

## Pros and Cons to Social Media

From Nancy S. Elia Powell, City Clerk and Kerriann M. Harrington, Deputy City Clerk, City of Oneonta

### Pros:

- Easily facilitate two-way conversation with constituents
- Additional method for notification of events, activities and alerts
- Additional notification method in cases of emergency
- Long reaching in a short amount of time
- Ability to receive texts/photographs/information from those who wouldn't normally pick up the phone to call
- Builds a brand
- Allows the community to become familiar with "a voice" of the municipality – builds trust/communication

### Cons:

- Negative commentary by constituents can't be removed (violation of first amendment rights – there's case law)
- Poor online reviews can't be removed (Facebook doesn't allow it)
- Posts that your municipality are tagged in can't always be responded to (due to the poster's privacy settings)
- You can't always reply in the manner you wish to do so (customer service)
- Time intensive

Social media is a wonderful tool to use when communicating with your constituents – but it is just that, a tool. It can't be the be all end all, nor can it be a singular method of communication or interaction. It takes time to build a brand and mere seconds (just one bad post) to destroy it all. Coordinating social media isn't as easy as logging into a platform and clicking post. There's an entire method and plan that needs to remain in place and sometimes knowing how and which posts to respond to (or not) can make or break the constituents view of your municipality. Social media, in partnership with our mass notification system, allows me to reach a matter of 20,000 people in mere minutes. In the cases of severe weather, missing children, and road closures – this saves time and resources. Keep in mind, though, that nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of that same 20,000 will also see anything negative posted/responded to. There's a fine line. Social media coordination and management is an important skill and one that requires training, education and experience.