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**ANNOTATED  
Freedom of Information Act  
Public Act 442 of 1976**

AN ACT to provide for public access to certain public records of public bodies; to permit certain fees; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain public officers and public bodies; to provide remedies and penalties; and to repeal certain acts and parts of acts.

*The People of the State of Michigan enact:*

**15.231 Short title; public policy.**

Sec. 1.

(1) This act shall be known and may be cited as the “freedom of information act”.

(2) It is the public policy of this state that all persons, except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities, are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees, consistent with this act. The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process.

**As amended, effective  
July 1, 2015**

**Section 1:  
What the FOIA  
stands for**

Full and complete  
information on affairs  
of government and acts  
of public officials and  
employees

**15.232 Definitions.**

Sec. 2.

As used in this act:

(a) “Field name” means the label or identification of an element of a computer data base that contains a specific item of information, and includes but is not limited to a subject heading such as a column header, data dictionary, or record layout.

(b) “FOIA coordinator” means either of the following:

(i) An individual who is a public body.

(ii) An individual designated by a public body in accordance with section 6 to accept and process requests for public records under this act.

(c) “Person” means an individual, corporation, limited liability company, partnership, firm, organization, association, governmental entity, or other legal entity. Person does not include an individual serving a sentence of imprisonment in a state or county correctional facility in this state or any other state, or in a federal correctional facility.

(d) “Public body” means any of the following:

(i) A state officer, employee, agency, department, division, bureau, board, commission, council, authority, or other body in the executive branch of the state government, but does not include the governor or lieutenant governor, the executive office of the governor or lieutenant governor, or employees thereof.

(ii) An agency, board, commission, or council in the legislative branch of the state government.

**Section 2:  
Definitions**

Who can request  
records?

What is a public body?

<p>(iii) A county, city, township, village, intercounty, intercity, or regional governing body, council, school district, special district, or municipal corporation, or a board, department, commission, council, or agency thereof.</p> <p>(iv) Any other body which is created by state or local authority or which is primarily funded by or through state or local authority.</p> <p>(v) The judiciary, including the office of the county clerk and employees thereof when acting in the capacity of clerk to the circuit court, is not included in the definition of public body.</p> <p>(e) "Public record" means a writing prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body in the performance of an official function, from the time it is created. Public record does not include computer software. This act separates public records into the following 2 classes:</p> <p>(i) Those that are exempt from disclosure under section 13.</p> <p>(ii) All public records that are not exempt from disclosure under section 13 and which are subject to disclosure under this act.</p> <p>(f) "Software" means a set of statements or instructions that when incorporated in a machine usable medium is capable of causing a machine or device having information processing capabilities to indicate, perform, or achieve a particular function, task, or result. Software does not include computer-stored information or data, or a field name if disclosure of that field name does not violate a software license.</p> <p>(g) "Unusual circumstances" means any 1 or a combination of the following, but only to the extent necessary for the proper processing of a request:</p> <p>(i) The need to search for, collect, or appropriately examine or review a voluminous amount of separate and distinct public records pursuant to a single request.</p> <p>(ii) The need to collect the requested public records from numerous field offices, facilities, or other establishments which are located apart from the particular office receiving or processing the request.</p> <p>(h) "Writing" means handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, photocopying, and every other means of recording, and includes letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combinations thereof, and papers, maps, magnetic or paper tapes, photographic films or prints, microfilm, microfiche, magnetic or punched cards, discs, drums, or other means of recording or retaining meaningful content.</p> <p>(i) "Written request" means a writing that asks for information, and includes a writing transmitted by facsimile, electronic mail, or other electronic means.</p>	<p>Township public bodies</p> <p>What is a public record?</p> <p>What are "unusual circumstances" for extending the time to respond to an appeal in Section 10?</p> <p>What is a "writing"?</p> <p>What is a "written request"?</p>
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<p><b>15.233 Public records; right to inspect, copy, or receive; subscriptions; forwarding requests; file; inspection and examination; memoranda or abstracts; rules; compilation, summary, or report of information; creation of new public record; certified copies.</b></p> <p>Sec. 3.</p> <p>(1) Except as expressly provided in section 13, upon providing a public body's FOIA coordinator with a written request that describes a public record sufficiently to enable the public body to find the public record, a person has a right to inspect, copy, or receive copies of the requested public record of the public body.</p> <p>A person has a right to subscribe to future issuances of public records that are created, issued, or disseminated on a regular basis. A subscription shall be valid for up to 6 months, at the request of the subscriber, and shall be renewable. An employee of a public body who receives a request for a public record shall promptly forward that request to the freedom of information act coordinator.</p> <p>(2) A freedom of information act coordinator shall keep a copy of all written requests for public records on file for no less than 1 year.</p> <p>(3) A public body shall furnish a requesting person a reasonable opportunity for inspection and examination of its public records, and shall furnish reasonable facilities for making memoranda or abstracts from its public records during the usual business hours. A public body may make reasonable rules necessary to protect its public records and to prevent excessive and unreasonable interference with the discharge of its functions. A public body shall protect public records from loss, unauthorized alteration, mutilation, or destruction.</p> <p>(4) This act does not require a public body to make a compilation, summary, or report of information, except as required in section 11.</p> <p>(5) This act does not require a public body to create a new public record, except as required in section 11, and to the extent required by this act for the furnishing of copies, or edited copies pursuant to section 14(1), of an already existing public record.</p> <p>(6) The custodian of a public record shall, upon written request, furnish a requesting person a certified copy of a public record.</p>	<p><b>Section 3: Requesting public records</b></p> <p>Right to inspect, copy or receive copies</p> <p>Subscriptions</p> <p>Keep all requests on file for 1 year</p> <p>Public inspection of records</p> <p>Township is not required to create a new record or report</p> <p>Certified copies of public records</p>
<p><b>15.234 Amended. Fee; limitation on total fee; labor costs; establishment of procedures and guidelines; creation of written public summary; detailed itemization; availability of information on website; notification to requester; deposit; failure to respond in timely manner; increased estimated fee deposit; deposit as fee.</b></p> <p>Sec. 4.</p> <p>(1) A public body may charge a fee for a public record search, for the necessary copying of a public record for inspection, or for providing a copy of a public record if it has established, makes publicly available, and follows procedures and guidelines to implement this section as described in subsection (4). Subject to subsections (2), (3), (4), (5), and (9), the fee shall be limited to actual mailing costs, and to the actual incremental cost of duplication or publication including labor, the cost of search, examination, review, and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information as provided in section 14.</p>	<p><b>Section 4: Fees</b></p> <p>Fees may be charged if the Township has Procedures and Guidelines (and a Written Public Summary)</p>

Except as otherwise provided in this act, if the public body estimates or charges a fee in accordance with this act, the total fee shall not exceed the sum of the following components:

(a) That portion of labor costs directly associated with the necessary searching for, locating, and examining of public records in conjunction with receiving and fulfilling a granted written request. The public body shall not charge more than the hourly wage of its lowest-paid employee capable of searching for, locating, and examining the public records in the particular instance regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor. Labor costs under this subdivision shall be estimated and charged in increments of 15 minutes or more, with all partial time increments rounded down.

(b) That portion of labor costs, including necessary review, if any, directly associated with the separating and deleting of exempt information from nonexempt information as provided in section 14. For services performed by an employee of the public body, the public body shall not charge more than the hourly wage of its lowest-paid employee capable of separating and deleting exempt information from nonexempt information in the particular instance as provided in section 14, regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor. If a public body does not employ a person capable of separating and deleting exempt information from nonexempt information in the particular instance as provided in section 14 as determined by the public body's FOIA coordinator on a case-by-case basis, it may treat necessary contracted labor costs used for the separating and deleting of exempt information from nonexempt information in the same manner as employee labor costs when calculating charges under this subdivision if it clearly notes the name of the contracted person or firm on the detailed itemization described under subsection (4). Total labor costs calculated under this subdivision for contracted labor costs shall not exceed an amount equal to 6 times the state minimum hourly wage rate determined under section 4 of the workforce opportunity wage act, 2014 PA 138, MCL 408.411 to 408.424. Labor costs under this subdivision shall be estimated and charged in increments of 15 minutes or more, with all partial time increments rounded down.

A public body shall not charge for labor directly associated with redaction under section 14 if it knows or has reason to know that it previously redacted the public record in question and the redacted version is still in the public body's possession.

(c) For public records provided to the requestor on nonpaper physical media, the actual and most reasonably economical cost of the computer discs, computer tapes, or other digital or similar media. The requestor may stipulate that the public records be provided on nonpaper physical media, electronically mailed, or otherwise electronically provided to him or her in lieu of paper copies. This subdivision does not apply if a public body lacks the technological capability necessary to provide records on the particular nonpaper physical media stipulated in the particular instance.

(d) For paper copies of public records provided to the requestor, the actual total incremental cost of necessary duplication or publication, not including labor. The cost of paper copies shall be calculated as a total cost per sheet of paper and shall be itemized and noted in a manner that expresses both the cost per sheet and the number of sheets provided. The fee shall not exceed 10 cents per sheet of paper for copies of public records made on 8-1/2- by 11-inch paper or 8-1/2- by 14-inch paper. A public body shall utilize the most economical means available for making copies of public records, including using double-sided printing, if cost saving and available.

Fees are limited to what is allowed here:

Labor for searching/examining records

Must be charged in 15-minute increments or more

Labor for review and separation of exempt information

Cost of contracted labor

Must be charged in 15-minute increments or more

No charge for previously redacted records

Cost of nonpaper physical media (digital or electronic media)

Cost of paper copies

<p>(e) The cost of labor directly associated with duplication or publication, including making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to be given to the requestor on nonpaper physical media or through the internet or other electronic means as stipulated by the requestor. The public body shall not charge more than the hourly wage of its lowest-paid employee capable of necessary duplication or publication in the particular instance, regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor. Labor costs under this subdivision may be estimated and charged in time increments of the public body's choosing; however, all partial time increments shall be rounded down.</p> <p>(f) The actual cost of mailing, if any, for sending the public records in a reasonably economical and justifiable manner. The public body shall not charge more for expedited shipping or insurance unless specifically stipulated by the requestor, but may otherwise charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation when mailing public records.</p>	<p>Labor for copying, duplication</p> <p>May be charged in time increment of board's choosing. <i>Recommendation: Use 15-minute increments or more to be consistent</i></p> <p>Cost of mailing</p>
<p>(2) When calculating labor costs under subsection (1)(a), (b), or (e), fee components shall be itemized in a manner that expresses both the hourly wage and the number of hours charged. The public body may also add up to 50% to the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits if it clearly notes the percentage multiplier used to account for benefits in the detailed itemization described in subsection (4). Subject to the 50% limitation, the public body shall not charge more than the actual cost of fringe benefits, and overtime wages shall not be used in calculating the cost of fringe benefits. Overtime wages shall not be included in the calculation of labor costs unless overtime is specifically stipulated by the requestor and clearly noted on the detailed itemization described in subsection (4). A search for a public record may be conducted or copies of public records may be furnished without charge or at a reduced charge if the public body determines that a waiver or reduction of the fee is in the public interest because searching for or furnishing copies of the public record can be considered as primarily benefiting the general public.</p>	<p>Itemizing hourly fees</p> <p>Fringe benefits</p> <p>Overtime</p> <p>Records may be provided free or at reduced charge</p>
<p>A public record search shall be made and a copy of a public record shall be furnished without charge for the first \$20.00 of the fee for each request by either of the following:</p> <p>(a) An individual who is entitled to information under this act and who submits an affidavit stating that the individual is indigent and receiving specific public assistance or, if not receiving public assistance, stating facts showing inability to pay the cost because of indigency. If the requestor is eligible for a requested discount, the public body shall fully note the discount on the detailed itemization described under subsection (4). If a requestor is ineligible for the discount, the public body shall inform the requestor specifically of the reason for ineligibility in the public body's written response. An individual is ineligible for this fee reduction if any of the following apply:</p> <p>(i) The individual has previously received discounted copies of public records under this subsection from the same public body twice during that calendar year.</p> <p>(ii) The individual requests the information in conjunction with outside parties who are offering or providing payment or other remuneration to the individual to make the request. A public body may require a statement by the requestor in the affidavit that the request is not being made in conjunction with outside parties in exchange for payment or other remuneration.</p>	<p>\$20 Discount for Indigence (poverty)</p>

<p>(b) A nonprofit organization formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the developmental disabilities assistance and bill of rights act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, or their successors, if the request meets all of the following requirements:</p> <p>(i) Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.</p> <p>(ii) Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.</p> <p>(iii) Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.</p> <p>(3) A fee as described in subsection (1) shall not be charged for the cost of search, examination, review, and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information as provided in section 14 unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the public body because of the nature of the request in the particular instance, and the public body specifically identifies the nature of these unreasonably high costs.</p> <p>(4) A public body shall establish procedures and guidelines to implement this act and shall create a written public summary of the specific procedures and guidelines relevant to the general public regarding how to submit written requests to the public body and explaining how to understand a public body's written responses, deposit requirements, fee calculations, and avenues for challenge and appeal. The written public summary shall be written in a manner so as to be easily understood by the general public. If the public body directly or indirectly administers or maintains an official internet presence, it shall post and maintain the procedures and guidelines and its written public summary on its website. A public body shall make the procedures and guidelines publicly available by providing free copies of the procedures and guidelines and its written public summary both in the public body's response to a written request and upon request by visitors at the public body's office. A public body that posts and maintains procedures and guidelines and its written public summary on its website may include the website link to the documents in lieu of providing paper copies in its response to a written request. A public body's procedures and guidelines shall include the use of a standard form for detailed itemization of any fee amount in its responses to written requests under this act. The detailed itemization shall clearly list and explain the allowable charges for each of the 6 fee components listed under subsection (1) that compose the total fee used for estimating or charging purposes. Other public bodies may use a form created by the department of technology, management, and budget or create a form of their own that complies with this subsection. A public body that has not established procedures and guidelines, has not created a written public summary, or has not made those items publicly available without charge as required in this subsection is not relieved of its duty to comply with any requirement of this act and shall not require deposits or charge fees otherwise permitted under this act until it is in compliance with this subsection. Notwithstanding this subsection and despite any law to the contrary, a public body's procedures and guidelines under this act are not exempt public records under section 13.</p> <p>(5) If the public body directly or indirectly administers or maintains an official internet presence, any public records available to the general public on that internet site at the time the request is made are exempt from any charges under subsection (1)(b). If the FOIA coordinator knows or has reason to know that all or a portion of the requested information is available on its website, the public body shall notify the requestor in its written response that all or a portion of the requested information is available on its website. The written response, to the degree practicable in the specific instance, shall include a specific webpage address where the requested information is available.</p>	<p>\$20 Discount for Nonprofit Organization advocating for developmentally disabled and mentally ill individuals</p> <p>Labor cannot be charged for search, review and redaction unless unreasonably high costs</p> <p>Township must create Written Public Summary of its Procedures and Guidelines, which must be posted on Township website.</p> <p>Copies must be available at no charge</p> <p>Standard form for detailed itemization of any fee required</p> <p>Township cannot charge any fee if it does not have Procedures and Guidelines and Written Summary</p> <p>No charge to redact for public records on Township website</p> <p>Notify requestors of records on website</p>
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<p>On the detailed itemization described in subsection (4), the public body shall separate the requested public records that are available on its website from those that are not available on the website and shall inform the requestor of the additional charge to receive copies of the public records that are available on its website. If the public body has included the website address for a record in its written response to the requestor and the requestor thereafter stipulates that the public record be provided to him or her in a paper format or other form as described under subsection (1)(c), the public body shall provide the public records in the specified format but may use a fringe benefit multiplier greater than the 50% limitation in subsection (2), not to exceed the actual costs of providing the information in the specified format.</p> <p>(6) A public body may provide requested information available in public records without receipt of a written request.</p> <p>(7) If a verbal request for information is for information that a public body believes is available on the public body's website, the public employee shall, where practicable and to the best of the public employee's knowledge, inform the requestor about the public body's pertinent website address.</p> <p>(8) In either the public body's initial response or subsequent response as described under section 5(2)(d), the public body may require a good-faith deposit from the person requesting information before providing the public records to the requestor if the entire fee estimate or charge authorized under this section exceeds \$50.00, based on a good-faith calculation of the total fee described in subsection (4). Subject to subsection (10), the deposit shall not exceed 1/2 of the total estimated fee, and a public body's request for a deposit shall include a detailed itemization as required under subsection (4). The response shall also contain a best efforts estimate by the public body regarding the time frame it will take the public body to comply with the law in providing the public records to the requestor. The time frame estimate is nonbinding upon the public body, but the public body shall provide the estimate in good faith and strive to be reasonably accurate and to provide the public records in a manner based on this state's public policy under section 1 and the nature of the request in the particular instance. If a public body does not respond in a timely manner as described under section 5(2), it is not relieved from its requirements to provide proper fee calculations and time frame estimates in any tardy responses. Providing an estimated time frame does not relieve a public body from any of the other requirements of this act.</p> <p>(9) If a public body does not respond to a written request in a timely manner as required under section 5(2), the public body shall do the following:</p> <p>(a) Reduce the charges for labor costs otherwise permitted under this section by 5% for each day the public body exceeds the time permitted under section 5(2) for a response to the request, with a maximum 50% reduction, if either of the following applies:</p> <p>(i) The late response was willful and intentional.</p> <p>(ii) The written request included language that conveyed a request for information within the first 250 words of the body of a letter, facsimile, electronic mail, or electronic mail attachment, or specifically included the words, characters, or abbreviations for "freedom of information", "information", "FOIA", "copy", or a recognizable misspelling of such, or appropriate legal code reference for this act, on the front of an envelope, or in the subject line of an electronic mail, letter, or facsimile cover page.</p> <p>(b) If a charge reduction is required under subdivision (a), fully note the charge reduction on the detailed itemization described under subsection (4).</p>	<p>Fees may be charged for <u>requested</u> copies of records already on website</p> <p>Verbal requests may be responded to</p> <p>Verbal requests for records on website <u>must</u> be responded to; inform of web location</p> <p>Good Faith Deposit</p> <p>Best Efforts Estimate of time frame to fulfil request</p> <p>Reduction in labor costs if Township does not respond in timely manner</p> <p>Note reduction on detailed itemization</p>
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<p>(10) This section does not apply to public records prepared under an act or statute specifically authorizing the sale of those public records to the public, or if the amount of the fee for providing a copy of the public record is otherwise specifically provided by an act or statute.</p> <p>(11) Subject to subsection (12), after a public body has granted and fulfilled a written request from an individual under this act, if the public body has not been paid in full the total amount under subsection (1) for the copies of public records that the public body made available to the individual as a result of that written request, the public body may require a deposit of up to 100% of the estimated fee before it begins a full public record search for any subsequent written request from that individual if all of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The final fee for the prior written request was not more than 105% of the estimated fee.</li> <li>(b) The public records made available contained the information being sought in the prior written request and are still in the public body's possession.</li> <li>(c) The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the time frame estimate described under subsection (7).</li> <li>(d) Ninety days have passed since the public body notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing.</li> <li>(e) The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the public body.</li> <li>(f) The public body calculates a detailed itemization, as required under subsection (4), that is the basis for the current written request's increased estimated fee deposit.</li> </ul> <p>(12) A public body shall no longer require an increased estimated fee deposit from an individual as described under subsection (11) if any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The individual is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the public body.</li> <li>(b) The public body is subsequently paid in full for the applicable prior written request.</li> <li>(c) Three hundred sixty-five days have passed since the individual made the written request for which full payment was not remitted to the public body.</li> </ul> <p>(13) A deposit required by a public body under this act is a fee.</p>	<p>Fees otherwise provided for by other statutes</p> <p>100% Deposit may be required when previous request not paid</p> <p>Deposits are "fees"</p>
<p><b>15.235 Amended. Request to inspect or receive copy of public record; response to request; failure to respond; damages; contents of notice denying request; signing notice of denial; notice extending period of response; action by requesting person.</b></p> <p>Sec. 5.</p> <p>(1) Except as provided in section 3, a person desiring to inspect or receive a copy of a public record shall make a written request for the public record to the FOIA coordinator of a public body.</p> <p>A written request made by facsimile, electronic mail, or other electronic transmission is not received by a public body's FOIA coordinator until 1 business day after the electronic transmission is made.</p>	<p><b>Section 5: Processing Requests</b></p> <p>Written request must go to FOIA Coordinator</p> <p>When electronic requests are "received"</p>

<p>However, if a written request is sent by electronic mail and delivered to the public body's spam or junk-mail folder, the request is not received until 1 day after the public body first becomes aware of the written request. The public body shall note in its records both the time a written request is delivered to its spam or junk-mail folder and the time the public body first becomes aware of that request.</p>	Township must check spam/junk-mail folders
<p>(2) Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the person making the request, a public body shall respond to a request for a public record within 5 business days after the public body receives the request by doing 1 of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Granting the request.</li> <li>(b) Issuing a written notice to the requesting person denying the request.</li> <li>(c) Granting the request in part and issuing a written notice to the requesting person denying the request in part.</li> <li>(d) Issuing a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the public body shall respond to the request. A public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular request.</li> </ul>	<p>Township must respond within 5 business days:</p> <p>Granting</p> <p>Denying</p> <p>Granting/Denying</p> <p>Issuing an Extension</p>
<p>(3) Failure to respond to a request pursuant to subsection (2) constitutes a public body's final determination to deny the request if either of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The failure was willful and intentional.</li> <li>(b) The written request included language that conveyed a request for information within the first 250 words of the body of a letter, facsimile, electronic mail, or electronic mail attachment, or specifically included the words, characters, or abbreviations for "freedom of information", "information", "FOIA", "copy", or a recognizable misspelling of such, or appropriate legal code reference to this act, on the front of an envelope or in the subject line of an electronic mail, letter, or facsimile cover page.</li> </ul>	<p>When failure to respond becomes a denial</p>
<p>(4) In a civil action to compel a public body's disclosure of a public record under section 10, the court shall assess damages against the public body pursuant to section 10(7) if the court has done both of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Determined that the public body has not complied with subsection (2).</li> <li>(b) Ordered the public body to disclose or provide copies of all or a portion of the public record.</li> </ul>	<p>Penalties for improper non-disclosure of records</p>
<p>(5) A written notice denying a request for a public record in whole or in part is a public body's final determination to deny the request or portion of that request. The written notice shall contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) An explanation of the basis under this act or other statute for the determination that the public record, or portion of that public record, is exempt from disclosure, if that is the reason for denying all or a portion of the request.</li> <li>(b) A certificate that the public record does not exist under the name given by the requester or by another name reasonably known to the public body, if that is the reason for denying the request or a portion of the request.</li> </ul>	<p>Notice of Denial</p>



**15.240 Amended. Options by requesting person; appeal; actions by public body; receipt of written appeal; judicial review; civil action; venue; de novo proceeding; burden of proof; private view of public record; contempt; assignment of action or appeal for hearing, trial, or argument; attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements; assessment of award; damages.**

Sec. 10.

(1) If a public body makes a final determination to deny all or a portion of a request, the requesting person may do 1 of the following at his or her option:

(a) Submit to the head of the public body a written appeal that specifically states the word "appeal" and identifies the reason or reasons for reversal of the denial.

(b) Commence a civil action in the circuit court, or if the decision of a state public body is at issue, the court of claims, to compel the public body's disclosure of the public records within 180 days after a public body's final determination to deny a request.

(2) Within 10 business days after receiving a written appeal pursuant to subsection (1)(a), the head of a public body shall do 1 of the following:

(a) Reverse the disclosure denial.

(b) Issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial.

(c) Reverse the disclosure denial in part and issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial in part.

(d) Under unusual circumstances, issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the head of the public body shall respond to the written appeal. The head of a public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

(3) A board or commission that is the head of a public body is not considered to have received a written appeal under subsection (2) until the first regularly scheduled meeting of that board or commission following submission of the written appeal under subsection (1)(a). If the head of the public body fails to respond to a written appeal pursuant to subsection (2), or if the head of the public body upholds all or a portion of the disclosure denial that is the subject of the written appeal, the requesting person may seek judicial review of the nondisclosure by commencing a civil action under subsection (1)(b).

(4) In an action commenced under subsection (1)(b), a court that determines a public record is not exempt from disclosure shall order the public body to cease withholding or to produce all or a portion of a public record wrongfully withheld, regardless of the location of the public record. Venue for an action against a local public body is proper in the circuit court for the county in which the public record or an office of the public body is located has venue over the action. The court shall determine the matter de novo and the burden is on the public body to sustain its denial. The court, on its own motion, may view the public record in controversy in private before reaching a decision. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

(5) An action commenced under this section and an appeal from an action commenced under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.

## Section 10: Right to Appeal a Denial

(No sections 7-9)

Requestor has options  
to appeal a denial:

To Township Board

To Circuit Court

Township Board  
Response:

Reverse

Uphold

Reverse/Uphold

Under "unusual  
circumstances," issue  
one extension of appeal

When an appeal is  
"received"

Requestor's right to  
seek judicial review

Court will order release  
of improperly withheld  
record

Township has burden  
to sustain its denial

Court scheduling

<p>(6) If a person asserting the right to inspect, copy, or receive a copy of all or a portion of a public record prevails in an action commenced under this section, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the person or public body prevails in part, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages under subsection (7).</p> <p>(7) If the court determines in an action commenced under this section that the public body has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by refusal or delay in disclosing or providing copies of a public record, the court shall order the public body to pay a civil fine of \$1,000.00, which shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury. The court shall award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$1,000.00 to the person seeking the right to inspect or receive a copy of a public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.</p>	<p>Court award of fees, costs to prevailing person</p> <p>Penalties for arbitrary and capricious violation</p>
<p><b>15.240a Added. Fee in excess of amount permitted under procedures and guidelines or MCL 15.234.</b></p> <p>Sec. 10a.</p> <p>(1) If a public body requires a fee that exceeds the amount permitted under its publicly available procedures and guidelines or section 4, the requesting person may do any of the following:</p> <p>(a) If the public body provides for fee appeals to the head of the public body in its publicly available procedures and guidelines, submit to the head of the public body a written appeal for a fee reduction that specifically states the word "appeal" and identifies how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted under the public body's available procedures and guidelines or section 4.</p> <p>(b) Commence a civil action in the circuit court, or if the decision of a state public body is at issue, in the court of claims, for a fee reduction. The action must be filed within 45 days after receiving the notice of the required fee or a determination of an appeal to the head of a public body. If a civil action is commenced against the public body under this subdivision, the public body is not obligated to complete the processing of the written request for the public record at issue until the court resolves the fee dispute. An action shall not be filed under this subdivision unless 1 of the following applies:</p> <p>(i) The public body does not provide for appeals under subdivision (a).</p> <p>(ii) The head of the public body failed to respond to a written appeal as required under subsection (2).</p> <p>(iii) The head of the public body issued a determination to a written appeal as required under subsection (2).</p>	<p><b>Section 10a: Excessive Fees</b></p> <p>Appeal of an Excess Fee:</p> <p>To Township Board</p> <p>To Circuit Court</p> <p>Township not required to complete request until fee appeal decided</p>

<p>(2) Within 10 business days after receiving a written appeal under subsection (1)(a), the head of a public body shall do 1 of the following:</p> <p>(a) Waive the fee.</p> <p>(b) Reduce the fee and issue a written determination to the requesting person indicating the specific basis under section 4 that supports the remaining fee. The determination shall include a certification from the head of the public body that the statements in the determination are accurate and that the reduced fee amount complies with its publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4.</p> <p>(c) Uphold the fee and issue a written determination to the requesting person indicating the specific basis under section 4 that supports the required fee. The determination shall include a certification from the head of the public body that the statements in the determination are accurate and that the fee amount complies with the public body's publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4.</p> <p>(d) Issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the head of the public body must respond to the written appeal. The notice of extension shall include a detailed reason or reasons why the extension is necessary. The head of a public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.</p> <p>(3) A board or commission that is the head of a public body is not considered to have received a written appeal under subsection (2) until the first regularly scheduled meeting of that board or commission following submission of the written appeal under subsection (1)(a).</p> <p>(4) In an action commenced under subsection (1)(b), a court that determines the public body required a fee that exceeds the amount permitted under its publicly available procedures and guidelines or section 4 shall reduce the fee to a permissible amount. Venue for an action against a local public body is proper in the circuit court for the county in which the public record or an office of the public body is located. The court shall determine the matter de novo, and the burden is on the public body to establish that the required fee complies with its publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.</p> <p>(5) An action commenced under this section and an appeal from an action commenced under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.</p> <p>(6) If the requesting person prevails in an action commenced under this section by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages under subsection (7).</p> <p>(7) If the court determines in an action commenced under this section that the public body has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by charging an excessive fee, the court shall order the public body to pay a civil fine of \$500.00, which shall be deposited in the general fund of the state treasury. The court may also award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$500.00 to the person seeking the fee reduction. The fine and any damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.</p> <p>(8) As used in this section, "fee" means the total fee or any component of the total fee calculated under section 4, including any deposit.</p>	<p>Township Board Response:</p> <p>Waive Fee</p> <p>Reduce fee and issue certified determination</p> <p>Uphold fee and issue certified determination</p> <p>Issue one extension of appeal detailing reasons for extension</p> <p>When an appeal is "received"</p> <p>Court will reduce impermissible fee</p> <p>Township has burden to show fee complies with Procedures and Guidelines and FOIA</p> <p>Court scheduling</p> <p>Court award of fees, costs to prevailing person</p> <p>Penalties for arbitrary and capricious violation</p> <p>Definition of "fee" for this section</p>
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<p><b>15.240b Added. Failure to comply with act; civil fine.</b></p> <p>Sec. 10b.</p> <p>If the court determines, in an action commenced under this act, that a public body willfully and intentionally failed to comply with this act or otherwise acted in bad faith, the court shall order the public body to pay, in addition to any other award or sanction, a civil fine of not less than \$2,500.00 or more than \$7,500.00 for each occurrence. In determining the amount of the civil fine, the court shall consider the budget of the public body and whether the public body has previously been assessed penalties for violations of this act. The civil fine shall be deposited in the general fund of the state treasury.</p>	<p><b>Section 10b: Failure to Comply with FOIA</b></p> <p>Fine for willful and intentional noncompliance</p>
<p><b>15.241 Amended. Matters required to be published and made available by state agency; form of publications; effect of matter not published and made available; exception; action to compel compliance by state agency; order; attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements; jurisdiction; definitions.</b></p> <p>Sec. 11.</p> <p>(1) A state agency shall publish and make available to the public all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Final orders or decisions in contested cases and the records on which they were made.</li> <li>(b) Promulgated rules.</li> <li>(c) Other written statements that implement or interpret laws, rules, or policy, including but not limited to guidelines, manuals, and forms with instructions, adopted or used by the agency in the discharge of its functions.</li> </ul> <p>(2) Publications may be in pamphlet, loose-leaf, or other appropriate form in printed, mimeographed, or other written matter.</p> <p>(3) Except to the extent that a person has actual and timely notice of the terms thereof, a person is not required to resort to, and shall not be adversely affected by, a matter required to be published and made available, if the matter is not so published and made available.</p> <p>(4) This section does not apply to public records that are exempt from disclosure under section 13.</p> <p>(5) A person may commence an action in the court of claims to compel a state agency to comply with this section. If the court determines that the state agency has failed to comply, the court shall order the state agency to comply and shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements to the person commencing the action. The court of claims has exclusive jurisdiction to issue the order.</p> <p>(6) As used in this section, "state agency", "contested case", and "rule" mean "agency", "contested case", and "rule" as those terms are defined in the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.</p>	<p><b>Section 11: State Records</b></p> <p>State agencies required to publish and make public certain records</p>

**15.243 Exemptions from disclosure; public body as school district or public school academy; withholding of information required by law or in possession of executive office.**

Sec. 13.

(1) A public body may exempt from disclosure as a public record under this act any of the following:

(a) Information of a personal nature if public disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual's privacy.

(b) Investigating records compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that disclosure as a public record would do any of the following:

(i) Interfere with law enforcement proceedings.

(ii) Deprive a person of the right to a fair trial or impartial administrative adjudication.

(iii) Constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(iv) Disclose the identity of a confidential source, or if the record is compiled by a law enforcement agency in the course of a criminal investigation, disclose confidential information furnished only by a confidential source.

(v) Disclose law enforcement investigative techniques or procedures.

(vi) Endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement personnel.

(c) A public record that if disclosed would prejudice a public body's ability to maintain the physical security of custodial or penal institutions occupied by persons arrested or convicted of a crime or admitted because of a mental disability, unless the public interest in disclosure under this act outweighs the public interest in nondisclosure.

(d) Records or information specifically described and exempted from disclosure by statute.

(e) A public record or information described in this section that is furnished by the public body originally compiling, preparing, or receiving the record or information to a public officer or public body in connection with the performance of the duties of that public officer or public body, if the considerations originally giving rise to the exempt nature of the public record remain applicable.

**Section 13:  
FOIA Exemptions**

*(apply to records or  
information in records)*

Privacy exemption

Law enforcement  
investigating records

Security records of  
custodial or penal  
institutions

Records exempted by  
statute

Exempt records  
provided to public  
office/body



<p>(f) Trade secrets or commercial or financial information voluntarily provided to an agency for use in developing governmental policy if:</p> <p>(i) The information is submitted upon a promise of confidentiality by the public body.</p> <p>(ii) The promise of confidentiality is authorized by the chief administrative officer of the public body or by an elected official at the time the promise is made.</p> <p>(iii) A description of the information is recorded by the public body within a reasonable time after it has been submitted, maintained in a central place within the public body, and made available to a person upon request. This subdivision does not apply to information submitted as required by law or as a condition of receiving a governmental contract, license, or other benefit.</p>	<p>Trade secrets / commercial / financial information</p>
<p>(g) Information or records subject to the attorney-client privilege.</p> <p>(h) Information or records subject to the physician-patient privilege, the psychologist-patient privilege, the minister, priest, or Christian Science practitioner privilege, or other privilege recognized by statute or court rule.</p>	<p>Attorney-client privilege Physician-patient privilege</p>
<p>(i) A bid or proposal by a person to enter into a contract or agreement, until the time for the public opening of bids or proposals, or if a public opening is not to be conducted, until the deadline for submission of bids or proposals has expired.</p>	<p>Bids/proposals</p>
<p>(j) Appraisals of real property to be acquired by the public body until either of the following occurs:</p> <p>(i) An agreement is entered into.</p> <p>(ii) Three years have elapsed since the making of the appraisal, unless litigation relative to the acquisition has not yet terminated.</p>	<p>Appraisals of real property for public body purchase</p>
<p>(k) Test questions and answers, scoring keys, and other examination instruments or data used to administer a license, public employment, or academic examination, unless the public interest in disclosure under this act outweighs the public interest in nondisclosure.</p>	<p>Test answers</p>
<p>(l) Medical, counseling, or psychological facts or evaluations concerning an individual if the individual's identity would be revealed by a disclosure of those facts or evaluation, including protected health information, as defined in 45 CFR 160.103.</p>	<p>Individuals medical / psychological evaluations</p>
<p>(m) Communications and notes within a public body or between public bodies of an advisory nature to the extent that they cover other than purely factual materials and are preliminary to a final agency determination of policy or action. This exemption does not apply unless the public body shows that in the particular instance the public interest in encouraging frank communication between officials and employees of public bodies clearly outweighs the public interest in disclosure. This exemption does not constitute an exemption under state law for purposes of section 8(h) of the open meetings act, 1976 PA 267, MCL 15.268. As used in this subdivision, "determination of policy or action" includes a determination relating to collective bargaining, unless the public record is otherwise required to be made available under 1947 PA 336, MCL 423.201 to 423.217.</p>	<p>Advisory communications preliminary to final action ("frank communication")</p>

(n) Records of law enforcement communication codes, or plans for deployment of law enforcement personnel, that if disclosed would prejudice a public body's ability to protect the public safety unless the public interest in disclosure under this act outweighs the public interest in nondisclosure in the particular instance.

Law enforcement codes, plans

(o) Information that would reveal the exact location of archaeological sites. The department of history, arts, and libraries may promulgate rules in accordance with the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328, to provide for the disclosure of the location of archaeological sites for purposes relating to the preservation or scientific examination of sites.

Archaeological sites

(p) Testing data developed by a public body in determining whether bidders' products meet the specifications for purchase of those products by the public body, if disclosure of the data would reveal that only 1 bidder has met the specifications. This subdivision does not apply after 1 year has elapsed from the time the public body completes the testing.

Testing data of bidder's products

(q) Academic transcripts of an institution of higher education established under section 5, 6, or 7 of article VIII of the state constitution of 1963, if the transcript pertains to a student who is delinquent in the payment of financial obligations to the institution.

College academic transcripts of students with unpaid loans

(r) Records of a campaign committee including a committee that receives money from a state campaign fund.

Campaign committee records

(s) Unless the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in nondisclosure in the particular instance, public records of a law enforcement agency, the release of which would do any of the following:

Law enforcement agency records that:

(i) Identify or provide a means of identifying an informant.

Identify informant

(ii) Identify or provide a means of identifying a law enforcement undercover officer or agent or a plain clothes officer as a law enforcement officer or agent.

Identify undercover / plain clothes officer

(iii) Disclose the personal address or telephone number of active or retired law enforcement officers or agents or a special skill that they may have.

Disclose personal info of officers

(iv) Disclose the name, address, or telephone numbers of family members, relatives, children, or parents of active or retired law enforcement officers or agents.

Disclose personal info of officer's family

(v) Disclose operational instructions for law enforcement officers or agents.

Disclose operational instructions  
Reveal manuals

(vi) Reveal the contents of staff manuals provided for law enforcement officers or agents.

(vii) Endanger the life or safety of law enforcement officers or agents or their families, relatives, children, parents, or those who furnish information to law enforcement departments or agencies.

Endanger officers or families or informants

(viii) Identify or provide a means of identifying a person as a law enforcement officer, agent, or informant.

Identify person as law enforcement

(ix) Disclose personnel records of law enforcement agencies.

Disclose personnel records

<p>(x) Identify or provide a means of identifying residences that law enforcement agencies are requested to check in the absence of their owners or tenants.</p> <p>(t) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, records and information pertaining to an investigation or a compliance conference conducted by the department under article 15 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.16101 to 333.18838, before a complaint is issued. This subdivision does not apply to records or information pertaining to 1 or more of the following:</p> <p>(i) The fact that an allegation has been received and an investigation is being conducted, and the date the allegation was received.</p> <p>(ii) The fact that an allegation was received by the department; the fact that the department did not issue a complaint for the allegation; and the fact that the allegation was dismissed.</p> <p>(u) Records of a public body's security measures, including security plans, security codes and combinations, passwords, passes, keys, and security procedures, to the extent that the records relate to the ongoing security of the public body.</p> <p>(v) Records or information relating to a civil action in which the requesting party and the public body are parties.</p> <p>(w) Information or records that would disclose the social security number of an individual.</p> <p>(x) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, an application for the position of president of an institution of higher education established under section 4, 5, or 6 of article VIII of the state constitution of 1963, materials submitted with such an application, letters of recommendation or references concerning an applicant, and records or information relating to the process of searching for and selecting an individual for a position described in this subdivision, if the records or information could be used to identify a candidate for the position. However, after 1 or more individuals have been identified as finalists for a position described in this subdivision, this subdivision does not apply to a public record described in this subdivision, except a letter of recommendation or reference, to the extent that the public record relates to an individual identified as a finalist for the position.</p> <p>(y) Records or information of measures designed to protect the security or safety of persons or property, whether public or private, including, but not limited to, building, public works, and public water supply designs to the extent that those designs relate to the ongoing security measures of a public body, capabilities and plans for responding to a violation of the Michigan anti-terrorism act, chapter LXXXIII-A of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328, MCL 750.543a to 750.543z, emergency response plans, risk planning documents, threat assessments, and domestic preparedness strategies, unless disclosure would not impair a public body's ability to protect the security or safety of persons or property or unless the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in nondisclosure in the particular instance.</p>	<p>Identify residences checked when empty</p> <p>Public health code investigations</p> <p>Public body's security plans / procedures</p> <p>Records related to civil action between public body and requestor (discovery)</p> <p>Social Security numbers</p> <p>Applications for university president</p> <p>Security measures re: terrorism, emergency response</p>
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<p>(2) A public body shall exempt from disclosure information that, if released, would prevent the public body from complying with 20 USC 1232g, commonly referred to as the family educational rights and privacy act of 1974. A public body that is a local or intermediate school district or a public school academy shall exempt from disclosure directory information, as defined by 20 USC 1232g, commonly referred to as the family educational rights and privacy act of 1974, requested for the purpose of surveys, marketing, or solicitation, unless that public body determines that the use is consistent with the educational mission of the public body and beneficial to the affected students. A public body that is a local or intermediate school district or a public school academy may take steps to ensure that directory information disclosed under this subsection shall not be used, rented, or sold for the purpose of surveys, marketing, or solicitation. Before disclosing the directory information, a public body that is a local or intermediate school district or a public school academy may require the requester to execute an affidavit stating that directory information provided under this subsection shall not be used, rented, or sold for the purpose of surveys, marketing, or solicitation.</p> <p>(3) This act does not authorize the withholding of information otherwise required by law to be made available to the public or to a party in a contested case under the administrative procedures act of 1969, 1969 PA 306, MCL 24.201 to 24.328.</p> <p>(4) Except as otherwise exempt under subsection (1), this act does not authorize the withholding of a public record in the possession of the executive office of the governor or lieutenant governor, or an employee of either executive office, if the public record is transferred to the executive office of the governor or lieutenant governor, or an employee of either executive office, after a request for the public record has been received by a state officer, employee, agency, department, division, bureau, board, commission, council, authority, or other body in the executive branch of government that is subject to this act.</p>	<p>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974</p> <p>Information required to be public under Administrative Procedures Act</p> <p>State agency public records not protected by possession of Executive Office</p>
<p><b>15.243a Salary records of employee or other official of institution of higher education, school district, intermediate school district, or community college available to public on request.</b></p> <p>Sec. 13a.</p> <p>Notwithstanding section 13, an institution of higher education established under section 5, 6, or 7 of article 8 of the state constitution of 1963; a school district as defined in section 6 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1976, being section 380.6 of the Michigan Compiled Laws; an intermediate school district as defined in section 4 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1976, being section 380.4 of the Michigan Compiled Laws; or a community college established under Act No. 331 of the Public Acts of 1966, as amended, being sections 389.1 to 389.195 of the Michigan Compiled Laws shall upon request make available to the public the salary records of an employee or other official of the institution of higher education, school district, intermediate school district, or community college.</p>	<p><b>Section 13a: School Salary Records</b></p> <p>Salary records of college / school district employee or official are public</p>

<b>15.244 Separation of exempt and nonexempt material; design of public record; description of material exempted.</b>	<b>Section 14: Redacting</b>
<p>Sec. 14.</p> <p>(1) If a public record contains material which is not exempt under section 13, as well as material which is exempt from disclosure under section 13, the public body shall separate the exempt and nonexempt material and make the nonexempt material available for examination and copying.</p> <p>(2) When designing a public record, a public body shall, to the extent practicable, facilitate a separation of exempt from nonexempt information. If the separation is readily apparent to a person requesting to inspect or receive copies of the form, the public body shall generally describe the material exempted unless that description would reveal the contents of the exempt information and thus defeat the purpose of the exemption.</p>	<p>Public information must be separated from exempt information</p> <p>Records must be designed to allow for redaction</p> <p>Describe exempt info</p>
<b>15.245 Repeal of MCL 24.221, 24.222, and 24.223.</b>	<b>Section 15: Repealer</b>
<p>Sec. 15.</p> <p>Sections 21, 22 and 23 of Act No. 306 of the Public Acts of 1969, as amended, being sections 24.221, 24.222 and 24.223 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, are repealed.</p>	
<b>15.246 Effective date.</b>	<b>Section 16: Original Effective Date</b>
<p>Sec. 16.</p> <p>This act shall take effect 90 days after being signed by the governor.</p>	<p><i>(2015 amendments take effect July 1, 2015)</i></p>

## BEAVER CREEK TOWNSHIP

### FOIA Procedures and Guidelines

#### Article 1: Statement of Principles

It is the policy of Beaver Creek Township that all persons, except those incarcerated, consistent with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and employees. The people shall be informed so that they fully participate in the democratic process.

The Township's policy with respect to FOIA requests is to comply with State law in all respects and to respond to FOIA requests in a consistent, fair, and even-handed manner regardless of who makes such a request.

The Township acknowledges that it has a legal obligation to disclose all nonexempt public records in its possession pursuant to a FOIA request. The Township acknowledges that sometimes it is necessary to invoke the exemptions identified under FOIA in order to ensure the effective operation of government and to protect the privacy of individuals.

Beaver Creek Township will protect the public's interest in disclosure, while balancing the requirement to withhold or redact portions of certain records. The Township's policy is to disclose public records consistent with and in compliance with State law.

The Township Board has established the following written procedures and guidelines to implement the FOIA and will create a written public summary of the specific procedures and guidelines relevant to the general public regarding how to submit written requests to the public body and explaining how to understand a public body's written responses, deposit requirements, fee calculations, and avenues for challenge and appeal. The written public summary will be written in a manner so as to be easily understood by the general public.

#### Section 1: General Policies

The Township Board, acting pursuant to the authority at MCL 15.236, designates the Supervisor as the FOIA Coordinator. He is authorized to designate other Township staff to act on his behalf to accept and process written requests for the Township's public records and approve denials.

If a request for a public record is received by fax or email, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day. If a request is sent by email and delivered to a Township spam or junk-mail folder, the request is not deemed received until one day after the FOIA Coordinator first becomes aware of the request. The FOIA Coordinator shall note in the FOIA log both the date the request was delivered to the spam or junk-mail folder and the date the FOIA Coordinator became aware of the request.

**The FOIA Coordinator shall review Township spam and junk-mail folders on a regular basis, which shall be no less than once a month. The FOIA Coordinator shall work with Township Information Technology staff to develop administrative rules for handling spam and junk-mail so as to protect Township systems from computer attacks which may be imbedded in an electronic FOIA request.**

The FOIA Coordinator may, in his or her discretion, implement administrative rules, consistent with State law and these Procedures and Guidelines to administer the acceptance and processing of FOIA requests.

The Township is not obligated to create a new public record or make a compilation or summary of information which does not already exist. Neither the FOIA Coordinator nor other Township staff are obligated to provide answers to questions contained in requests for public records or regarding the content of the records themselves.

The FOIA Coordinator shall keep a copy of all written requests for public records received by the Township on file for a period of at least one year.

The Township will make this Procedures and Guidelines document and the Written Public Summary publicly available without fee. If it does not, the Township cannot require deposits or charge fees otherwise permitted under the FOIA until it is in compliance.

A copy of this Procedures and Guidelines document and the Township's Written Public Summary must be publicly available by providing free copies both in the Township's response to a written request and upon request by visitors at the Township's office.

This Procedures and Guidelines document and the Township's Written Public Summary will be maintained on the Township's website at beavercreektownship.com, so a link to those documents will be provided in lieu of providing paper copies of those documents.

## **Section 2: Requesting a Public Record**

No specific form to submit a request for a public record is required. However the FOIA Coordinator may make available a FOIA Request Form for use by the public.

Requests to inspect or obtain copies of public records prepared, owned, used, possessed or retained by the Township may be submitted on the Township's FOIA Request Form, in any other form of writing (letter, fax, email, etc.), or by verbal request.

Verbal requests for records may be documented by the Township on the Township's FOIA Request Form.

If a person makes a verbal, non-written request for information believed to be available on the Township's website, where practicable and to the best ability of the employee receiving the request, shall be informed of the pertinent website address.

A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable Township personnel to identify and find the requested public record.

Written requests for public records may be submitted in person or by mail to any Township office. Requests may also be submitted electronically by fax and email. Upon their receipt, requests for public records shall be promptly forwarded to the FOIA Coordinator for processing.

A person may request that public records be provided on non-paper physical media, emailed or otherwise provided to him or her in digital form in lieu of paper copies. The Township will comply with the request only if it possesses the necessary technological capability to provide records in the requested non-paper physical media format.

A person may subscribe to future issues of public records that are created, issued or disseminated by Beaver Creek Township on a regular basis. A subscription is valid for up to 6 months and may be renewed by the subscriber.

A person serving a sentence of imprisonment in a local, state or federal correctional facility is not entitled to submit a request for a public record. The FOIA Coordinator will deny all such requests.

### **Section 3: Processing a Request**

Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the person making the request, the Township will issue a response within 5 business days of receipt of a FOIA request. If a request is received by fax, email or other electronic transmission, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day.

The Township will respond to a request in one of the following ways:

- Grant the request.
- Issue a written notice denying the request.
- Grant the request in part and issue a written notice denying in part the request.
- Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the Township needs an additional 10 business days to respond for a total of no more than 15 business days. Only one such extension is permitted.
- Issue a written notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on the Township's website.

#### **When a request is granted:**

If the request is granted, or granted in part, the FOIA Coordinator will require that payment be made in full for the allowable fees associated with responding to the request before the public record is made available.

The FOIA Coordinator shall provide a detailed itemization of the allowable costs incurred to process the request to the person making the request.

A copy of these Procedures and Guidelines and the Written Public Summary will be provided to the requestor free of charge with the response to a written request for public records provided however, that because these Procedures and Guidelines, and the Written Public Summary are maintained on the Township's website at: [beavercreektownship.com](http://beavercreektownship.com), a link to the Procedures and Guidelines and the Written Public Summary will be provided in lieu of providing paper copies of those documents. If the cost of processing a FOIA request is \$50. or less, the requester will be notified of the amount due and where the documents can be obtained.

If the cost of processing a FOIA request is expected to exceed \$50 based on a good-faith calculation, or if the requestor has not paid in full for a previously granted request, the Township will require a good-faith deposit pursuant to Section 4 of this policy before processing the request.

In making the request for a good-faith deposit the FOIA Coordinator shall provide the requestor with a detailed itemization of the allowable costs estimated to be incurred by the Township to process the request and also provide a best efforts estimate of a time frame it will take the Township to provide the records to the requestor. The best efforts estimate shall be nonbinding on the Township, but will be made in good faith and will strive to be reasonably accurate, given the nature of the request in the particular instance, so as to provide the requested records in a manner based on the public policy expressed by Section 1 of the FOIA.



**When a request is denied or denied in part:**

If the request is denied or denied in part, the FOIA Coordinator will issue a Notice of Denial which shall provide in the applicable circumstance:

- An explanation as to why a requested public record is exempt from disclosure; or
- A certificate that the requested record does not exist under the name or description provided by the requestor, or another name reasonably known by the Township; or
- An explanation or description of the public record or information within a public record that is separated or deleted from the public record; and
- An explanation of the person's right to submit an appeal of the denial to either the office of the Township Supervisor or seek judicial review in the Crawford County Circuit Court;
- An explanation of the right to receive attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements as well actual or compensatory damages, and punitive damages of \$1,000, should they prevail in Circuit Court.
- The Notice of Denial shall be signed by the FOIA Coordinator.

If a request does not sufficiently describe a public record, the FOIA Coordinator may, in lieu of issuing a Notice of Denial indicating that the request is deficient, seek clarification or amendment of the request by the person making the request. Any clarification or amendment will be considered a new request subject to the timelines described in this Section.

**Requests to inspect public records:**

The Township shall provide reasonable facilities and opportunities for persons to examine and inspect public records during normal business hours. The FOIA Coordinator is authorized to promulgate rules regulating the manner in which records may be viewed so as to protect Township records from loss, alteration, mutilation or destruction and to prevent excessive interference with normal Township operations.

**Requests for certified copies:**

The FOIA Coordinator shall, upon written request, furnish a certified copy of a public record at no additional cost to the person requesting the public record.

**Section 4: Fee Deposits**

If the fee estimate is expected to exceed \$50.00 based on a good-faith calculation, the requestor will be asked to provide a deposit not exceeding one-half of the total estimated fee.

If a request for public records is from a person who has not paid the Township in full for copies of public records made in fulfillment of a previously granted written request, the FOIA Coordinator will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before beginning to search for a public record for any subsequent written request by that person when all of the following conditions exist:

- The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;
- The public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the Township's possession;
- The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the time frame estimated by the Township to provide the records;
- Ninety (90) days have passed since the FOIA Coordinator notified the individual in writing that the public The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;
- The public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the Township's possession;
- The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the time frame estimated by the Township to provide the records;
- Ninety (90) days have passed since the FOIA Coordinator notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing;

- The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the Township; and
- The FOIA Coordinator has calculated a detailed itemization that is the basis for the current written request's increased estimated fee deposit.

FOIA Coordinator will not require an increased estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:

- The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the Township;
- The Township is subsequently paid in full for the applicable prior written request; or
- Three hundred sixty five (365) days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to the Township.

## **Section 5: Calculation of Fees**

A fee may be charged for the labor cost of copying/duplication.

A fee will not be charged for the labor cost of search, examination, review and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the Township because of the nature of the request in the particular instance, and the Township specifically identifies the nature of the unreasonably high costs.

Costs for the search, examination review, and deletion and separation of exempt from non-exempt information are "unreasonably high" when they are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services (Attorney General Opinion 7083 of 2001) compared to the costs of the township's usual FOIA requests, not compared to the township's operating budget. (Bloch v. Davison Community Schools, Michigan Court of Appeals, Unpublished, April 26, 2011)

The following factors shall be used to determine an unreasonably high cost to the Township:

- Volume of the public record requested
- Amount of time spent to search for, examine, review and separate exempt from non-exempt information in the record requested.
- Whether the public records are from more than one Township department or whether various Township offices are necessary to respond to the request.
- The available staffing to respond to the request.
- Any other similar factors identified by the FOIA Coordinator in responding to the particular request.

The Michigan FOIA statute permits the Township to charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:

- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to non-paper physical media or through the Internet.
- Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Township.
- Labor costs associated with a review of a record to separate and delete information exempt from disclosure, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Township.
- The cost of copying or duplication, not including labor, of paper copies of public records. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the township's website if you ask for the township to make copies.
- The cost of computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media when the requester asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the township's website if you ask for the township to make copies.
- The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor.

Labor costs will be calculated based on the following requirements:

- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments, with all partial time increments rounded down. If the time involved is less than 15 minutes, there will be no charge.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid Township employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually performs work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits.
- The Township may add up to 50% to the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits, but in no case may it exceed the actual cost of fringe benefits.
- Overtime wages will not be included in labor costs unless agreed to by the requestor; overtime costs will not be used to calculate the fringe benefit cost.
- Contracted labor costs will be charged at the hourly rate of \$48.90 (6 times the state minimum hourly wage).

The cost to provide records on non-paper physical media when so requested will be based on the following requirements:

- Computer disks, computer tapes or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media.
- This cost will only be assessed if the Township has the technological capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-paper physical media format.
- The Township will procure any non-paper media and will not accept media from the requestor in order to ensure integrity of the Township's technology infrastructure.

The cost to provide paper copies of records will be based on the following requirements:

- Paper copies of public records made on standard letter (8 1/2 x 11) or legal (8 1/2 x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$.10 per sheet of paper. Copies for non-standard sized sheets of paper will reflect the actual cost of reproduction.
- The Township will provide records using double-sided printing, if it is cost-saving and available.

The cost to mail records to a requestor will be based on the following requirements:

- The actual cost to mail public records using a reasonably economical and justified means.
- The Township may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- No cost will be made for expedited shipping or insurance unless specified by the requestor.

If the FOIA Coordinator does not respond to a written request in a timely manner, the Township must:

- Reduce the labor costs by 5% for each day the Township exceeds the time permitted under FOIA up to a 50% maximum reduction, if **any** of the following applies:
  - The Township's late response was willful and intentional,
  - The written request conveyed a request for information within the first 250 words of the body of a letter facsimile, email or email attachment, or
  - The written request included the words, characters, or abbreviations for "freedom of information," "information," "FOIA," "copy" or a recognizable misspelling of such, or legal code reference to MCL 15.231, et seq. or 1976 Public Act 442 on the front of an envelope or in the subject line of an email, letter or facsimile cover page.
- Fully note the charge reduction in the Detailed Itemization of Costs Form.

## **Section 6: Waiver of Fees**

The cost of the search for and copying of a public record may be waived or reduced if in the sole judgment of the FOIA Coordinator a waiver or reduced fee is in the public interest because it can be considered as primarily benefitting the general public. The township d may identify specific records or types of records it deems should be made available for no charge or at a reduced cost.

## **Section 7: discounted Fees**

### **Indigence**

The FOIA Coordinator will discount the first \$20.00 of the processing fee for a request if the person requesting a public record submits an affidavit stating that they are:

- Indigent and receiving specific public assistance, or
- If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence.

An individual is not eligible to receive the waiver if:

- The requestor has previously received discounted copies of public records from the Township twice during the calendar year; or
- The requestor requests information in connection with other persons who are offering or providing payment to make the request.

An affidavit is sworn statement. The FOIA Coordinator may make a Fee Waiver Affidavit Form available for use by the public.

### **Nonprofit organization advocating for developmentally disabled or mentally ill individuals**

The FOIA Coordinator will discount the first \$20.00 of the processing fee for a request from:

- A nonprofit organization formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the federal developmental disabilities assistance and bill of rights act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, or their successors, if the request meets all of the following requirements:
  - Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
  - Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
  - Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

## **Section 8: Appeals of a Denial of a Public Record**

When a requestor believes that all or a portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, he or she may appeal to the Township Board by filing an appeal of the denial with the office of the Township Supervisor.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal" and identify the reason or reasons the requestor is seeking a reversal of the denial. The Township FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal a Denial of Records), may be used.

The Township Board is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Township Board meeting following submission of the written appeal.

Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the Township Board will respond in writing by:

- Reversing the disclosure denial;
- Upholding the disclosure denial; or
- Reverse the disclosure denial in part and uphold the disclosure denial in part; or
- Under unusual circumstances, issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Township Board shall respond to the written appeal. The Township Board shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

If the Township Board fails to respond to a written appeal, or if the Township Board upholds all or a portion of the disclosure denial that is the subject of the written appeal, the requesting person may seek judicial review of the nondisclosure by commencing a civil action in Circuit Court.

Whether or not a requestor submitted an appeal of a denial to the Township Board, he or she may file a civil action in Crawford County Circuit Court within 180 days after the Township's final determination to deny the request.

If a court that determines a public record is not exempt from disclosure, it shall order the Township to cease withholding or to produce all or a portion of a public record wrongfully withheld, regardless of the location of the public record. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

If a person asserting the right to inspect, copy, or receive a copy of all or a portion of a public record prevails in such an action, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the person or Township prevails in part, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements.

If the court determines that the Township has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by refusal or delay in disclosing or withholding copies of a public record, the court shall order the Township to pay a civil fine of \$1,000.00, which shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury. The court shall award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$1,000.00 to the person seeking the right to inspect or receive a copy of a public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

#### **Section 9: Appeal of an Excessive FOIA Processing Fee**

"Fee" means the total fee or any component of the total fee calculated under section 4 of the FOIA, including any deposit.

If a requestor believes that the fee charged by the Township to process a FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law or under this policy, he or she must first appeal to the Township Board by submitting a written appeal for a fee reduction to the office of the Township Supervisor.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal" and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted. The Township FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal an Excess Fee) may be used.

The Township Board is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Township Board meeting following submission of the written appeal.

Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the Township Board will respond in writing by:

- Waiving the fee;
- Reducing the fee and issuing a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee;
- Upholding the fee and issuing a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or
- Issuing a notice detailing the reason or reasons for extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Township Board will respond to the written appeal. The Township Board shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

Where the Township Board reduces or upholds the fee, the determination must include a certification from the Township Board that the statements in the determination are accurate and that the reduced fee amount complies with its publicly available procedures and guidelines and Section 4 of the FOIA.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Township Board's determination of an appeal, the requesting person may commence a civil action in Crawford County Circuit Court for a fee reduction.

If a civil action is commenced against the Township for an excess fee, the Township is not obligated to complete the processing of the written request for the public record at issue until the court resolves the fee dispute.

An action shall not be filed in circuit court unless one of the following applies:

- The Township does not provide for appeals of fees,
- The Township Board failed to respond to a written appeal as required, or
- The Township Board issued a determination to a written appeal.

If the court determines that the Township required a fee that exceeds the amount permitted under its publicly available procedures and guidelines or Section 4 of the FOIA, the court shall reduce the fee to a permissible amount. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

If the requesting person prevails in court by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages.

If the court determines that the Township has arbitrarily and capriciously violated the FOIA by charging an excessive fee, the court shall order the Township to pay a civil fine of \$500.00, which shall be deposited in the general fund of the state treasury. The court may also award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$500.00 to the person seeking the fee reduction. The fine and any damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

#### **Section 10: Conflict with Prior FOIA Policies and Procedures; Effective Date**

To the extent that these Procedures and Guidelines conflict with previous FOIA policies promulgated by Township Board or the Township Administration these Procedures and Guidelines are controlling. To the extent that any administrative rule promulgated by the FOIA Coordinator subsequent to the adoption of this resolution is found to be in conflict with any previous policy promulgated by the Township Board or the Township Administration, the administrative rule promulgated by the FOIA Coordinator is controlling.

To the extent that any provision of these Procedures and Guidelines or any administrative rule promulgated by the FOIA Coordinator pertaining to the release of public records is found to be in conflict with any State statute, the applicable statute shall control. The FOIA Coordinator is authorized to modify this policy and all previous policies adopted by the Township Board or the Township Administration, and to adopt such administrative rules as he or she may deem necessary, to facilitate the legal review and processing of requests for public records made pursuant to Michigan's FOIA statute, provided that such modifications and rules are consistent with State law. The FOIA Coordinator shall inform the Township Board of any change these Policies and Guidelines.

These FOIA Policies and Guidelines become effective July 1, 2015.

#### **Section 11: Appendix of Beaver Creek Township FOIA Forms**

- Request for Public Records Form
- Notice to Extend Response Time Form
- Notice of Denial Form
- Detailed Cost Itemization Form
- Appeal of Denial of Records Form
- Appeal of Excess Fee Form

**Township:** Keep original and provide copy, along with Public Summary, to requestor at no charge.

Beaver Creek Township, Crawford County  
8888 S. Grayling Road  
Grayling, MI 49738  
Phone: 989-275-8878

Extension Form

**Notice to Extend Response Time for FOIA Request**  
Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, et seq.

**Request No.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check if received via:** ☐ Email ☐ Fax ☐ Other Electronic Method  
**Date of This Notice:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date delivered to junk/spam folder:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print or Type) **Date discovered in junk/spam folder:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Phone
Firm/Organization	Fax
Street	Email
City	State Zip

**Request for:** ☐ Copy ☐ Certified copy ☐ Record inspection ☐ Subscription to record issued on regular basis  
**Delivery Method:** ☐ Will pick up ☐ Will make own copies onsite ☐ Mail to address above ☐ Email to address above  
☐ Deliver on digital media provided by the township: \_\_\_\_\_

**Record(s) You Requested:** (Listed here or see attached copy of original request) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We are extending the date to respond to your FOIA request for no more than 10 business days, until \_\_\_\_\_ (month, day, year).  
Only one extension may be taken per FOIA request. If you have any questions regarding this extension, contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

**Estimated Time Frame to Provide Records:** \_\_\_\_\_ (days or date)  
The time frame estimate is nonbinding upon the township, but the township is providing the estimate in good faith. Providing an estimated time frame does not relieve a public body from any of the other requirements of this act.

**Reason for Extension:**

☐ 1. The township needs to search for, collect, or appropriately examine or review a voluminous amount of separate and distinct public records pursuant to your request. Specifically, the township must:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ 2. The township needs to collect the requested public records from numerous field offices, facilities, or other establishments that are located apart from the township office. Specifically, the township must coordinate documents from the following locations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ 3. Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of FOIA Coordinator:**

**Date:**



**Township:** Keep original and provide copy of both sides, along with Public Summary, to requestor at no charge.

Beaver Creek Township, Crawford County  
8888 S. Grayling Road  
Grayling, MI 49738  
Phone: 989-275-8878

Denial Form

## Notice of Denial of FOIA Request

Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, et seq.

Request No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Check if received via: ☐ Email ☐ Fax ☐ Other Electronic Method  
Date of This Notice: \_\_\_\_\_ Date delivered to junk/spam folder: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print or Type) Date discovered in junk/spam folder: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Phone
Firm/Organization	Fax
Street	Email
City	State Zip

Request for: ☐ Copy ☐ Certified copy ☐ Record inspection ☐ Subscription to record issued on regular basis

Delivery Method: ☐ Will pick up ☐ Will make own copies onsite ☐ Mail to address above ☐ Email to address above  
☐ Deliver on digital media provided by the township: \_\_\_\_\_

Record(s) You Requested: (Listed here or see attached copy of original request) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**II** OR ☐ Part of your request for records has been denied. Please refer to this form for an explanation. If you have any questions regarding this denial, contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

### Reason for Denial:

☐ **1. Exempt from Disclosure:** This item is exempt from disclosure under FOIA Section 13, Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ (insert number), because: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ **2. Record Does Not Exist:** This item does not exist under the name provided in your request or by another name reasonably known to the township. A certificate that the public record does not exist under the name given is attached. If you believe this record does exist, provide a description that will enable us to locate the record: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ **3. Redaction:** A portion of the requested record had to be separated or deleted (redacted) as it is exempt under FOIA Section 13, Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ (insert number), because: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

A brief description of the information that had to be separated or deleted: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Notice of Requestor's Right to Seek Judicial Review

You are entitled under Section 10 of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.240, to appeal this denial to the township board or to commence an action in the Circuit Court to compel disclosure of the requested records if you believe they were wrongfully withheld from disclosure. If, after judicial review, the court determines that the township has not complied with MCL 15.235 in making this denial and orders disclosure of all or a portion of a public record, you have the right to receive attorneys' fees and damages as provided in MCL 15.240. (See back of this form for additional information on your rights.)

Signature of FOIA Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Created by Michigan Townships Association, April 2015)

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (EXCERPT)

Act 442 of 1976

**15.240.amended Options by requesting person; appeal; actions by public body; receipt of written appeal; judicial review; civil action; venue; de novo proceeding; burden of proof; private view of public record; contempt; assignment of action or appeal for hearing, trial, or argument; attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements; assessment of award; damages.**

10.

(1) If a public body makes a final determination to deny all or a portion of a request, the requesting person may do 1 of the following at his or her option:

(a) Submit to the head of the public body a written appeal that specifically states the word "appeal" and identifies the reason or reasons for reversal of the denial.

(b) Commence a civil action in the circuit court, or if the decision of a state public body is at issue, the court of claims, to compel the public body's disclosure of the public records within 180 days after a public body's final determination to deny a request.

(2) Within 10 business days after receiving a written appeal pursuant to subsection (1)(a), the head of a public body shall do 1 of the following:

(a) Reverse the disclosure denial.

(b) Issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial.

(c) Reverse the disclosure denial in part and issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial in part.

(d) Under unusual circumstances, issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the head of the public body shall respond to the written appeal. The head of a public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.

(3) A board or commission that is the head of a public body is not considered to have received a written appeal under subsection (2) until the first regularly scheduled meeting of that board or commission following submission of the written appeal under subsection (1)(a). If the head of the public body fails to respond to a written appeal pursuant to subsection (2), or if the head of the public body upholds all or a portion of the disclosure denial that is the subject of the written appeal, the requesting person may seek judicial review of the nondisclosure by commencing a civil action under subsection (1)(b).

(4) In an action commenced under subsection (1)(b), a court that determines a public record is not exempt from disclosure shall order the public body to cease withholding or to produce all or a portion of a public record wrongfully withheld, regardless of the location of the public record. Venue for an action against a local public body is proper in the circuit court for the county in which the public record or an office of the public body is located has venue over the action. The court shall determine the matter de novo and the burden is on the public body to sustain its denial. The court, on its own motion, may view the public record in controversy in private before reaching a decision. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.

(5) An action commenced under this section and an appeal from an action commenced under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.

(6) If a person asserting the right to inspect, copy, or receive a copy of all or a portion of a public record prevails in an action commenced under this section, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the person or public body prevails in part, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages under subsection (7).

(7) If the court determines in an action commenced under this section that the public body has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by refusal or delay in disclosing or providing copies of a public record, the court shall order the public body to pay a civil fine of \$1,000.00, which shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury. The court shall award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$1,000.00 to the person seeking the right to inspect or receive a copy of a public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

**History:** 1976, Act 442, Eff. Apr. 13, 1977 ;-- Am. 1978, Act 329, Imd. Eff. July 11, 1978 ;-- Am. 1996, Act 553, Eff. Mar. 31, 1997 ;-- Am. 2014, Act 563, Eff. July 1, 2015



### Records Located on Website

If the township directly or indirectly administers or maintains an official internet presence, any public records available to the general public on that internet site at the time the request is made are exempt from any labor charges to redact (*separate exempt information from non-exempt information*).

If the FOIA coordinator knows or has reason to know that all or a portion of the requested information is available on its website, the township must inform the requestor in its written response that all or a portion of the requested information is available on its website. The written response, to the degree practicable in the specific instance, must include a specific webpage address where the requested information is available. On the detailed cost itemization form, the township must separate the requested public records that are available on its website from those that are not available on the website and must inform the requestor of the additional charge to receive copies of the public records that are available on its website.

If the township has included the website address for a record in its written response to the requestor and the requestor thereafter stipulates that the public record be provided to him or her in a paper format or other form, including digital media, the township must provide the public records in the specified format (if the township has the technological capability) but may use a fringe benefit multiplier greater than the 50%, not to exceed the actual costs of providing the information in the specified format.

### Request for Copies/Duplication of Records on Township Website

I hereby stipulate that, even if some or all of the records are located on a township website, I am requesting that the township make copies of those records on the website and deliver them to me in the format I have requested above. I understand that some FOIA fees may apply.

Requestor's Signature

Date

### Overtime Labor Costs

Overtime wages shall not be included in the calculation of labor costs unless overtime is specifically stipulated by the requestor and clearly noted on the detailed cost itemization form.

### Consent to Overtime Labor Costs

I hereby agree and stipulate to the township using overtime wages in calculating the following labor costs as itemized in the following categories:

1. ☐ Labor to copy/duplicate

2. ☐ Labor to locate

3a. ☐ Labor to redact

3b. ☐ Contract labor to redact

6b. ☐ Labor to copy/duplicate records already on township's website

Requestor's Signature

Date

### Request for Discount: Indigence

A public record search **must** be made and a copy of a public record **must** be furnished **without charge for the first \$20.00 of the fee** for each request by an individual who is entitled to information under this act and who:

1) Submits an affidavit stating that the individual is indigent and receiving specific public assistance, **OR**

2) If not receiving public assistance, stating facts showing inability to pay the cost because of indigence.

If a requestor is ineligible for the discount, the public body shall inform the requestor specifically of the reason for ineligibility in the public body's written response. An individual is ineligible for this fee reduction if **ANY** of the following apply:

- (i) The individual has previously received discounted copies of public records from the same public body twice during that calendar year,
- (ii) The individual requests the information in conjunction with outside parties who are offering or providing payment or other remuneration to the individual to make the request. A public body may require a statement by the requestor in the affidavit that the request is not being made in conjunction with outside parties in exchange for payment or other remuneration.

**Office Use:** ☐ Affidavit Received ☐ Eligible for Discount ☐ Ineligible for Discount

I am submitting an affidavit and requesting that I receive the discount for indigence for this FOIA request:

Date:

Requestor's Signature:

### Request for Discount: Nonprofit Organization

A public record search **must** be made and a copy of a public record **must** be furnished **without charge for the first \$20.00 of the fee** for each request by a nonprofit organization formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act, if the request meets **ALL** of the following requirements:

- (i) Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
- (ii) Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the Mental Health Code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
- (iii) Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the township.

**Office Use:** ☐ Documentation of State Designation Received ☐ Eligible for Discount ☐ Ineligible for Discount

I stipulate that I am a designated agent for the nonprofit organization making this FOIA request and that this request is made on behalf of the organization or its clients and is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the Mental Health Code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931:

Date:

Requestor's Signature:

## Beaver Creek Township

### Public Summary of FOIA Procedures and Guidelines

**It is the public policy of this state that all persons  
(except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities)  
are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and  
the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees.**

**The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process.**

Consistent with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Public Act 442 of 1976, the following is the Written Public Summary of the Township's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines relevant to the general public.

This is only a summary of the Township's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines. For more details and information, copies of the Township's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines are available at no charge at any Township office and on the Township's website: [www.beavercreektownship.com](http://www.beavercreektownship.com).

#### **1. How do I submit a FOIA request to the Township?**

- A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable the Township to find it.
- Please include the words "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the request to assist the Township in providing a prompt response.
- Requests to inspect or obtain copies of public records prepared, owned, used, possessed or retained by the Township may be submitted on the Township's FOIA Request Form, in any other form of writing (letter, fax, email, etc.), or by verbal request.
  - o Any verbal request will be documented by the Township on the Township's FOIA Request Form.
  - o No specific form to submit a written request is required. However a FOIA Request Form and other FOIA-related forms are available for your use and convenience on the Township's website at [www.beavercreektownship.com](http://www.beavercreektownship.com), or at Beaver Creek Township (*Provide one or more locations: "the Township Hall" or "any township facility" or another location*).
- Written requests may be delivered to the Township Hall in person or by mail: 8888 S. Grayling Road, Grayling, MI 49738
- Requests may be faxed to: (989) 275-9965. To ensure a prompt response, faxed requests should contain the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" on the first/cover page.
- Requests may be emailed to: [DBonamic@beavercreektownship.com](mailto:DBonamic@beavercreektownship.com). To ensure a prompt response, email requests should contain the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the subject line.

## 2. What kind of response can I expect to my request?

- Within 5 business days after receiving a FOIA request the Township will issue a response. If a request is received by fax or email, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day. The Township will respond to your request in one of the following ways:
  - 
  - Grant the request,
  - Issue a written notice denying the request,
  - Grant the request in part and issue a written notice denying in part the request,
  - Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the Township needs an additional 10 business days to respond, or
  - Issue a written notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on the Township's website
- If the request is granted, or granted in part, the Township will ask that payment be made for the allowable fees associated with responding to the request before the public record is made available.
- If the cost of processing the request is expected to exceed \$50, or if you have not paid for a previously granted request, the Township will require a deposit before processing the request.

## 3. What are the Township's deposit requirements?

- If the Township has made a good faith calculation that the total fee for processing the request will exceed \$50.00, the Township will require that you provide a deposit in the amount of 50% of the total estimated fee. When the Township requests the deposit, it will provide you a non-binding best efforts estimate of how long it will take to process the request after you have paid your deposit.
- If the Township receives a request from a person who has not paid the Township for copies of public records made in fulfillment of a previously granted written request, the Township will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before it begins to search for the public record for any subsequent written request when all of the following conditions exist:
  - The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;
  - The public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the Township's possession;
  - The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the best effort time frame estimated by the Township to provide the records;
  - Ninety (90) days have passed since the Township notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing;
  - The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the Township; and
  - The Township has calculated an estimated detailed itemization that is the basis for the current written request's increased fee deposit.

- The Township will not require the 100% estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:
  - The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the Township;
  - The Township is subsequently paid in full for all applicable prior written requests; or
  - Three hundred sixty five (365) days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to the Township.

#### **4. How does the Township calculate FOIA processing fees?**

The Michigan FOIA statute permits the Township to charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:

- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to non-paper physical media or through the Internet.
- Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Township.
- Labor costs associated with a review of a record to separate and delete information exempt from disclosure, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Township.
- The cost of copying or duplication, not including labor, of paper copies of public records. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the township's website if you ask for the township to make copies.
- The cost of computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media when the requester asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the township's website if you ask for the township to make copies.
- The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor.

#### **Labor Costs**

- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments, with all partial time increments rounded down. If the time involved is less than 15 minutes, there will be no charge.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid Township employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually performs work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits. Township may add up to 50% to the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits, but in no case may it exceed the actual cost of fringe benefits.

- Overtime wages will not be included in labor costs unless agreed to by the requestor; overtime costs will not be used to calculate the fringe benefit cost.
- Contracted labor costs will be charged at the hourly rate of \$48.90 (6 times the state minimum hourly wage)

A labor cost will not be charged for the search, examination, review and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the Township. Costs are unreasonably high when they are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the Township's usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in the particular instance. The Township must specifically identify the nature of the unreasonably high costs in writing.

### **Copying and Duplication**

The Township must use the most economical method for making copies of public records, including using double-sided printing, if cost-saving and available.

#### ***Non-paper Copies on Physical Media***

- The cost for records provided on non-paper physical media, such as computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media.
- This cost will be charged only if the Township has the technological capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-paper physical media format.

#### ***Paper Copies***

- Paper copies of public records made on standard letter (8 ½ x 11) or legal (8 ½ x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$.10 per sheet of paper.
- Copies for non-standard sized sheets will paper will reflect the actual cost of reproduction.

### **Mailing Costs**

- The cost to mail public records will use a reasonably economical and justified means.
- The Township may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- No cost will be made for expedited shipping or insurance unless you request it.



## Waiver of Fees

The cost of the search for and copying of a public record may be waived or reduced if in the sole judgment of the FOIA Coordinator a waiver or reduced fee is in the public interest because it can be considered as primarily benefitting the general public. The township board may identify specific records or types of records it deems should be made available for no charge or at a reduced cost.

### 5. How do I qualify for an indigence discount on the fee?

The Township will discount the first \$20.00 of fees for a request if you submit an affidavit stating that you are:

- Indigent and receiving specific public assistance; or
- If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence.

You are **not** eligible to receive the \$20.00 discount if you:

- Have previously received discounted copies of public records from the Township twice during the calendar year; or
- Are requesting information on behalf of other persons who are offering or providing payment to you to make the request.

An affidavit is sworn statement. For your convenience, the Township has provided an Affidavit of Indigence for the waiver of FOIA fees on the back of the Township FOIA Request Form, which is available on the Township's website: [www.beavercreektownship.com](http://www.beavercreektownship.com).

### 6. May a nonprofit organization receive a discount on the fee?

A nonprofit organization advocating for developmentally disabled or mentally ill individuals that is formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the federal developmental disabilities assistance and bill of rights act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, may receive a \$20.00 discount if the request meets all of the following requirements in the Act:

- Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
- Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
- Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

## **6. How may I challenge the denial of a public record or an excessive fee?**

### **Appeal of a Denial of a Public Record**

If you believe that all or a portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, you may appeal to the Township Board by filing a written appeal of the denial with the office of the Township Supervisor (or “clerk” or “FOIA Coordinator,” etc.).

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word “appeal,” and identify the reason or reasons you are seeking a reversal of the denial. You may use the Township FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal a Denial of Records), which is available on the Township’s website: [www.beavercreektownship.com](http://www.beavercreektownship.com).

The Township Board is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Township Board meeting following submission of the written appeal. Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the Township Board will respond in writing by:

- Reversing the disclosure denial;
- Upholding the disclosure denial; or
- Reverse the disclosure denial in part and uphold the disclosure denial in part.

Whether or not you submitted an appeal of a denial to the Township Board, you may file a civil action in Crawford County Circuit Court within 180 days after the Township’s final determination to deny your request. If you prevail in the civil action the court will award you reasonable attorneys’ fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the Township acted arbitrarily and capriciously in refusing to disclose or provide a public record, the court shall award you damages in the amount of \$1,000.

### **Appeal of an Excess FOIA Processing Fee**

If you believe that the fee charged by the Township to process your FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law, you must first appeal to the Township Board by filing a written appeal for a fee reduction to the office of the Township Supervisor (or “clerk” or “FOIA Coordinator,” etc.).

The appeal must specifically state the word “appeal” and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted. You may use the Township FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal an Excess Fee), which is available at the Township Hall and on the Township’s website: [www.beavercreektownship.com](http://www.beavercreektownship.com).

The Township Board is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Township Board meeting following submission of the written appeal. Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the Township Board will respond in writing by:

- Waiving the fee;
- Reducing the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee;
- Upholding the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or
- Issuing a notice detailing the reason or reasons for extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Township Board will respond to the written appeal.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Township Board’s determination of the processing fee appeal, you may commence a civil action in Crawford County Circuit Court for a fee reduction. If you prevail in the civil action by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may award all or appropriate amount of reasonable attorneys’ fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the Township acted arbitrarily and capriciously by charging an excessive fee, court may also award you punitive damages in the amount of \$500.

Township: Keep original and provide copies of both sides of each sheet, along with Public Summary, to requestor at no charge.

Beaver Creek Township, Crawford County  
8888 S. Grayling Road  
Grayling, MI 49738  
Phone: 989-275-8878

Detailed Cost Itemization

## Freedom of Information Act Request Detailed Cost Itemization

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Prepared for Request No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Request Received: \_\_\_\_\_

The following costs are being charged in compliance with Section 4 of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.234, according to the township's FOIA Policies and Guidelines.

### 1. Labor Cost for Copying / Duplication

This is the cost of labor directly associated with duplication of publication, including making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to be given to the requestor on non-paper physical media or through the Internet or other electronic means as stipulated by the requestor.

This shall not be more than the hourly wage of the township's lowest-paid employee capable of necessary duplication or publication in this particular instance, regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor.

These costs will be estimated and charged in \_\_\_\_\_-minute time increments as set by the township board (for example: 15-minutes or more); all partial time increments must be rounded down. If the number of minutes is less than one increment, there is no charge.

Hourly Wage Charged: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
OR

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly Wage with Fringe Benefit Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
OR  
Multiply the hourly wage by the percentage multiplier: \_\_\_\_\_%  
(up to 50% of the hourly wage) and add to the hourly wage for a total per hour rate.

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Overtime rate charged as stipulated by Requestor (overtime is not used to calculate the fringe benefit cost)

To figure the number of increments, take the number of minutes: \_\_\_\_\_, divide by \_\_\_\_\_-minute increments, and round down.  
Enter below:

Number of increments

1. Labor Cost

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Labor Cost to Locate:

This is the cost of labor directly associated with the necessary searching for, locating, and examining public records in conjunction with receiving and fulfilling a granted written request. This fee is being charged because failure to do so will result in unreasonably high costs to the township that are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the township's usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in this particular instance, specifically: \_\_\_\_\_

The township will not charge more than the hourly wage of its lowest-paid employee capable of searching for, locating, and examining the public records in this particular instance, regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor.

These costs will be estimated and charged in \_\_\_\_\_-minute time increments (must be 15-minutes or more); all partial time increments must be rounded down. If the number of minutes is less than 15, there is no charge.

Hourly Wage Charged: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
OR

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly Wage with Fringe Benefit Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
OR  
Multiply the hourly wage by the percentage multiplier: \_\_\_\_\_%  
(up to 50% of the hourly wage) and add to the hourly wage for a total per hour rate.

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Overtime rate charged as stipulated by Requestor (overtime is not used to calculate the fringe benefit cost)

To figure the number of increments, take the number of minutes: \_\_\_\_\_, divide by \_\_\_\_\_-minute increments, and round down.  
Enter below:

Number of increments

2. Labor Cost

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**3a. Employee Labor Cost for Separating Exempt from Non-Exempt (Redacting):**

(Fill this out if using a township employee. If contracted, use No. 3b instead).

The township will not charge for labor directly associated with redaction if it knows or has reason to know that it previously redacted the record in question and still has the redacted version in its possession.

This fee is being charged because failure to do so will result in unreasonably high costs to the township that are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the township's usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in this particular instance, specifically: \_\_\_\_\_

This is the cost of labor of a **township employee**, including necessary review, directly associated with separating and deleting exempt from nonexempt information. This shall not be more than the hourly wage of the **township's lowest-paid employee** capable of separating and deleting exempt from nonexempt information in this particular instance, regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor.

These costs will be estimated and charged in \_\_\_\_\_-minute time increments (*must be 15-minutes or more*); all partial time increments must be rounded down. *If the number of minutes is less than 15, there is no charge.*

Hourly Wage Charged: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly Wage with Fringe Benefit Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply the hourly wage by the percentage multiplier: \_\_\_\_\_%  
(*up to 50% of the hourly wage*) and add to the hourly wage for a total per hour rate.

☐ Overtime rate charged as stipulated by Requestor (*overtime is not used to calculate the fringe benefit cost*)

To figure the number of increments, take the *number of minutes*:  
\_\_\_\_\_, divide by \_\_\_\_\_-minute increments, and round down.  
Enter below:

Number of increments

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

3a.  
Labor Cost

**3b. Contracted Labor Cost for Separating Exempt from Non-Exempt (Redacting):**

(Fill this out if using a contractor, such as the attorney. If using in-house employee, use No. 3a instead.)

The township will not charge for labor directly associated with redaction if it knows or has reason to know that it previously redacted the record in question and still has the redacted version in its possession.

This fee is being charged because failure to do so will result in unreasonably high costs to the township that are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the township's usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in this particular instance, specifically: \_\_\_\_\_

As this township does not employ a person capable of separating exempt from non-exempt information in this particular instance, as determined by the FOIA Coordinator, this is the cost of labor of a **contractor** (i.e.: outside attorney), including necessary review, directly associated with separating and deleting exempt information from nonexempt information. This shall not exceed an amount equal to 6 times the state minimum hourly wage rate of \_\_\_\_\_ (*currently \$8.15*).

Name of contracted person or firm: \_\_\_\_\_

These costs will be estimated and charged in \_\_\_\_\_-minute time increments (*must be 15-minutes or more*); all partial time increments must be rounded down. *If the number of minutes is less than 15, there is no charge.*

Hourly Cost Charged: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To figure the number of increments, take the *number of minutes*:  
\_\_\_\_\_, divide by \_\_\_\_\_-minute increments, and round down to: \_\_\_\_\_ increments.  
Enter below:

Number of increments

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

3b.  
Labor Cost

#### 4. Copying / Duplication Cost:

Copying costs may be charged if a copy of a public record is requested, or for the necessary copying of a record for inspection (for example, to allow for blacking out exempt information, to protect old or delicate original records, or because the original record is a digital file or database not available for public inspection).

No more than the actual cost of a sheet of paper, up to maximum 10 cents per sheet for:

- Letter (8 1/2 x 11-inch, single and double-sided): \_\_\_\_\_ cents per sheet
- Legal (8 1/2 x 14-inch, single and double-sided): \_\_\_\_\_ cents per sheet

No more than the actual cost of a sheet of paper for other paper sizes:

- Other paper sizes (single and double-sided): \_\_\_\_\_ cents / dollars per sheet

Actual and most reasonably economical cost of non-paper physical digital media:

- **Circle applicable:** Disc / Tape / Drive / Other Digital Medium Cost per Item: \_\_\_\_\_

The cost of paper copies **must** be calculated as a total cost per sheet of paper. The fee **cannot exceed** 10 cents per sheet of paper for copies of public records made on 8-1/2- by 11-inch paper or 8-1/2- by 14-inch paper. A township must utilize the most economical means available for making copies of public records, including using double-sided printing, if cost saving and available.

Number of  
Sheets:

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Items:

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Costs:

4. Total  
Copy Cost

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Mailing Cost:

The township will charge the actual cost of mailing, if any, for sending records in a reasonably economical and justifiable manner. Delivery confirmation is not required.

- The township **may** charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- The township **cannot** charge more for expedited shipping or insurance unless specifically requested by the requestor.\*

Actual Cost of Envelope or Packaging: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Actual Cost of Postage: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per stamp  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per pound  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per package

Actual Cost (least expensive) Postal Delivery Confirmation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Expedited Shipping or Insurance as Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \* Requestor has requested expedited shipping or insurance

Number of  
Envelopes or  
Packages:

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Costs:

5. Total  
Mailing Cost

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**6a. Copying/Duplicating Cost for Records Already on Township's Website:**

If the public body has included the website address for a record in its written response to the requestor, and the requestor thereafter stipulates that the public record be provided to him or her in a paper format or non-paper physical digital media, the township will provide the public records in the specified format and may charge copying costs to provide those copies.

No more than the actual cost of a sheet of paper, up to maximum 10 cents per sheet for:

- Letter (8 1/2 x 11-inch, single and double-sided): \_\_\_\_\_ cents per sheet
- Legal (8 1/2 x 14-inch, single and double-sided): \_\_\_\_\_ cents per sheet

No more than the actual cost of a sheet of paper for other paper sizes:

- Other paper sizes (single and double-sided): \_\_\_\_\_ cents / dollars per sheet

Actual and most reasonably economical cost of non-paper physical digital media:

- Circle applicable: Disc / Tape / Drive / Other Digital Medium Cost per Item: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Requestor has stipulated that some / all of the requested records that are already available on the township's website be provided in a paper or non-paper physical digital medium.

Number of  
Sheets:

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Items:

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Costs:

6a. Web  
Copy Cost

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**6b. Labor Cost for Copying/Duplicating Records Already on Township's Website:**

This shall not be more than the hourly wage of the township's lowest-paid employee capable of necessary duplication or publication in this particular instance, regardless of whether that person is available or who actually performs the labor. These costs will be estimated and charged in \_\_\_\_\_-minute time increments (i.e.: \_\_\_\_\_-minutes or more); all partial time increments must be rounded down. If the number of minutes is less than 15, there is no charge.

Hourly Wage Charged: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Hourly Wage with Fringe Benefit Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Charge per increment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply the hourly wage by the percentage multiplier: \_\_\_\_\_ %  
and add to the hourly wage for a total per hour rate.

The township may use a fringe benefit multiplier greater than the 50% limitation, not to exceed the actual costs of providing the information in the specified format.

☐ Overtime rate charged as stipulated by Requestor

To figure the number of increments, take the number of minutes: \_\_\_\_\_, divide by \_\_\_\_\_-minute increments, and round down. Enter below:

Number of  
increments

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6b. Web  
Labor Cost

**6c. Mailing Cost for Records Already on Township's Website:**

Actual Cost of Envelope or Packaging: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Actual Cost of Postage: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per stamp / per pound / per package

Actual Cost (least expensive) Postal Delivery Confirmation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Expedited Shipping or Insurance as Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \* Requestor has requested expedited shipping or insurance

Number:

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Costs:

6c. Web  
Mailing Cost

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Subtotal Fees Before Waivers, Discounts or Deposits:****Estimated Time Frame to Provide Records:**

\_\_\_\_ (days or date)

The time frame estimate is nonbinding upon the township, but the township is providing the estimate in good faith. Providing an estimated time frame does not relieve the township from any of the other requirements of this act.

- ☐ Cost estimate  
☐ Bill

1. Labor Cost for Copying: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Labor Cost to Locate: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
3a. Labor Cost to Redact: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
3b. Contract Labor Cost to Redact: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
4. Copying/Duplication Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
5. Mailing Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
6a. Copying/Duplication of Records on Website: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
6b. Labor Cost for Copying Records on Website: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
6c. Mailing Costs for Records on Website: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Subtotal Fees: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Waiver: Public Interest**

A search for a public record may be conducted or copies of public records may be furnished without charge or at a reduced charge if the township determines that a waiver or reduction of the fee is in the public interest because searching for or furnishing copies of the public record can be considered as primarily benefiting the general public.

☐ All fees are waived OR ☐ All fees are reduced by: \_\_\_\_\_ %

Subtotal Fees After Waiver: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Discount: Indigence**

A public record search **must** be made and a copy of a public record **must** be furnished **without charge for the first \$20.00 of the fee** for each request by an individual who is entitled to information under this act and who:

- 1) Submits an affidavit stating that the individual is indigent and receiving specific public assistance, **OR**
- 2) If not receiving public assistance, stating facts showing inability to pay the cost because of indigence.

If a requestor is ineligible for the discount, the public body shall inform the requestor specifically of the reason for ineligibility in the public body's written response. An individual is ineligible for this fee reduction if **ANY** of the following apply:

(i) The individual has previously received discounted copies of public records from the same public body twice during that calendar year, **OR**

(ii) The individual requests the information in conjunction with outside parties who are offering or providing payment or other remuneration to the individual to make the request. A public body may require a statement by the requestor in the affidavit that the request is not being made in conjunction with outside parties in exchange for payment or other remuneration.

☐ Eligible for Indigence Discount

Subtotal Fees After Discount (subtract \$20): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Discount: Nonprofit Organization**

A public record search **must** be made and a copy of a public record **must** be furnished **without charge for the first \$20.00 of the fee** for each request by a nonprofit organization formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 and the federal Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act, if the request meets **ALL** of the following requirements:

(i) Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.

(ii) Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the Michigan Mental Health Code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.

(iii) Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the township.

☐ Eligible for Nonprofit Discount

Subtotal Fees After Discount (subtract \$20): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Deposit: Good Faith**

The township may require a good-faith deposit in either its initial response or a subsequent response before providing the public records to the requestor if the entire fee estimate or charge authorized under this section exceeds \$50.00, based on a good-faith calculation of the total fee. The deposit cannot exceed 1/2 of the total estimated fee.

Percent of Deposit: \_\_\_\_\_%

Date Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit Amount Required: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Deposit: Increased Deposit Due to Previous FOIA Fees Not Paid In Full**

After a township has granted and fulfilled a written request from an individual under this act, if the township has not been paid in full the total amount of fees for the copies of public records that the township made available to the individual as a result of that written request, the township may require an increased estimated fee deposit of up to 100% of the estimated fee before it begins a full public record search for any subsequent written request from that individual if ALL of the following apply:

- (a) The final fee for the prior written request was not more than 105% of the estimated fee.
- (b) The public records made available contained the information being sought in the prior written request and are still in the township's possession.
- (c) The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the best effort estimated time frame given for the previous request.
- (d) Ninety (90) days have passed since the township notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing.
- (e) The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the township.
- (f) The township calculates a detailed itemization, as required under MCL 15.234, that is the basis for the current written request's increased estimated fee deposit.

A township can no longer require an increased estimated fee deposit from an individual if ANY of the following apply:

- (a) The individual is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the township, OR
- (b) The township is subsequently paid in full for the applicable prior written request, OR
- (c) Three hundred sixty-five (365) days have passed since the individual made the written request for which full payment was not remitted to the township.

Percent Deposit Required: \_\_\_\_\_%

Date Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit Required: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Late Response Labor Costs Reduction**

If the township does not respond to a written request in a timely manner as required under MCL 15.235(2), the township must do the following:

- (a) Reduce the charges for labor costs otherwise permitted by 5% for each day the township exceeds the time permitted for a response to the request, with a maximum 50% reduction, if EITHER of the following applies:

(i) The late response was willful and intentional, OR

(ii) The written request included language that conveyed a request for information within the first 250 words of the body of a letter, facsimile, electronic mail, or electronic mail attachment, or specifically included the words, characters, or abbreviations for "freedom of information," "information," "FOIA," "copy", or a recognizable misspelling of such, or appropriate legal code reference for this act, on the front of an envelope, or in the subject line of an electronic mail, letter, or facsimile cover page.

Number of Days Over Required Response Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply by 5%

= Total Percent Reduction: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Labor Costs

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Minus Reduction

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

= Reduced Total Labor Costs

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

The Public Summary of the township's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines is available free of charge from:  
Website: beavercreektownship.com Email: bashton@beavercreektownship.com  
Phone: 989-275-8878 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Balance Due: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Request Will Be Processed,  
But Balance Must Be Paid Before Copies May Be Picked Up, Delivered or Mailed**

(Form created by Michigan Townships Association, April 2015)



**Township:** Keep original and provide copy of both sides, along with Public Summary, to requestor at no charge.

Beaver Creek Township, Crawford County  
8888 S. Grayling Road  
Grayling, MI 49738  
Phone: 989-275-8878

Denial Appeal Form

**FOIA Appeal Form—To Appeal a Denial of Records**  
Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, et seq.

**Request No.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of This Notice:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print or Type)  
Check if received via: ☐ Email ☐ Fax ☐ Other Electronic Method  
Date delivered to junk/spam folder: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date discovered in junk/spam folder: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Phone
Firm/Organization	Fax
Street	Email
City	State Zip

**Request for:** ☐ Copy ☐ Certified copy ☐ Record inspection ☐ Subscription to record issued on regular basis  
**Delivery Method:** ☐ Will pick up ☐ Will make own copies onsite ☐ Mail to address above ☐ Email to address above  
☐ Deliver on digital media provided by the township: \_\_\_\_\_

**Record(s) You Requested:** (Listed here or see attached copy of original request) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reason(s) for Appeal:**

The appeal must specifically identify how the required fee(s) exceed the amount permitted. You may use this form or attach additional sheets:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Requestor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Township Response:**

The township must provide a response within 10 business days after receiving this appeal, including a determination or taking one 10-day extension.

**Township Extension:** We are extending the date to respond to your FOIA fee appeal for no more than 10 business days, until \_\_\_\_\_  
(month, day, year). Only one extension may be taken per FOIA appeal.

Unusual circumstances warranting extension: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions regarding this extension, contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Township Determination:**

☐ Denial Reversed ☐ Denial Upheld ☐ Denial Reversed in Part and Upheld in Part

The following previously denied records will be released: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Notice of Requestor's Right to Seek Judicial Review**

You are entitled under Section 10 of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.240, to appeal this denial to the township board or to commence an action in the Circuit Court to compel disclosure of the requested records if you believe they were wrongfully withheld from disclosure. If, after judicial review, the court determines that the township has not complied with MCL 15.235 in making this denial and orders disclosure of all or a portion of a public record, you have the right to receive attorneys' fees and damages as provided in MCL 15.240. (See back of this form for additional information on your rights.)

**Signature of FOIA Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Created by Michigan Townships Association, April 2015)

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (EXCERPT)

Act 442 of 1976

15.240.amended Options by requesting person; appeal; actions by public body; receipt of written appeal; judicial review; civil action; venue; de novo proceeding; burden of proof; private view of public record; contempt; assignment of action or appeal for hearing, trial, or argument; attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements; assessment of award; damages.

: 10.

- (1) If a public body makes a final determination to deny all or a portion of a request, the requesting person may do 1 of the following at his or her option:
  - (a) Submit to the head of the public body a written appeal that specifically states the word "appeal" and identifies the reason or reasons for reversal of the denial.
  - (b) Commence a civil action in the circuit court, or if the decision of a state public body is at issue, the court of claims, to compel the public body's disclosure of the public records within 180 days after a public body's final determination to deny a request.
- (2) Within 10 business days after receiving a written appeal pursuant to subsection (1)(a), the head of a public body shall do 1 of the following:
  - (a) Reverse the disclosure denial.
  - (b) Issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial.
  - (c) Reverse the disclosure denial in part and issue a written notice to the requesting person upholding the disclosure denial in part.
  - (d) Under unusual circumstances, issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the head of the public body shall respond to the written appeal. The head of a public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.
- (3) A board or commission that is the head of a public body is not considered to have received a written appeal under subsection (2) until the first regularly scheduled meeting of that board or commission following submission of the written appeal under subsection (a). If the head of the public body fails to respond to a written appeal pursuant to subsection (2), or if the head of the public body upholds all or a portion of the disclosure denial that is the subject of the written appeal, the requesting person may seek judicial review of the nondisclosure by commencing a civil action under subsection (1)(b).
- (4) In an action commenced under subsection (1)(b), a court that determines a public record is not exempt from disclosure shall order the public body to cease withholding or to produce all or a portion of a public record wrongfully withheld, regardless of the location of the public record. Venue for an action against a local public body is proper in the circuit court for the county in which the public record or an office of the public body is located has venue over the action. The court shall determine the matter de novo and the burden is on the public body to sustain its denial. The court, on its own motion, may view the public record in controversy in private before reaching a decision. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.
- (5) An action commenced under this section and an appeal from an action commenced under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.
- (6) If a person asserting the right to inspect, copy, or receive a copy of all or a portion of a public record prevails in an action commenced under this section, the court shall award reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the person or public body prevails in part, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages under subsection (7).
- (7) If the court determines in an action commenced under this section that the public body has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by refusal or delay in disclosing or providing copies of a public record, the court shall order the public body to pay a civil fine of \$1,000.00, which shall be deposited into the general fund of the state treasury. The court shall award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$1,000.00 to the person seeking the right to inspect or receive a copy of a public record. The damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.

**History:** 1976, Act 442, Eff. Apr. 13, 1977 ;-- Am. 1978, Act 329, Imd. Eff. July 11, 1978 ;-- Am. 1996, Act 553, Eff. Mar. 31, 1997 ;-- Am. 2014, Act 563, Eff. July 1, 2015.

**Township:** Keep original and provide copy of both sides, along with Public Summary, to requestor at no charge.

Beaver Creek Township, Crawford County  
8888 S. Grayling Road  
Grayling, MI 49738  
Phone: 989-275-8878

Fee Appeal Form

**FOIA Appeal Form—To Appeal an Excess Fee**  
Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act 442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, et seq.

**Request No.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check if received via:** ☐ Email ☐ Fax ☐ Other Electronic Method  
**Date of This Notice:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date delivered to junk/spam folder:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print or Type) **Date discovered in junk/spam folder:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Phone
Firm/Organization	Fax
Street	Email
City	State Zip

**Request for:** ☐ Copy ☐ Certified copy ☐ Record inspection ☐ Subscription to record issued on regular basis  
**Delivery Method:** ☐ Will pick up ☐ Will make own copies onsite ☐ Mail to address above ☐ Email to address above  
☐ Deliver on digital media provided by the township: \_\_\_\_\_

**Record(s) You Requested:** (Listed here or see attached copy of original request) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Reason(s) for Appeal:**

The appeal must specifically identify how the required fee(s) exceed the amount permitted. You may use this form or attach additional sheets:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Requestor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Township Response:**

The township must provide a response within 10 business days after receiving this appeal, including a determination or taking one 10-day extension.

**Township Extension:** We are extending the date to respond to your FOIA fee appeal for no more than 10 business days, until \_\_\_\_\_  
(month, day, year). Only one extension may be taken per FOIA appeal.

Unusual circumstances warranting extension: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions regarding this extension, contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Township Determination:** ☐ Fee Waived ☐ Fee Reduced ☐ Fee Upheld

Written basis for township determination: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Notice of Requestor's Right to Seek Judicial Review**

You are entitled under Section 10a of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.240a, to appeal a FOIA fee that you believe exceeds the amount permitted under the township's written Procedures and Guidelines to the township board or to commence an action in the Circuit Court for a fee reduction within 45 days after receiving the notice of the required fee or a determination of an appeal to the township board. If a civil action is commenced in court, the township is not obligated to compete processing the request until the court resolves the fee dispute. If the court determines that the township required a fee that exceeded the permitted amount, the court shall reduce the fee to a permissible amount. (See back of this form for additional information on your rights.)

**Signature of FOIA Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Created by Michigan Townships Association, April 2015)

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 442 of 1976**

**15.240a.added Fee in excess of amount permitted under procedures and guidelines or MCL 15.234.**  
10a.

- (1) If a public body requires a fee that exceeds the amount permitted under its publicly available procedures and guidelines or section 4, the requesting person may do any of the following:
- (a) If the public body provides for fee appeals to the head of the public body in its publicly available procedures and guidelines, submit to the head of the public body a written appeal for a fee reduction that specifically states the word "appeal" and identifies how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted under the public body's available procedures and guidelines or section 4.
  - (b) Commence a civil action in the circuit court, or if the decision of a state public body is at issue, in the court of claims, for a fee reduction. The action must be filed within 45 days after receiving the notice of the required fee or a determination of an appeal to the head of a public body. If a civil action is commenced against the public body under this subdivision, the public body is not obligated to complete the processing of the written request for the public record at issue until the court resolves the fee dispute. An action shall not be filed under this subdivision unless 1 of the following applies:
    - (i) The public body does not provide for appeals under subdivision (a).
    - (ii) The head of the public body failed to respond to a written appeal as required under subsection (2).
    - (iii) The head of the public body issued a determination to a written appeal as required under subsection (2).
- (2) Within 10 business days after receiving a written appeal under subsection (1)(a), the head of a public body shall do 1 of the following:
- (a) Waive the fee.
  - (b) Reduce the fee and issue a written determination to the requesting person indicating the specific basis under section 4 that supports the remaining fee. The determination shall include a certification from the head of the public body that the statements in the determination are accurate and that the reduced fee amount complies with its publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4.
  - (c) Uphold the fee and issue a written determination to the requesting person indicating the specific basis under section 4 that supports the required fee. The determination shall include a certification from the head of the public body that the statements in the determination are accurate and that the fee amount complies with the public body's publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4.
- (3) Issue a notice extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the head of the public body must respond to the written appeal. The notice of extension shall include a detailed reason or reasons why the extension is necessary. The head of a public body shall not issue more than 1 notice of extension for a particular written appeal.
- (3) A board or commission that is the head of a public body is not considered to have received a written appeal under subsection (2) until the first regularly scheduled meeting of that board or commission following submission of the written appeal under subsection (1)(a).
- (4) In an action commenced under subsection (1)(b), a court that determines the public body required a fee that exceeds the amount permitted under its publicly available procedures and guidelines or section 4 shall reduce the fee to a permissible amount. Venue for an action against a local public body is proper in the circuit court for the county in which the public record or an office of the public body is located. The court shall determine the matter de novo, and the burden is on the public body to establish that the required fee complies with its publicly available procedures and guidelines and section 4. Failure to comply with an order of the court may be punished as contempt of court.
- (5) An action commenced under this section and an appeal from an action commenced under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.
- (6) If the requesting person prevails in an action commenced under this section by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may, in its discretion, award all or an appropriate portion of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. The award shall be assessed against the public body liable for damages under subsection (7).
- (7) If the court determines in an action commenced under this section that the public body has arbitrarily and capriciously violated this act by charging an excessive fee, the court shall order the public body to pay a civil fine of \$500.00, which shall be deposited in the general fund of the state treasury. The court may also award, in addition to any actual or compensatory damages, punitive damages in the amount of \$500.00 to the person seeking the fee reduction. The fine and any damages shall not be assessed against an individual, but shall be assessed against the next succeeding public body that is not an individual and that kept or maintained the public record as part of its public function.
- (8) As used in this section, "fee" means the total fee or any component of the total fee calculated under section 4, including any deposit.

**History:** Add. 2014, Act 563, Eff. July 1, 2015