

## **Village of Croton-on-Hudson** **Social Media and Email Blast Policy**

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Policies are developed and stated herein to set forth parameters for the implementation and use of social media, such as Facebook, and public email blasts for the dissemination of official Village information and as a means of assisting not-for-profits and other organizations in the Village.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to set forth the rules, regulations, and conduct for official Village use of social media and Village email blasts. This policy does not include use of Social Media by Village employees and officials in their personal capacities.

### **Use of social media encouraged:**

It shall be the policy of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson to make use of social media outlets, including but not limited to Facebook and Twitter to disseminate information about the Village to both residents and non-residents.

### **Management of Social Media:**

Management of the Village's social media assets will be the joint responsibility of the Offices of the Village Manager and the Village Clerk. Only those Village employees so designated may post on the Village's behalf. Those designated shall conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the policies outlined in the Employee Policy Manual.

### **Social Media Accounts**

There shall be one official Village Facebook Account, located at [www.facebook.com/crotongov](http://www.facebook.com/crotongov), and one official Twitter Account, located at [www.twitter.com/villagecroton](http://www.twitter.com/villagecroton). No other village department, office, agency, board, commission or committee shall have any social media page, with the following exceptions:

- The Croton-on-Hudson Volunteer Fire Department and the Croton-on-Hudson Volunteer EMS Department, which shall be responsible for the management of their social media and public outreach, but must follow Village regulations.

### **Acceptable content:**

The following are guidelines, and not an exhaustive list, of what would be considered acceptable to post on Village social media assets and/or contain in Village email blasts:

- Emergency Notices
- Meeting notices
- Proposed Local Laws
- Public Hearings
- Announcements of Village events
- The Croton Community Calendar, a weekly digest of non-profit events
- Announcements by governmental or social services agencies regarding services provided to the

Village or otherwise concerning the Village (e.g. announcements by the County of road closings, ads seeking volunteers for the Red Cross, and other such announcements)

- Updates of Village projects
- Results of Village elections/referenda
- Reminders of tax and water billing
- Links to official information from the Village, governmental, or social service organizations

### **Unacceptable content:**

The following are guidelines, and not an exhaustive list, of what would be not considered acceptable to post on Village social media assets and/or contain in Village email blasts:

- Any post or e-blast advocating/promoting unlawful activity, that be considered targeted against any person or group of persons, or by any group advocating the same.
- Any post or e-blast of a pornographic or obscene nature or otherwise not suitable for all audiences.
- Any post or e-blast by individuals other than Village staff or officials authorized to post on behalf of the Village.
- Any post or e-blast of a religious nature, not to include events of a secular nature that happen to be sponsored by a religious group or organization (e.g. "Come Pray at Church" would be unacceptable, "Summer Fair sponsored by Church" would be acceptable).
- Any post or e-blast of a political nature or promoting a particular political philosophy or belief (e.g. "Vote for X", "Support Party Y in November"), not to include events such as electoral debates or forums sponsored by non-partisan organizations (e.g. League of Women Voters Debate).

### **Non-Village Events**

Any non-profit organization based in Croton-on-Hudson or with a majority membership residing in the village is eligible to submit their event for inclusion in the Croton Community Calendar, a weekly digest of events occurring in the community. Organizations shall submit their information electronically via a form available on the village website. Events shall follow the same guidelines for content as listed above. The calendar has been distributed via the Village email blast system and on the various social media assets of the Village. Due to the number of organizations and events taking place in the Village, it is not possible for the Village to advertise individual events.

### **Links/Likes:**

As is the nature of various social media, it is encouraged for the Village's social media assets to link, like, or otherwise associate with the social media assets of other governments or non-profit entities. This shall not include association with for-profit entities, whether within or without the Village. For example, the Village may "Like" Westchester County or the Red Cross on Facebook, but may not "Like" Bob's Restaurant.

### **Record-keeping:**

The Village shall keep appropriate records of all social media posts and Village email blasts, approved or disapproved. All such records may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act.

### **Open Meetings:**

Village social media assets shall not be used in a way that would violate any requirements of the Open Meetings Law, such as by having members of Village Boards or Commissions engage in discussions using such

assets.

**Moderation of posts made by the public:**

The Village shall strive to ensure that comments on posts follow the guidelines listed below and are germane to the topic at hand. However, comments containing any of the following shall be deemed inappropriate content subject to removal and/or restrictions by the Village.

- Any comment advocating/promoting unlawful activity or otherwise targeted against any person or group of persons or that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- Any comment of a pornographic, profane, violent, sexual or obscene nature or otherwise not suitable for all audiences.
- Any comment of a religious nature, not to include events of a secular nature that happen to be sponsored by a religious group or organization (e.g. "Come Pray at Church" would be unacceptable, "Summer Fair sponsored by Church" would be acceptable).
- Any comment of a political nature or promoting a particular political philosophy or belief (e.g. "Vote for X", "Support Party Y in November"), not to include events such as electoral debates or forums sponsored by non-partisan organizations (e.g. League of Women Voters Debate).
- Any comment containing defamatory or personal attacks or threats to any person or organization.
- Any comment advocating a particular policy or issue currently or likely to be before any Village Board or Commission (e.g. "Tell the Board to support X" or "Tell ZBA to disapprove Project Y").
- Any comment advocating a particular policy or issue currently or likely to be before any Governmental or Judicial entity (e.g. "Tell your Senator to support X").
- Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public.
- Comments that may cause an invasion of privacy.

The Village reserves the right to delete any comment containing any of the above, and in the event of repeated posts in violation by a particular user, may block such user. If a blocked user wishes to have its ability to comment restored, it can appeal to the Village Manager. If appropriate, the Village may also report a particular comment to the site administrator.

**Notices:**

The Village shall include in all of its social media assets a notice that posts are subject to the terms of service of the relevant provider (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and subject to this policy. Additionally, where possible, social media assets shall include a statement that the opinions expressed in comments by visitors do not reflect the opinions of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson. A link to this policy shall also be provided on all social media assets.

**Disclaimers:**

A communication made through Village social media sites shall in no way constitute a legal or official notice to the Village and should not be used as a means to contact the Village. Comments on social media are monitored only during business hours.

**Termination:**

The Village reserves the right to terminate any or all of its social media assets at any time, or to delete any posts generated by the Village or previously approved by the Village.

**Use of social media not exclusive:**

The use of social media will be in addition to, and not in place of, means of communications already in place such as e-mail blasts, or posts on the Village website, etc.

**ADOPTED: June 17, 2019**