

OPEN RECORDS REQUEST POLICY

BOROUGH OF WAYNESBURG ORDINANCE #1- 2008

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF WAYNESBURG OPEN RECORDS POLICY

IT IS HEREBY ENACTED AND ORDAINED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, as follows:

Section 1: The text of Part 8 (Open Records Policy) of Chapter 1 (Administration & Government) of the Code of the Code of the Borough of Waynesburg is hereby amended in entirety as follows:

§1-801 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assure compliance with Act 3 of 2008, The Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, as amended; to provide access to public records of Waynesburg Borough; to preserve the integrity of Waynesburg Borough's records; and to minimize the financial impact to the residents of the borough regarding the resources utilized in the receipt and processing of public records requests and the retrieval of copying of public records.

§1-802 Designated Open Records Officer

It is the policy of the Borough to require the presence of a designated employee when public records are examined and inspected and to charge reasonable fees for duplication of public records of the borough.

Waynesburg Borough designated the Borough Manager as the Open Records Officer, responsible for assuring compliance with the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- A.** The Borough Manager may designate certain employee (s) to Process public record requests.
- B.** The Borough Manager is responsible for minimizing, where possible, the financial impact to the borough regarding the resources utilized in the receipt and processing of public record requests and the retrieval and copying of public records.

- C.** All requests for public records of the Borough under this policy shall be specific in identifying and describing each public record requested. In no case shall the Borough be required to create a public record which does not exist or to compile, maintain, format or organize a public record in a manner in which the Borough does not currently compile, maintain, format or organize the public record. All requests for public records shall be submitted in writing and include the date of the request; requestor's name, address and telephone number; certification of United States residency; signature of requestor; and if duplication is requested, appropriate payment.
- D.** The designated employee shall make a good faith effort to determine whether each record requested is a public record.
- E.** The Borough shall facilitate a reasonable response to a request for Borough's public records. In no case is the Borough expected to provide extraordinary staff to respond to the request, but will respond in a manner consistent with the Borough's administrative responsibilities and consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law.
- F.** The designated employee shall respond to the requester within five (5) business days from the date of receipt of the written request. If the Borough does not (respond within five (5) business days of receipt thereof, the request is deemed denied.
- G.** The response provided by the Borough shall consist for (1) approval for access to the public record; (2) review of the request by the designated employee; or (3) denial of access to the records requested.
- H.** If access to the public record requested is approved ~ the public record shall
Be available for access during the regular business hours of the Borough.
The designated employee shall cooperate fully with the requester, while also taking reasonable measures to protect borough public records from the possibility of theft and/or modification. The presence of a designated employee is required when public records are examined and inspected.
- I.** Fees for duplication of public records shall be established by the Commonwealth's Office of Open Records. The Borough may at its

discretion waive fees.

- J.** In the event the estimated cost of fulfilling a request submitted under the policy is expected to exceed \$100.00, the designated employee(s) shall obtain the expected cost in advance of fulfilling the request to avoid unwanted expense of Borough resources.
- K.** If the request is being reviewed, the notice provided by the Borough shall be in writing and include the reason for review and the expected response date, which shall be within (30) days of the notice of review. If the Borough does not respond within (30) days thereof, the request is deemed denied. Review of the request is limited to situations where:
 - a)** The record requested contains information which is subject to access, as well as information which is not subject to access that must be retracted prior to a grant of access. The retracted information is considered a denial as to that information;
 - b)** The record requires retrieval from a remote location;
 - c)** A timely response cannot be accomplished due to staffing limitations;
 - d)** A legal review is necessary to determine whether the record is requested is a public record;
 - e)** The requester has failed to comply with the Borough's policy and procedure requirements; or
 - f)** The requester refuses to pay the applicable fees.
 - g)** The extent or nature of the request precludes a response within the required time period.

Upon a determination that one of the factors listed above applies, the borough shall send written notice to the requester within five (5) business days of receipt of the request for access. The notice shall include a statement notifying the requester that the request for access is being reviewed, the reason for the review, a reasonable date that a response is expected to be provided and an estimate of applicable fees owed when the record becomes available. If the date that a response is expected to be provided is in excess of 30 days, following the five (5) business days allowed for, the request for access shall be deemed denied unless the

requester has agreed in writing to an extension to the date specified in the notice. If the requester agrees to the extension, the request shall be deemed denied on the day following the date specified in the notice if the agency has not provided a response by that date.

- L.** If access to the record requested is denied, the notice provided by the borough shall be in writing as indicated on the form attached hereto entitled “Denial of Request to Review and/or duplicate: Waynesburg Borough Records.”
- M.** If the request is denied or deemed denied, the requester may file an appeal with the Commonwealth’s Office of Open Records within fifteen (15) business days of the mailing date of the Borough’s notice of denial, or within fifteen (15) days of a deemed denial. The appeal shall state the grounds upon which the requested asserts that the record is a public record and shall address any grounds stated by the agency for delaying or denying the request.
- N.** Within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of the final determination of the appeals officer, the requester or borough may file a petition for review or other documents as required by rule of court with the court of common pleas for GREENE COUNTY. The Decision of the court shall contain findings of fact and conclusions of law based upon the evidence as a whole. The decision shall clearly and concisely explain the rationale for the decision. A petition for review under this section shall stay the release of documents until a decision is issued.
- O.** This policy shall be available for review at the Borough office.

Section 2. Repealer: That any Ordinance, or part of Ordinance, conflicting with this Ordinance be and the same is hereby repealed insofar as the same affects this Ordinance. The Codified Ordinance of the Borough of Waynesburg “Open Records Policy” Resolution #10, 2003 specifically repealed in its entirety.

Section 3. Severability: If any sentence, clause, section, or part of this ordinance is for any any reason found to be unconstitutional, illegal, or invalid, unconstitutionally, illegality or invalidity shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses, sections or parts of this Ordinance. It is hereby declared as the intent

of the Waynesburg Borough Council that this Ordinance would have been adopted had such unconstitutional, illegal, or invalid sentence, clause, section or party thereof now been included herein.

Section 4. Effective Date: This Ordinance shall become effective on December 8, 2008.

ENACTED AND ORDAINED this 8th day of December, 2008.

Borough Council President

ATTEST:

Borough Manager

2008 Approved this 8th Day of December,

Mayor