



# GLADSTONE CITY COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

City Hall Chambers – 1100 Delta Avenue

July 07, 2025

5:00 PM

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## MINUTES

Mayor Thompson called the special meeting to order; Clerk Berry called the roll:

### PRESENT

Mayor Joe Thompson

Commissioner Judy Akkala

Mayor Pro-Tem Brad Mantela

Commissioner Steve O'Driscoll

### ABSENT - EXCUSED

Commissioner Robert Pontius

The following individuals spoke under public comment:

Mr. Benjamin Bures, 415 South 10th Street - Opposes waiving the fee

Mr. Steve Viau, 817 Delta Avenue, read the following statement and gave to the Clerk to place on the record:

7 July 2025

Steven E. Viau

#### City of Gladstone – FOIA Waiver Special Meeting Comments

Respected members of the board, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this evening on my request to have the FOIA Request #2025-11 fees waived as stated under MCL 15.234(1) and (3) as this matter is in the interest of the public in that searching for or furnishing copies of the requested documents of public record are primarily benefitting the general public.

These matters are of public interest as they imply a stake, concern, or responsibility of the elected officials and staff members of the city of Gladstone, and their decisions affecting one or more residents, but they also reflect a larger concern with fairness and accountability with members within the Gladstone administration for city residents' general welfare that warrants recognition and protection.

It is imperative for all city residents to observe that the standards of conduct and a code of ethics are applied uniformly throughout the city. The transparency of the City of Gladstone in this matter affords the general public that decisions are made with truthfulness, accountability, fairness, and establishes the ethical norms for conduct that are used by Gladstone's management team. They provide the public with what behaviors can be expected as it relates to individuals, events, or specific subject matters relating to the city and its populace. The people of the City of Gladstone deserve clarity on whether these standards have been upheld consistently or not.

In good faith, I have submitted the FOIA Request #2025-11 as a legitimate matter of public concern to address potential misconduct or missteps by the Gladstone elected officials, city staff, or employees relating to matters of political, social, or other concerns of the community. I have been accountable for my actions and have had to face rumors of embezzlement among other accusations behind my back; now I am asking that the same standards be applied to all, without exception.

It is very troubling that there is a perceived imbalance of power between a resident of this city, such as myself, and the institutional authority of the City of Gladstone. The trust of the public depends on the belief that all individuals are treated fairly and that the government of our city acts with transparency and for the benefit of all residents, not just the privileged or powerful.

Remember, it is the citizens of Gladstone who will benefit the most. This is a time for the city to show it believes in transparency, follows ethical standards and holds its personnel

accountable for their actions, and provides its residents with proper due process. If there is nothing to hide, why continue to operate in the shadows, sowing threads of distrust amongst the people? This matter will have an impact on the public; how do you want the trust of the residents to be swayed?

So again, I ask for the FOIA Request #2025-11 Fees to be waived. The specific fees do not appear to meet the requirement established by MCL 15.234 in that the labor costs to search, locate, and examine do not reflect "...a public body may not charge more than the hourly wage of the lowest paid public body employee capable of performing the tasks necessary to comply with the request. A fee shall not be charged for the cost of search, examination, review, and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless the failure to charge a fee in the particular instance would result in an unreasonably high cost to the public body because of the nature of the request."

June 22, 2025 (9:35 PM)

**Subject:** Formal FOIA Fee Appeal and Request for Transparency, Accountability, Equitable Access, and Due Process.

**Date:** June 22, 2025

**From:** Steven Viau  
817 Delta Avenue  
Gladstone, MI 49837  
[awardsfromus@gmail.com](mailto:awardsfromus@gmail.com)

**To:**  
Gladstone City Commission  
c/o Eric Buckman, City Manager  
c/o Kim Berry, FOIA Coordinator  
City of Gladstone  
1100 Delta Avenue  
Gladstone, MI 49837

Dear respected members of the Gladstone City Commission, Mayor Thompson, City Manager Mr. Buckman, and FOIA Coordinator Ms. Berry,

I am writing to formally appeal the estimated fees associated with FOIA Request #2025-11, which currently exceed \$1,000. I respectfully request that these costs be waived or substantially reduced under MCL 15.234(1) and (3), due to the critical public interest and personal hardship involved.

This request is not just about documents—it is about truth, fairness, and restoring public confidence in how our city is governed. The materials sought are vital for:

1. **Serving the Public Interest:** This request serves a vital public interest by promoting truth, accountability, and transparency involving decisions made by the City of Gladstone and its staff. This not only affects me but may reflect broader issues of fairness and accountability with members within the Gladstone administration.
2. **Clarifying Ethical Boundaries:** These documents relate directly to how the city of Gladstone defines and applies ethics. The documents are essential for defining "ETHICS" norms for conduct used by the city of Gladstone's management team. These norms distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behavior relating to specific individuals, events, or subject matter based on my first-

hand knowledge and experiences. The public deserves clarity on whether standards have been upheld—or not.

3. **Addressing Potential Misconduct:** If there have been missteps by Gladstone elected officials, city staff, or employees, the community has a right to know. This is a matter of legitimate public concern, and shielding such records behind unaffordable costs is incompatible and contradicts the principles of fairness and transparency our city claims to uphold. I have faced accountability for my actions now I am asking that the same standard be applied to all, without exception.

4. **Recognizing Financial Hardship:** I have already borne significant emotional and financial strain due to the city's actions. Requiring additional expense simply to get clarification and understanding of what occurred should be achieved without further financial burden. This is unreasonable and unnecessary to seek transparency for the general public.

5. **Balancing Power:** There exists a profound and deeply troubling imbalance between an individual resident such as myself and the institutional authority and resources of our city government. Public trust depends on the belief that all individuals are treated fairly, and that transparency is not a privilege reserved for the powerful. I urge you to take meaningful action now by waiving the FOIA fees and allowing this matter to be addressed openly and locally.

I have maintained a respectful and patient demeanor despite ongoing challenges, yet the City must acknowledge the ramifications of its actions or inaction upon my circumstances. So it's time for the full board of the Gladstone City commission to step forward and thoroughly examine the outcomes and consequences of administrative decisions that have harmed not only me but possibly others as well. I ask when this will stop and accountability will be applied to those responsible?

If any of you are willing to hear my side of the story, I respectfully ask that you contact me directly. I would deeply value the opportunity to speak with you honestly, openly, and with the hope that someone within our city leadership will be willing to listen and act with justice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven Viau  
Resident of Gladstone  
(906) 241-7494  
avardsfromus@gmail.com

Mrs. Vicki Viau, 1107 Delta Avenue - supports waving the fee

Motion made by Commissioner Akkala, Seconded by Commissioner O'Driscoll to deny the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Appeal of Excess Fees as the requestor (Steven Viau) did not identify how the fee exceeds the amount permitted to be charged under FOIA and/or the City of Gladstone's FOIA Policy.

Commissioner Akkala	Yes
Commissioner Mantela	Yes
Commissioner O'Driscoll	Yes
Commissioner Pontius	Absent & Excused
Mayor Thompson	Yes

MOTION CARRIED

There being no further business before the Commission, Mayor Thompson adjourned the meeting at 5:20 PM.

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Mayor Joe Thompson

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Clerk Kimberly Berry