



Winchester, New Hampshire
1 Richmond Road, Winchester, NH 03470
(603) 239-4951

Request for Governmental Record Policy

TOWN OF WINCHESTER

1 Richmond Rd.
Winchester, NH 03470

RECORD INFORMATION REQUEST POLICY

I SUBJECT

Request for access to governmental records.

II AUTHORITY

New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated Chapter 91-A.

III PURPOSE

This policy identifies what a member of the public needs to furnish staff when requesting access to a governmental record, whether the request is verbal or written.

IV RESPONSIBILITY

All town departments and staff.

V POLICY

A ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES.

- Openness in the conduct of public business is essential to a democratic society to ensure both the greatest possible access to the actions, discussions and records of all public bodies, and their accountability to the people.
- The public has the right to inspect, during regular business hours and at the appropriate department location, all public governmental records, and to request copies, except for those records that are temporarily unavailable or are specifically exempted by law.
- The public does not have to offer a reason or demonstrate a need to inspect a record.
- The public must reasonably describe a record being requested.
- The town is not required to create a record that does not exist, or to compile data to create a record in a specific format requested, including electronic format. However, it may be easier for staff to create a summary than it would be to copy large volumes to satisfy specific record requests, and may also be necessary to maintain confidentiality.
- Records that are exempt from public access are cited under various New Hampshire laws and generally include personnel records, medical, welfare, library user, vital records or any other confidential record, the disclosure of which would constitute an invasion of privacy or jeopardize the security or safety of any individual. Any question

as to whether a record or portion of a record may be exempt from disclosure shall be addressed to the town attorney prior to release.

B REQUEST FOR RECORDS

- Requests for governmental records are to be submitted to the appropriate department that normally handles that record. In the event that a requestor of a record is unfamiliar with what department would handle the matter, the Town Administrator or her staff shall be consulted.

VI PROCEDURES

A VERBAL AND WRITTEN REQUESTS

1. A request made verbally by an individual for access to a governmental record, whether or not RSA Chapter 91-A is cited, shall be furnished for inspection or, if desired, copied, as long as the record is reasonably described and readily accessible, and the staff determines that the record is not otherwise exempt.

2. A written request shall be required in the event that any of the following conditions apply to the requested document or documents:

- a. The document or documents are not reasonably described;
- b. The document or documents are not readily available;
- c. The volume of documents requested will require more time than is currently available to the staff member at the time of the request; or
- d. The request may involve the disclosure of information which is exempt from disclosure under RSA Chapter 91-A.

B PROCESSING A WRITTEN REQUEST

1. If a written request is required, the requestor shall provide his or her full name, address, telephone number or contact information, and describe, in detail, the document or documents requested. The request shall be signed by the requestor.

2. Staff shall date stamp, note the time of the receipt of the request, and initial it.

3. Within 5 business days of the request, a status response shall be sent to the requestor, providing the following information:

- a. The request is granted; or
- b. The request is denied, with written reasons for denial; or
- c. Acknowledgment of the receipt of the request, stating a reasonable time necessary to determine whether the request will be granted or denied; and,
- d. Any costs that may be associated with copying the documents.

4. In the alternative, staff may establish a mutually agreed upon date and time for the document or documents to be inspected.

5. Upon receipt of any payments due, including postage, staff may provide the requested record by mail. If it is determined that the requested

documents are too voluminous or require special handling to be mailed, then staff may notify the requestor that the documents are ready for pickup.

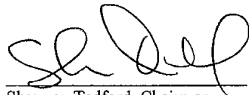
6. Staff shall complete a final response letter, closing out the request, the original of which shall be filed in the office of the Selectmen.

C PROCEDURES DURING ON-SITE RECORD INSPECTION

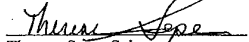
1. All department records are not openly accessible to the public, unless otherwise provided (e.g. minutes of meetings maintained in binders available to the public, a bound volume of the tax maps, or tax cards in a binder).
2. Supervision by a staff member must be provided at all times during records inspection.
3. Inspected records must be retained in their present arrangement; documents shall stay in order.
4. Only one record series shall be inspected at a time.
5. To preserve the original record for use, no marks, erasures or other changes to the record shall be allowed when accessed for inspection.
6. Due to the risk of damage to documents, use of ink is prohibited. The requestor inspecting records shall use pencil when taking notes.
7. In order to preserve the original record from physical damage, hand held scanners are not permitted. Photocopying is permitted unless staff considers the item to be fragile, exceptionally valued, or too large to photocopy safely. Duplication shall be performed by staff or through an approved qualified professional. Additional security and procedures as determined by the staff may be required for fragile, one-of-a-kind documents, protected information, or historically significant records.

VII FEES AND CHARGES

1. A fee shall be charged to the requestor for each copy of a document provided.
2. Payment of all fees, including postage, shall be required prior to the copying of any documents.



Sherman Tedford, Chairman

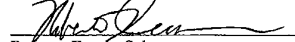


Theresa Sepe, Selectman



Kenneth Gardner, Selectman

Gustave Ruth, Selectman



Roberta Fraser, Selectman

Date: December 15, 2010