

Social Media & Municipalities: A Roundtable with Our Municipal Attorneys

Government Entities Alert
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In our digital evolving age, social media platforms create a multitude of opportunities to engage the citizenry. They also create a minefield of dangers for municipalities to avoid.

Moderator, Julie Proscia, led a discussion with our panel of municipal law attorney Mike McGrory to answer some questions to help you avoid the landmines and successfully avoid the pitfall traps.

Moderator: What is the biggest challenge that you see for governmental entities in a time of interconnectivity where everything is posted, tweeted, blogged etc.?

Mike McGrory: Municipalities have issues very similar to businesses when it comes to social media. Julie, you point out that anything can and will be posted on social sites. I agree with Carlos in that the formal posting from a municipality needs to be done by the right people, but I would also caution and say that municipalities need to be thinking of their internal communication strategy and working with experts to craft very specific messages to staff, especially in the case of a hot button issue. Your seemingly innocuous internal email about the mishandling of a situation can easily find its way online.

Moderator: What is your best advice to municipalities that are struggling with the heightened comments and exchanges of their constituents on their official social media platforms?

Moderator: Are social media posts public record?

Julie Proscia: Maybe. Posts that are made by the official governmental entity or by a private account being used to distribute information by that entity are public records **IF** the content is unique, i.e. a governmental entity only needs to save the first announcement regarding free electronic recycling – not all 50 unless the versions significantly differ.

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