

CATEGORY: Administration

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2015

SUB-CATEGORY: Public Records

LAST REVISED DATE: January 1, 2025

POLICY TITLE: Public Records Request Policy

AUTHOR: Public Records Act: La R.S. 44:1

SUMMARY

To provide direction when complying with public records requests in accordance with the Public Records Act: La R.S. 44:1 et seq. Statutes providing for public access must be literally interpreted so as to extend rather than restrict access to public records.

GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

Custodian of Public Records

The Town Clerk is designated as the Custodian of Public Records. All requests for public records must be directed to the Custodian.

Submitting a Public Records Request

Public records requests may be made in person to the Custodian at the Town Hall Annex Building during regular business hours or submitted in writing. A request may also be submitted via the Town’s website.

If the requestor makes a public records request by phone, the Custodian will respectfully request a written or in person request as per public records law.

Identity of Public Records

A public record can include any document, data or information produced or received by a public body in the course of conducting business. Records include documents, emails, reports, and other written materials but **do not include private or exempt information**, such as personnel records or certain law enforcement documents.

The Custodian may use the services of an attorney to verify whether information in the public records request must be redacted or denied to ensure compliance with privacy and exempt laws.

Contents of Public Records Request

All public records requests must provide the following information:

- The requestor’s name and contact information (unless in person)
- A clear and concise description of the records being requested, including time period of applicable records.
- The preferred format for receiving the records (electronic or paper copies).

Response Time

The Custodian will provide a written response to the requestor within **five (5) business days** (excluding

holidays) of the public records request, as required by law. This response may be:

- **Acknowledgment**: The Custodian may respond with acknowledgement of receipt of the request and provide an estimate of any costs associated with the request and the timeline for fulfilling the requests.
- **Release**: If the records are available and accessible within the five (5) day period, the Custodian will provide the records in the preferred format.
- **Denial**: If the records are exempt or not available, the Custodian will provide legal justification for the exemption.

Exemptions and Denials

Certain records may be exempt from disclosure under Louisiana law, including but not limited to a) Personal information protected by law, b) Privileged legal communications, and c) Certain law enforcement records. If a request is denied, the Town Clerk will provide a written explanation citing the specific exemption under Louisiana law.

Fees and Payment

Fees for public records requests will be assessed in accordance with **R.S. 44:32** and may include the following:

- **Copy Fees**: \$0.50 per page for printed records.
- **Certified Copies**: Additional charges apply for certification.
- **Postage Fees**: The requestor is responsible for any mailing costs for paper copies. No postage fees will be charged for records sent via email.
- **Accident or Incident Reports**: \$7.00 per incident

Before the records collection process begins, the requestor must submit a written confirmation accepting the estimate of costs associated with the request. Upon completion of compilation of records, the Custodian will issue a **Final Bill** to the requestor. Payment, accepted in the form of **check or cash**, must be received before the records are released.

Inspection of Records

Public Records are available for in-person inspection during normal business hours, Monday-Friday (excluding holidays). It is recommended that in-person inspections be scheduled in advance with the Custodian to ensure availability.

The records will be segregated and made available for inspection, but if it is unreasonably burdensome or expensive to segregate the records or if the records are readily identifiable and segregation is unnecessary, the Custodian shall advise the requestor in writing where the records are located.