RESOLUTION NO. 2025-3367

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, AMENDING AND ADOPTING A UNIFORM SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA INQUIRY POLICY FOR THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Town Resolution 2019-2564, the Town of Surfside ("Town") established an official Town Social Media and Media Inquiry Policy, to establish general standards and responsibilities with respect to the official use of social media channels and for responses to official inquires of the Town; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Town Resolution 2022-2887, the Town amended the Social Media Policy, without reference to its Media Inquiry Policy, to revise and update the use, administration, and retention of the Town's content on social media sites; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that the Town implement and abide by a consistent, professional, modern and efficient code of conduct on digital social platforms, and update its handling of media requests and inquiries, as well as providing residents with accurate and objective information as it pertains to the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Town Commission wishes to adopt a uniform Social Media and Media Inquiry Policy for the Town, substantially in the form attached hereto as Exhibit "A" ("Amended Policy"); and

WHEREAS, the Town Commission desires to adopt the Amended Policy and finds that it is in the best interest of the Town and necessary for the proper conduct of the Town and dissemination of information.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, THAT:

Section 1. **Recitals Adopted**. Each of the above stated recitals are hereby adopted, confirmed and incorporated herein.

Section 2. **Adoption and Approval of the Amended Social Media and Media Inquiry Policy.** The Amended Policy, in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit "A", is hereby adopted and approved, subject to any non-substantive changes as may be directed and approved by the Town Manager and Town Attorney.

Section 3. **Implementation.** The Town Manager and Town Officials are hereby authorized to take all action necessary to implement and enforce the Amended Policy and the purposes of this Resolution.

Section 4. **Effective Date.** This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 14th day of January, 2025.

Motion By: Commissioner Velasquez
Second By: Vice Mayor Paul

FINAL VOTE ON ADOPTION:

Commissioner Ruben A. Coto	Yes
Commissioner Nelly Velasquez	Yes
Commissioner Gerardo Vildostegui	Yes
Vice Mayor Tina Paul	Yes
Mayor Charles W. Burkett	Yes

Charles W. Burkett, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sandra N. McCready, MMC
Town Clerk

TOWN OF SURFSIDE INCORPORATED SEAL 1935 DADE COUNTY, FLA.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY FOR THE USE AND BENEFIT OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE ONLY:

Thais Hernandez, Town Attorney

TOWN OF SURFSIDE
INCORPORATED
SEAL
DADE COUNTY, FLA.

Social Media and Media Inquiry Policy for the Town of Surfside

Purpose and Scope

The ***Social Media Policy*** for the Town of Surfside establishes general standards and responsibilities with respect to the official use of social media channels for the dissemination of important Town-related information to residents and the general public.

The ***Media Inquiry Policy*** for the Town of Surfside establishes general standards and responsibilities for the Town's administration and employees, and the Town Commission when responding to, working with and handling social media requests and inquiries.

Social Media: Sites and Accounts

The Town of Surfside will maintain official pages or accounts (each an "Official Account") on third-party websites (each a "Social Media Site") in order to disseminate Town-related information to residents and the general public. The Community Services and Public Communications Director is responsible for maintaining a current list of the Town's Official Accounts and the corresponding Social Media Sites hosting each Official Account.

The Town's social media presence should be limited to one Official Account per each Social Media Site (the "Town of Surfside Official Accounts"). For example, the Parks & Recreation Department for Surfside should not have a Facebook page that is separate from the Town. Instead, the Town's Facebook page should, when appropriate, incorporate information pertaining to Parks & Recreation. By doing so, important public information becomes more organized and residents know where to find such information, thus eliminating any layer of confusion or public misinformation.

Notwithstanding the above, the Police Department is permitted to maintain Official Accounts (the "Police Department Official Accounts") in addition to the Town of Surfside Official Accounts. This is deemed operationally essential, due to the frequency of information posted, the unique nature of the information disseminated, and the necessity to have emergency information released immediately for public

safety. It is also an industry standard across Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties for Police Departments to maintain their own social media platforms as an indispensable means of communication to the public.

Ownership and Public Records

All social media communications messages that are composed, sent or received on the Town of Surfside Official Accounts and the Police Department Official Accounts are the property of the Town of Surfside and subject to public records laws. The Town of Surfside reserves the right not to publish any posting or to later remove it if the comments violate the guidelines enumerated in the Social Media Policy.

Town Commission Conduct

It is advisable that the Town Commission strictly follow the Code of Ethics as codified in Chapter 112, Part III of the Florida Statutes and Miami-Dade County Code Section 2-11.1, as well as comply with Florida's Sunshine Law and Public Records Law.

- Commission members must not communicate amongst themselves in a social media exchange or discussion regarding any matter that is before the board/commission for action or on any matter which foreseeably could be brought before the Commission for action.

- Commission members who use private social media platforms to communicate about Town business must follows the rules concerning the retention of public records.

- Commission members may not utilize the Town of Surfside Official Accounts or the Police Department Official Accounts for personal use, including posting personal content and/or opinions.

- Commission members should refrain from posting on social media in a manner that would suggest that they are representing the official position of the Town and Town government.

- In the event of an emergency, the Town Commission may "share" posts of the Town of Surfside Official Accounts or the Police Department Official Accounts. It is not advisable to copy & paste a post or paraphrase content to ensure accuracy of information to public.

Conduct on Town Official Accounts

The Town's use of Social Media Sites is generally limited to the dissemination of Town related information on the Town's Official Accounts and the Police Department Official Accounts.

The Town recognizes and appreciates the rights of all members of our online community to free speech and freedom of expression. The Town's Official Accounts and the Police Department Official Accounts, as well as all comments posted, however, are regularly monitored by administrators. Although the Town's Official Accounts are monitored on a regular basis, individuals should NOT use the Town's Official Accounts to report emergency situations or time-sensitive issues.

The Town's Official Accounts are a limited public forum, which affords the Town the right to reject posts/comments or remove such posts/comments when they violate the following guidelines:

- Graphic, obscene or explicit comments or submissions are prohibited, as well as comments that are abusive, threatening, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization, or comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.

- Content 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, gender identity or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

- Content posted by persons whose profile picture or avatar, username or e-mail address contains any of the afore-mentioned prohibited content will not be tolerated.

- Content should be related to the subject matter of the social media site where it is posted.

- Solicitations or advertisements are prohibited. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, attempts to defame or defraud any person or financial, commercial or governmental agency are not permitted. Information intended to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems is prohibited.

Other Considerations

- Participation is voluntary and taken at one's own risk. Those who decide to post maintain personal responsibility for their comments, their username and/or any information provided.

- All comments are subject to Florida's public records law.

- The appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the Town of Surfside.

- Individuals are subject to the Terms of Use of the Social Media Sites. Any

user in violation of the Terms of Use will be reported. For more information, consult the Social Media Sites' website's Terms of Use directly
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, NextDoor.

- This Social Media Policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time. Social media sites are a public forum, any content posted is subject to public records retention and disclosure pursuant to Florida law. Opinions expressed by individuals and visitors to the Town's Official Accounts or the Police Department Accounts do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Town government.

Social Media Procedures

The Community Services and Public Communications Director and the Police Chief will establish procedures for the use of Social Media Platforms as approved administratively by the Town Manager.

Media Inquiries

Town Spokespeople:
Only authorized spokespeople are permitted to speak to the press. The spokespeople for the Town of Surfside are as follows:

Primary Spokesperson – Town Manager or designee
Secondary Spokesperson – Mayor and Commission
Town Matters – Town Manager or Public Information Representative ("PIR")
Police Matters – Town Manager or Public information Officer ("PIO")
The Town Manager reserves the right to delegate his/her authority as authorized spokesperson for the Town.

Elected Officials:
Elected officials are encouraged to share interview requests with the Town Manager, PIR and/or PIO in order to create consistency in messaging

Media Inquiries via Town Employees:
When a member of the press contacts the Town of Surfside, please follow these steps:

1. Ask the journalist for the *purpose* of his or her call.
2. Record the journalist's *name*, *media outlet*, *phone number* and *email address*.
3. Inform the journalist that someone will follow-up with him or her as soon as possible.
4. Contact the Town's PIO or PIR within one hour of receiving request via email, text message or phone call. Do not send journalists directly to the Town Manager or Mayor for comment.

- ➢ If it's a police-related matter, reach out to the PIO at 305-861-4862 or edoce@townofsurfsidefl.gov
- ➢ *Examples include:* Pending investigation, arrests, murder, crimes such as a burglary or unlicensed practice.
- ➢ If it's a Town matter, reach out to PIR at 305-586-8427 or ftrigueros@townofsurfsidefl.gov. E*xamples include:* Town development stories, events, ordinances, resolutions, new businesses in Surfside, etc.

5. Please do not attempt to answer the journalist's questions. Simply tell the journalist that the PIO or PIR will follow-up with him or her.

Press Policy for Employees

Employees are not authorized to provide any information to the press, except the name, telephone number and/or email address for the PIR or PIO.

It is every employee's responsibility to inform his/her supervisor or the designated spokesperson if he/she observes members of the press asking questions or taking pictures or if they are contacted by the press.

Employees are not permitted to share sensitive/confidential information pertaining to the Town, an investigation, etc. on their own personal social media pages. Employees who violate the Town's social media policy (refer to Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual) may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

PIR and PIO Policy for Media Responses:

In order to create seamless communication and consistent messaging, it's important that the PIR and acting PIO's efforts are aligned. It is the responsibility of both parties to keep each other copied and informed of media requests and anything of sensitive nature. When working with the press, the PIR and the acting PIO are to follow these steps:

1. Respond to journalist in timely manner, within one to two hours.
2. Confirm journalist's purpose for call and ask journalist for his or her deadline and anticipated questions.
3. Research answers to questions and draft media talking points or press statement.
4. Prepare spokesperson(s) in advance of media interview.
5. If sensitive issues arise, such as a pending legal investigation, run draft media response and statements by Town attorney for approval first. (Refer to crisis communications plan on how to address press in the event of a crisis.)
6. Alert mayor and elected officials and keep them abreast of the situation, along with messaging in case they receive questions from residents and/or businesses.
7. Tailor messaging and provide to Town's human resources director, to be shared with dispatch for example in the event they receive questions from the public.