



155 F Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

TO: Town Council of Town of Loxahatchee Groves

FROM: Valerie Oakes, Town Clerk

VIA: Francine Ramaglia, Town Manager

DATE: July 1, 2025

SUBJECT: Discussion on Approving and Implementing the Town's Public Records Request Policy

In accordance with Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and Article I, Section 24(a) of the Florida Constitution, the Town Clerk's Office has drafted a comprehensive Public Records Request Policy ("Policy") to ensure the Town's ongoing commitment to transparency, accountability, and lawful compliance with Florida's public records laws.

The proposed Policy establishes clear administrative procedures for the receipt, processing, tracking, redaction, and delivery of public records requests. It provides guidance for both internal staff and members of the public to ensure consistency, efficiency, and compliance. The Policy also addresses modern record formats such as electronic communications, outlines fee structures consistent with state law, and incorporates protections against the release of confidential or exempt records.

Key elements of the Policy include:

- Definitions and responsibilities of staff, officials, and the Town Clerk (aka Records Custodian);
- Procedures for responding to requests, including those requiring extensive staff time or external costs;
- Fee structures for duplication, extensive use, and electronic delivery;
- Detailed procedures for requests submitted by Councilmembers;
- Legal processes for redactions, exemptions, and responses; and
- Policies on abandoned or unpaid requests.

Notably, the Policy includes safeguards to prevent the inadvertent release of confidential or exempt information. Where uncertainty arises regarding the applicability of exemptions or potential Sunshine Law conflicts, the Policy provides that the Town Clerk may seek a written opinion from the Town Attorney to ensure compliance and legal protection for the Town, elected officials, and staff.



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Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Town Council review and discuss the draft Public Records Request Policy and consider its formal adoption. Implementation of this Policy will ensure that the Town's practices remain legally compliant and consistently applied across departments while enhancing public access and operational efficiency.