

MINERVA MAYORS COURT PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

We believe openness leads to a better informed public, which leads to more transparent government and better public policy. Citizens are entitled to access government records and it is the policy of the Minerva Mayors Court to adhere to the State of Ohio Public Records Act.

PUBLIC RECORDS

This office, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records to include the following; any document – paper, electronic or other format that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization, function, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. All records of the Minerva Mayor's Court are public unless they are exempt from disclosure under the ORC.

All exemptions to openness are to be construed in their narrowest sense and any denial of public records in response to a valid request must be accompanied by an explanation, including legal authority, as outlined in the Ohio Revised Code. If the request is in writing, the explanation must also be in writing.

It is the policy of the Minerva Mayor's Court, as required by Ohio Law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are available for inspection and copying in accordance with the law.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

You may make public records requests to the Minerva Mayors Court in person, by mail or over the phone. The requestor does not have to put a request in writing and does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. Requests for public records must clearly state the records and/or information being sought to allow the Minerva Mayors Court to identify, retrieve and review the records. No "official" language is required to make a request for public records.

The Minerva Mayors Court has a public record request form available. The requestor is not required to use this form or to put their request in writing. The requestor does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the custodian may contact the requestor for clarification and assist in revising their request.

PROCESSING REQUESTS

Each request should be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records. Most routine requests for records should be satisfied immediately if feasible to do so. Routine requests include, but are not limited to, case dispositions, case payments, monetary receipts, jail orders etc. If a request is deemed beyond "routine" such as seeking a voluminous number of copies or requiring extensive search, the requestor shall be notified of an estimated number of business days it will take to complete the request.

Public records are generally available for inspection and copies Monday – Friday 8:00am -4:00pm, except holidays. We will provide prompt inspection of public records and copies of public records in a reasonable period of time. "prompt" and "reasonable" take into account the volume of records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested. If fewer than 20 pages of copies are requested or if the records are readily available in an electronic format that can be emailed or downloaded easily, these should be made as quickly as the equipment allows. If the records cannot be provided while you wait, we will contact you when the records are available.

DENIAL AND REDACTION OF RECORDS

If a request is ambiguous, overly broad or if the requestor has difficulty in making a request that we cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested, the request may be denied. We will then provide the requestor an opportunity to revise the request by explaining to the requestor the manner in which records are kept.

Any denial of public records requested will include an explanation, including legal authority. If only a portion of a record is exempt, then only that portion will be withheld or redacted and the rest released.

The custodian shall notify the requestor of an redactions or make the redactions plainly visible.

COST FOR PUBLIC RECORDS

There is no cost to inspect records. The first 10 pages are provided at no charge. Over 10 pages will be charged \$.05 cents per page.

MANAGING RECORDS

The records of the Minerva Mayors Court are subject to record retention schedule.