



Staff Report

Administration

Report To: Community Communications Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: November 18, 2019
Report Number: FAF.19.240
Subject: Considerations for Official Town of The Blue Mountains Facebook Account
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee receive Staff Report FAF.19.240, entitled "Considerations for Official Town of The Blue Mountains Facebook Account" for information.

B. Overview

This report provides the Community Communications Advisory Committee with insight into the operational, financial and resourcing considerations associated with an official Town of The Blue Mountains Facebook account.

C. Background

At the September 16, 2019 Committee meeting, the following request was provided to Town staff:

C.3 Town Facebook Account – Councillor Bordignon (verbal)

Moved by: Peter Bordignon

Seconded by: Odette Bartnicki

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee requests staff to investigate an official Town of The Blue Mountains Facebook account with any operating criteria, including estimated staff time for monitoring the page, for the Committee's consideration, Carried.

D. Analysis

As requested by the Community Communications Advisory Committee, staff have conducted a preliminary review of the items that should be considered within the creation of a corporate Facebook page for the Town of The Blue Mountains. In addition to the request by the committee, Town staff have received multiple requests from residents to create a corporate Facebook page.

This section contains information on the following key areas:

- Policy Considerations
- Social Media Management Tools
- Staffing Considerations

Policy Considerations

To ensure the effective delivery of municipal information on Facebook, most municipalities create and adopt a Social Media Policy. The purpose of the policy is to outline the standards and principles of communicating to residents on Facebook as it relates to discussing, sharing or commenting on Town business. The Social Media Policy also establishes standards for response time, hours of operation, content and comment moderation (including removing comments and blocking users).

In addition, it is standard practice that a Terms of Use Policy be created, adopted and included on the facebook page to ensure that all users are aware of the page guidelines, policies and expectations.

Social Media Management Tools

Currently, the Town uses Buffer to manage the Town of The Blue Mountains corporate Twitter account. The use of these tools allows for post scheduling and the streamlined monitoring of comments and mentions. Under the current plan, the Town pays \$780 USD per year. To accommodate additional users, the account would need to be upgraded to the Business Plan at a cost of \$1200 USD per year.

Staffing Considerations

To help determine staffing considerations, staff reached out to Municipal Communication Officers throughout Grey County & Simcoe County. On average, each municipality spends 1.5 – 2 hours per day managing their social media profiles. The time spent includes content planning, information gathering, scheduling posts, and responding to comments.

Of the municipalities contacted, they are averaging 3 - 4 posts per day at approximately 15 minutes per post. The largest time consideration is spent within responding to comments. Most municipalities indicated that they receive 5 - 7 public comments and 1 - 2 private messages per day. Based on the need for 1.5 – 2 hours per day of social media management and the immediate nature of social media, additional staffing resources should be considered.

As an alternative model, staff looked at the viability of hiring a social media management firm to manage the Town's social media accounts. In short, staff were unable to identify a municipality that uses an external firm due to the need for access to information to respond to comments in a timely manner. In addition, using an external firm limits the ability of the municipality to effectively manage the content.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Create Opportunities for Sustainability
Objective #5 Improved Visibility and Local Identity

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners
Objective #1 Improve External Communication with our Constituents
Objective #2 Use Technology to Advance Engagement
Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service
Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

F. Environmental Impacts

No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impact

No financial impacts are anticipated as a result of the recommendation in this report.

H. In consultation with

Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, communications@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

No attachments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Hendry
Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

Shawn Everitt
Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:
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