

RESOLUTION No. 2009-04

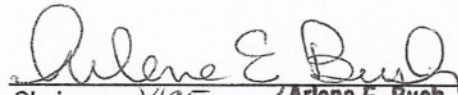
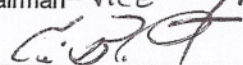
A RESOLUTION of Blair Township Supervisors of Blair Township, Blair County Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted Act 3 of 2008 effective January 01, 2009, which is the Right to Know Act and,

WHEREAS, the Blair Township Board of Supervisors has developed a policy to carry out Blair Township's responsibilities under the Right to Know Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Open Records Policy attached hereto is hereby adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Blair Township with an effective date of January 01, 2009.


Secretary


Chairman-VICE / Arlene E. Bush

Eric B. Prendergast

January 13, 2009
DATE

BLAIR TOWNSHIP OPEN RECORDS POLICY

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 Blair Township; to preserve the integrity of Blair Township's records; and to minimize the financial impact to the residents of the Township regarding the resources utilized in the receipt and processing of public record requests and the retrieval and copying of public records.

It is the policy of the Township 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 Township. Blair Township designates the Township Secretary as the Open Records Officer, responsible for assuring compliance with the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, in accordance with the following guidelines:

A. The Township Secretary may designate certain employee(s) to process public record requests.

B. The Township Secretary is responsible for minimizing, where possible, the financial impact to the Township 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 Township under this policy shall be in writing and specific in identifying and describing each public record requested. In no case shall the Township 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 Township does not currently compile, maintain, format or organize the public record. All requests for public records must be submitted in writing to the Township office on the Township's Right-to-Know Request Form or on any form established by the Commonwealth's Office of Open Records and shall 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 Township Secretary or designated employee shall make a good faith effort to determine whether each record requested is a public record.

E. The Township shall facilitate a reasonable response to a request for Blair Township's public records. In no case is the Township expected to provide extraordinary staff to respond to the request, but will respond in a manner consistent with the Township's administrative responsibilities and consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law.

F. The Township Secretary or designated employee shall respond to the requester within five (5) business days from the date of receipt of the written request. If

the Township does not respond within five (5) business days of receipt thereof, the request is deemed denied.

G. The response provided by the Township shall consist of (1) approval for access to the public record; (2) review of the request by the designated employee; or (3) denial of access to the record 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 Township. The presence of a designated employee is required when public records are examined and inspected. Review must be done at the convenience of the Township staff. Appointments may be required at the discretion of the Township Secretary or designated employee. The Township Secretary or designated employee shall also have the discretion to limit all appointments to one requestor per sitting. The Township Secretary or designated employee shall cooperate fully with the requester, while also taking reasonable measures to protect the Township's public records from the possibility of theft and/or modification.

I. Fees for duplication of public records shall be as established by the Township's Open Records Officer in accordance with the fee schedules established by the Commonwealth's Office of Open Records. The Township may at its discretion waive fees.

J. In the event the estimated cost of fulfilling a request submitted under this policy is expected to exceed \$100.00, the Township Secretary or designated employee(s) shall obtain the expected cost in advance of fulfilling the request to avoid unwarranted expense of Township resources.

K. If the request is being reviewed, the notice provided by the Township shall be in writing and include the reason for the review and the expected response date, which shall be within thirty (30) days of the notice of review. If the Township does not respond within thirty (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 redacted prior to a grant of access. The redacted 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 requested is a public record;

- (e) The requester has failed to comply with the Township'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 Township shall send written notice to the requester within five 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 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 Township shall be in writing in accordance with applicable law.

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 Township's notice of denial, or within fifteen (15) days of a deemed denial. The appeal shall state the grounds upon which the requester asserts that the record is a public record and shall address any grounds stated by the Township for delaying or denying the request.

N. Within 30 days of the mailing date of the final determination of the appeals officer, the requester or Township may file a petition for review or other document as required by rule of court with the Court of Common Pleas for Blair 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 Township office.