Facebook may hire former Obama aide: NY Times

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Facebook is in talks with former White House spokesman Robert Gibbs, seen here in February 2011, about taking a senior role in the company ahead of going public in early 2012, The New York Times reported Monday.

Facebook is in talks with former White House spokesman Robert Gibbs about taking a senior role in the company ahead of going public in early 2012, The New York Times reported Monday.

The newspaper, citing "people briefed on the negotiations," said Facebook was looking to Gibbs to help manage the social network's communications ahead of an initial public offering.

Gibbs stepped down as President Barack Obama's press secretary in February.

The Times said the talks between the Palo Alto, California-based Facebook and Gibbs were "still at an early stage and no formal offer has been made."

It cautioned that "it remained possible that the discussions could collapse."

Gibbs could stand to earn millions of dollars with Facebook, the Times said, pulling down a cash salary as well as shares.

Facebook's public offering could be the largest ever. Some investors have valued the social network, which has more than half a billion members, at more than $60 billion.

As Facebook has grown, however, it has come under fire from some members of Congress and private groups over online privacy issues.

The Times said Gibbs would work under Elliot Schrage, Facebook's vice president for global communications, marketing and public policy, and be responsible for helping to communicate the company's message to the media, investors and policy makers.

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