal or banned substances and narcotics.
- viii. Intellectual Property: content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party including trade secrets (information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, and technology), internal reports, policies, procedures, and confidential communications.

6. Reporting of Inappropriate Comments

- a. The Township requires that Township Personnel shall immediately notify the Township Supervisor if there is any posted material that may be inappropriate, that violates this Policy, any Township policy, any federal, state, or local law, or that potentially infringes the copyrights or other rights of any persons. The Township Supervisor, through his or her designee, shall investigate and respond to all reports of potential violations of this Policy. Any content deemed not suitable shall be removed by Township staff.
- b. Comments on Niles Township Social Media Pages, applications, or other electronic media that violate any federal, state, or local law shall be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
- c. Comments on Niles Township Social Media Pages, applications, or other electronic media that violate any terms of service/use of any of the Social Media Sites used by the Township shall be referred to the appropriate Social Media site.

- d. Should the Township join any Social Media Page, utilize an application, or otherwise use a different form of electronic media not specifically delineated in this Policy, all user comments posted to Niles Township Social Media Pages, applications, or other electronic media will be bound by the Terms of Service, Terms of Use or other User Agreement (“Terms”) of that Page or application. The Township reserves the right to report any violation of the Terms, to the Site, Page, or application with the intent of the Site, Page, or application taking appropriate and reasonable responsive action. Niles Township has no control over the Page, Site, or application’s Terms or the modifications to it, which may include the removal of user comments and/or the blocking of users from using the Township’s Pages, sites, applications, or other electronic media for certain violations of the Terms.

7. Disclaimer

All users participating in the Township’s Social Media Pages, applications, and other electronic media, must consent to and agree to comply with all Township Social Media Policies. Users and visitors to the Township’s Social Media shall be notified that the intended purpose of the Page, application, or other electronic media is to serve as a means for communication of Township news, services, and events and that it is a limited public forum. By posting or commenting, users agree to the terms of use outlined in this policy, which will be posted to the Township’s website and linked to, as technology allows, from each of the Township’s Social Media Pages, applications, and/or other electronic media.

The following disclaimer shall be posted and/or referenced on all Township Social Media and the Township Website:

THIS WEBSITE IS MADE AVAILABLE FOR GENERAL REFERENCE ONLY AND MAY NOT REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POSITIONS OF NILES TOWNSHIP. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED ON THIS WEBSITE IS BEING USED SOLELY AT THE USER’S OWN RISK.

The Niles Township website and Social Media Pages are created to provide the public with information about Township government programs, services, projects, issues, activities, and events. By using this website or any information or data made available through this website, the user agrees to all the conditions stated in the following paragraphs. Any information submitted via Niles Township’s website may be considered a public record and may be subject to disclosure to third parties. The Township reserves the right to amend these terms at any time and without further notice.

Neither Niles Township, nor any department, officer, or employee of Niles Township warrants the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of any information on this website and may not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of such information. Information on this website is not verified and may be incorrect or not current. Any person or entity that relies on any information obtained from this website does so at his/her own risk.

Niles Township, its departments, officers, and employees do not assume any responsibility or liability in connection with the use or misuse of any material, data, or information provided on this site and expressly disclaim any and all warranties, whether express, implied or statutory, including but not limited to express and implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose.

Niles Township retains copyright protection on all text, graphic images, design, sound, and other content on its websites and social media sites. This means that the user may not: distribute the text or graphics to others without the express permission of the Niles Township; "mirror" this information on their server without the Township's permission; or modify or re-use the text or graphics on this system. The user may print copies of the information for their own personal use and reference this server from their own documents. Commercial use of the materials is prohibited without advance permission from Niles Township or citing Niles Township as its source. To inquire about obtaining permission to use any materials from the Township's website, contact the Assistant to the Township Supervisor. Niles Township reserves all rights.

Communications made through Niles Township's website and social media pages/sites in no way constitute a legal or official notice to Niles Township or its departments or any official or employee of Niles Township for any purpose.

These terms should not be construed as legal advice. These terms are not presented as a complete or accurate recitation of any or all applicable regulations. The use or misuse of any material, data, or information provided on this site may have implications under Federal, State, and local laws that are frequently amended and are at times subject to interpretation. You should seek appropriate legal or other professional advice to address specific facts and circumstances.

III. UNOFFICIAL EMAIL ACCOUNTS & TEXT MESSAGING

A. Unofficial Email Accounts

Township officials and employees should not use their personal email accounts for work-related communications. Such work-related communications may constitute public records subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 104/1, *et seq.* If

an official or employee uses a personal email account for work-related communication (either inadvertently or when it is unavoidable), he or she must ensure that a copy of such email is maintained in official files. This may include, for example, forwarding a copy of each such email immediately to the official's or employee's government email account. This policy applies to all work-related emails sent or received on private accounts, including receipt of unsolicited work-related emails.

For Township Trustees or other purely legislative officials (that is, officials who have no executive branch or administrative roles), all emails discussing public business that are either sent or received during a public meeting or that include a majority of a quorum of the legislative body, shall be sent with an official email account designated by the public body for the purposes of collecting and retaining such emails. Moreover, care should be taken that said communications do not violate the Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1, *et seq.*

B. Text Messages

Township officials and employees should not use text messaging for work-related communications. Such work-related communications may constitute public records subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 5/140, *et seq.* If an official or employee uses a text message for work-related communication (either inadvertently or when it is unavoidable), he or she must ensure that a copy of such work-related text message sent or received by the official or employee is maintained in the official files.

The retention and disposal of these records is subject to the Local Records Act, 50 ILCS 205/1, *et seq.*