

Pennsylvania Borough Considers Social Media Policy for Employees

May 22, 2017



(TNS) — Borough officials aren't sure time spent on the clock should mean time spent on social media.

Council is considering enacting a social media policy that would govern when and what borough employees — including temporary summer help, such as teenage lifeguards — can share on social media.

“If they're on borough time, employees need to conduct themselves accordingly,” Borough Manager Dan Madgar said. “We just want to make sure everything is clean and above board.”

Madgar suggested the ordinance and reviewed it earlier this month with council. But several members had questions, he said, so the topic has been delayed for review. He said he expects council will vote on the ordinance in the coming months.

The policy came at Madgar's recommendation, said council President Mike Deelo.

“The idea behind a social media policy is to provide some guidance for people as to when and where it's appropriate to engage in social media,” Deelo said.

Madgar said the main impetus is the hiring of “a lot” of summer interns and temporary employees. Social media policies are common in school districts and in private businesses. Some local communities — such as Sewickley — have policies that extend confidentiality, nondisclosure and workplace harassment policies to the internet.

For instance, in 2014, Sewickley Council adopted a policy that required employees who posted personal opinions on Twitter, Facebook or blogs to state that their views do not reflect the views or opinions of the borough. That policy also focused heavily on how employees interacted with co-workers and residents on social media, Borough Manager Kevin Flannery said at the time.

Madgar said there hasn't been an issue that was the impetus for the suggestion. But, for instance, a teen “horseplaying” at the pool could post a picture or commentary about something they see and cause an issue, he said.

“We can joke about something in person that someone else would take offense to online,” Madgar said. “We want to make sure that a young person doesn't put themselves in a position that could create an issue for them later or that would reflect negatively on the borough.”

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