

SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Social Media Working Group

Minutes

Thursday, June 11, 2015

Attendees: Erin Concas (Hermosa Beach), Selina Barajas (Inglewood), Jesse Reyes (Redondo Beach), Kit Fox (Rancho Palos Verdes), Jill Reed (Torrance), Pamela Manning (County of Los Angeles), Jeffrey Robinson (Area G Disaster Management), Matt Messina and Gillian Molina (HERO Program), Lauren Langer (Jenkins and Hogin, LLP) Medha Paliwal (West Basin Municipal Water District), Chandler Shields, Marilyn Lyon, Jacki Bacharach and Kim Fuentes (SBCCOG)

---- AGENDA ----

I. **Introductions:**

- *New attendees provide a brief overview of their services*
 - **Kit Fox** – Next Door is proving to be much more useful reaching residents (than Facebook). 1600 households participating currently.
 - **Jill Reed** – Community Relations at City of Torrance, transitioning from Nixle to “Torrance Alerts” via “opt-in” notification tool.
 - **Selina Barajas** – Parks and Recreation at the City of Inglewood, interested in learning about social media use with government; launching ActiveNet soon.
 - **Erin Concas** – Emergency Management coordinator at the City of Hermosa Beach; having miscommunication issues using Nixle. Seeking to overhaul social media use and develop comprehensive policy for city staff to follow. City was prompted by Torrance's gas explosion incident, where misinformation was rampant immediately after the incident, to get a social media policy in the works ASAP. Opted not to use Next Door because of public records request issues.

II. **Guest Speakers:**

- ***Matt Messina and Gillian Molina** – Director of Community Development and Manager of Social Media at Home Energy Renovation Opportunity (HERO) Program*
 - **Matt Messina**
 - Focusing on supporting Los Angeles County communities in HERO's service area.
 - A new way to finance water efficient and energy efficient upgrades/improvements to existing homes.
 - Initially launched the program in South Bay cities back in 2013.
 - Home owner “public good” for the community and local jobs are some of the reasons why cities have endorsed the program.
 - Renovate America (which the HERO program is administered by) is a technology firm.
 - “HERO Pro” is an application that can be accessed by participants in the program.
 - Contractors, homeowners and municipalities are all the partners/stakeholders in the program.

- Useful mobile app for monitoring the impacts of the program (e.g. GHG emissions, water savings, etc.).
- Hope to integrate a social component to the app including a user input mechanism to feature climate action planning goals from municipalities.
- 95% of customers would recommend the program to others.
- Much of Southern California is signed up with the program – 70% of the housing market in California can participate in the program.
- **Gillian Molina**
 - Social media goals are to increase engagement, brand awareness and learn more about customer base.
 - Executed a social media initiative during Earth Month – created organic model and paid model strategies.
 - a. Consistent branding (e.g. hashtags and images) used across social media platforms.
 - b. User engagement, blog content and meme graphics
 - c. Facebook’s change in algorithms led the program to pay for ads on Facebook to increase reach.
 - d. #EnergyWhim
 - e. Internal and contractor outreach email campaigns were used to spread the message further.
 - f. The engagement increased on Facebook page due to paid model strategy.
 - Looking to work with municipalities with social media interaction ahead of community events.
 - On Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google Plus, YouTube.
 - The program has a team put together a “content calendar”, which is executed/posted by one staff member.
- **Lauren Langer – Representative from Jenkins & Hogin, LLP**
 - Technology and case law is constantly changing.
 - Dealing with employees who express biased opinions about their employer/former employer on social media is a complex issue.
 - This depends on the municipality’s service to its constituents and ability to provide “efficient operations” vs. the employee’s first amendment rights.
 - The courts will factor in the audience and will look at the privacy settings of the employee posting the content.
 - The courts tend to side with the municipalities in these cases and the employees typically file against the municipality after he/she has been disciplined for posting biased opinions on social media.
 - Depending on the type of employee, the court may factor in the employment title/representation (e.g. police officer) when making a decision.
 - Addressing ex-employees voicing biased opinions on social media depends on grounds for defamation and social media policy maintained by municipality.
 - Screening employees via social media prior to hiring can be an issue for municipalities as well.
 - If the employer finds private information (e.g. age, religion, etc.) on social media prior to hiring a candidate, they cannot use that information during the hiring process.
 - Employers cannot discipline employees for not handing over profiles and passwords to personal accounts.

- Generally, employees do not have privacy rights when using employer-issued phones, computers, etc.
- Employers can obtain anything that is public.
- It is very important to implement a social media policy for your municipality.
 - Your social media site, list of subscribers, and content you are posting must all be accessible as public records.
 - Include statements on the site like “all comments are subject to disclosure”.
 - Municipalities should pair social media policy with public records retention policy. Using a social media platform like “SnapChat” would be difficult to use in light of a public records retention policy.
 - 3 council members cannot discuss a municipal matter together on social media outside of a city council meeting.
 - Mailing rule addressing maximum amount of recipients that an elected official can address/reach is currently outdated and not encompassing of social media use.
 - No requirement for municipalities to respond to comments/questions on social media.
 - Social media policies should designate/differentiate roles in social media – difference between being a “private resident” and an “elected official” when using social media should be clearly outlined.
 - Comment rules should be drafted in regards to municipal social media policies – manages expectations for what the platform is to be used for.
 - A social media policy gives the municipality grounds to take something off their social media platform(s) if necessary.
 - Link social media policy on municipalities’ websites, making them accessible to everyone.
 - When addressing requests for taking down photos of people at public events, individual must consider the nature of the event and the “expectation” that it is public and there are likely to be photos of those in attendance to promote the event.
 - **Jacki Bacharach** – Listened to a podcast that recommended that municipality’s ensure/reserve their name on social media platforms that they might not even consider using to prevent fraudulent misrepresentation (e.g. SnapChat, Instagram).
 - Elected official business cards representative of the municipality that they serve should not feature personal/campaign social media accounts.

III. **LinkedIn Group:**

- *Report on usage*
 - **Chandler Sheilds** – Group members will be able to post content during administrator’s extended absence.

IV. **Other Issues of Interest:**

- *Resources from the League of Cities*
 - **Lauren Langer** – Will send the group materials mentioned during today’s meeting and other legal resources regarding social media use/policy/issues. Sample social media policies can also be viewed on the League of Cities website.

V. **Next Meeting:**

- **Jacki Bacharach** – Look into getting a representative from Nextdoor to speak at a future meeting.
- **Jill Reed** – Interested in Instagram use and how cities can make the platform work for their uses.
- **Pamela Manning** – Access to a matrix that breaks down demographics for the different social media platforms (e.g. who is using what, risks of using certain platforms) would be optimal.

- **Jeffrey Robinson** – View “Social Media Revolution 2015” by Erik Qualman on YouTube.