



MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

Rely on us.

TO: Commissioners Carlson, Mital, Helgeson, Schlossberg and Brown
FROM: Rene Gonzalez, Customer Solutions Manager
Sarah Creighton, Enterprise Risk Supervisor
DATE: February 19, 2019
SUBJECT: Social Media Guidance for EWEB Commissioners
OBJECTIVE: Informational Only

Issue

This correspondence is to provide the Board guidance regarding the use of social media in their capacity as elected officials.

Discussion

The role of technology in communicating and engaging with EWEB customers is constantly expanding. Social media platforms can improve the interactions between elected officials and the public, reaching broad audiences and supporting two-way dialogue. However, caution should be exercised to ensure transparency and compliance with public records and open meetings laws.

Staff created a document to help guide the Board on use of social media as an elected official. This document has been developed with input from legal counsel.

Recommendation and Requested Board Action

For informational purposes only. No action requested at this time.

Attachment A: Social Media Guidance for EWEB Commissioners.



Social Media Guidance for EWEB Commissioners

Purpose:

As an elected official, it is important to have transparent communications with constituents. Social media platforms can improve interactivity between elected officials and the public, reaching a broad audience and supporting two-way dialogue.

This guidance document is designed to help create a clear delineation between personal use of social media and use of social media as an EWEB Commissioner. Social media communications of elected officials may be subject to Public Records and Open Meetings laws.

For purposes of this guidance document, social media is content created by individuals using accessible and scalable technologies through the Internet. Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, Tumblr, and YouTube. To the extent that communications involve public business, they should only be conducted on social media which allow for capture and retention when appropriate.

EWEB maintains an account on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube under the username “EWEButility.” Throughout this document, those accounts are referred to as “EWEB’s official social media accounts” and are not to be confused with EWEB Commissioner social media accounts.

Commissioner Use of Social Media:

When communicating with constituents via social media, it is recommended that Commissioners create designated EWEB Commissioner accounts:

- Sign up for the social media platform using EWEB Commissioner email address.
- Choose a username or handle that clearly indicates the account is for “EWEB Commissioner *(name)*.”
- Set the account type as “Government” or “Government Official” (if applicable).
- Set all privacy settings on social media platforms to “public” to ensure equal access to all constituents.
- Under the about or profile section, provide a link to EWEB’s website (eweb.org), provide EWEB’s phone number (541-685-7000) and if applicable consider providing a Social Media Rules of Conduct and/or Terms of Use statement, provided below.

As an elected official, the following guidelines are recommended with regard to EWEB business and social media:

- Commissioners should not post to EWEB’s official social media accounts for campaigning purposes.
- Use caution when commenting on social media posts that relate to utility business, whether on EWEB’s official social media accounts or Commissioner accounts. Identify yourself as an EWEB Commissioner, and consider open meeting laws. Commissioners are encouraged to not post comments on another Commissioner’s official webpage.
- Two-way communication between Commissioners on social media is not advised.
- Commissioners should not use social media as a platform for conducting official EWEB business, other than to engage in informal communication with the public.

- Content published on social media platforms that relates to the conduct of utility business should be treated as an open record. Upon establishing a Commissioner social media account, contact the Executive Assistant to the Board to ensure content is appropriately retained.
- Exercise caution when removing comments from public view and blocking users on a Commissioner social media account to ensure such action is taken on a viewpoint neutral basis. If a member of the public is clearly violating Rules of Conduct, remove the offending comment from public view rather than deleting it. Contact the Executive Assistant to the Board to ensure content is appropriately retained.

Example Social Media Rules of Conduct:

This is an official page for EWEB Commissioner (*name*). All content is a public record and may be subject to public disclosure. Opinions expressed by visitors to this page do not reflect EWEB opinion. Commissioner (*name*) reserves the right to remove posts from public view that include obscene, explicit, discriminatory or threatening language.

Commissioner (*name*) welcomes dialogue on utility-specific topics and issues and asks that you respect the following Social Media Rules of Conduct. Posts violating these rules may be removed from public view, and any community member not following these rules may be blocked:

- Obscene, explicit, discriminatory or threatening language is not allowed.
- Do not post personal account information.
- Any threats made against EWEB, EWEB staff, EWEB Commissioners or against other community members are strictly prohibited.
- Commercial promotions or spam are not allowed.

Personal Use of Social Media

To delineate between EWEB Commissioner accounts and personal social media accounts, the following is recommended:

- Use a personal email address for personal social media accounts, rather than EWEB Commissioner email, and set personal account security to “private.”
- Under the about or profile section, clearly indicate it is a personal account and not for engaging with the public on utility matters. Example: “The postings on this site are my own opinion and do not reflect the opinions of EWEB or my position as an elected EWEB Commissioner. I do not engage in dialogue on utility matters on this page. Please go to (link to official social media account) to engage with me in my capacity as an EWEB Commissioner.”
- If someone posts on a personal social media account about EWEB, do not respond. Their comment alone is not a public record, but any response may be viewed as such.
- Avoid talking about EWEB business on a personal social media account. While sharing content from EWEB’s official social media accounts is fine, commenting on the shared content on a personal social media account may be viewed as a new public record. It is best practice to share content from EWEB’s official social media account on EWEB Commissioner social media accounts.