

NORTH AUGUSTA

SOUTH CAROLINA'S RIVERFRONT

FOIA 2023-10

Date: February 14, 2023

TO: Fred Ilardi

Copy to:
Kelly Zier - City Attorney
James Clifford - City Administrator

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

PLEASE BE ADVISED that the City of North Augusta has received your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request the 13th day of February 2023. Such request has been forwarded to the appropriate department for response. In addition, a copy of said request has been forwarded to the office of the City Attorney for his review.

The City Attorney will make a determination as to whether the request is a proper request under the FOIA act. The appropriate department will advise as to what materials, documents, etc. may be available. That department will also provide information indicating the approximate time involved related to the retrieval of the documentation, and also the amount of material that would need to be copied in order to comply with the request. At such time as a response is received from the City Attorney and the appropriate department, we will then notify you of the response of the City to your FOIA request. In the event that the request is deemed appropriate and permissible under the FOIA act, we will advise you of same and also provide an estimate of the costs that would be related to responding to said request. In the event that it is determined that the FOIA request is not proper and not permitted by the act, you'll also be advised of that decision.

A response to your request will be made within the time limits as established by section 20-4-30(c) of the FOIA act. Specifically, this requires that said response be provided within 10 business days for any record requested that is less than 24 months old. A request for a record that is more than 24 months old, is to be responded to within 20 business days from the date of the receipt of your request. The City would not normally require the full period in order to respond, but reserves its right under the act to do so.

The response as required by the Act as referred to in the above paragraph is NOT the delivery of the documents. It is a response advising the person making the FOIA request of the City's determination as to the public availability, of the requested public records. The ACT further provides that if the request is granted, the document must be furnished or made available for inspection or copying no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date on which the final determination as to the availability of the documents is made, unless the record are more than twenty-four (24) months old, in which case the Public Body is to provide such records no late than thirty-five (35) calendar days from the date on which the final determination was provided. In the event that a deposit for the costs of providing the documentation is required, the providing of the

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documents would be based upon the date on which the deposit is received. In such case, the time remains thirty (30) or thirty-five (35) calendar days based upon the age of the documents requested.

In the event that the response to your request is positive and the costs associated with retrieving and providing the data is minimal, in most cases, the City would forward the documentation to you with a statement for the costs. An example of charges would be 15¢ per page for black and white copies, 20¢ per page for color copies. The City does not charge for search and retrieval for fifteen minutes or less. For any time required to research and retrieve the requested information more than 15 minutes, the City charges, a minimum of \$8.00 per 30 minutes. Pursuant to the act, the charge for searching, retrieving, and redacting records is not to exceed the hourly wage of the lowest paid employee on the public body staff, who has the skill and training to fulfill the request. Therefore, the charge could be in excess of the \$8.00 per 30 minutes, if a regular clerical person is unable to perform the services. The specific FOIA Fee schedule, as adopted by the City is available for review online. In the event that the costs are considered to be of more than a nominal amount, the City would reserve the right to require a deposit of 25% of anticipated costs to be made before assembling, copying and delivering the materials. This would also provide to you the opportunity to determine if you desired to proceed with the request in light of the costs.

NOTICE: SOUTH CAROLINA LAW PROVIDES THAT “IT IS A CRIME TO KNOWINGLY OBTAIN OR USE PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM A PUBLIC BODY FOR COMMERCIAL SOLICITATION.” Section 30-2-50

Jamie Paul

Jamie Paul, City Clerk, CMC

City of North Augusta, South Carolina

From:
To: [Williams, Briton](#)
Cc: [Paul, Jamie](#); [McGhee, David](#); [McCauley, Jenafer](#); [Presnell, Eric](#); [Brooks, Robert](#); [Carpenter, Pat](#); [Toole, Kevin](#)
Subject: FOIA Request For City Documents
Date: Monday, February 13, 2023 12:57:30 PM

Dear Mayor Williams:

Under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 30-4-10, I am requesting to have sent to me the following documents used in the preparation of a comparison of building expenses for building the **North Augusta Public Safety HQ Building**.

- **As a first request**, I suspect that there was a Spec Sheet, Requirement Listing , Bid Package, and/ or RFP request provided to each bidder used in the June 14,2021 , Council Study Session discussion. There were figures presented that compared expenses to build the North Augusta **Public Safety HQ Building from two bidders**. Under the line item "**Construction Costs**" there is a figure for building it on E. Buena Vista of \$14,426,853 and a figure of \$12,924,106.71 for using the Georgia Avenue site. I would like sent to me electronic copies of both of those proposals. The response should include the firm names submitting the proposals.
- **As a second request**, I suspect that there was a Spec Sheet, Requirement Listing , Bid Package, and/ or RFP request provided to each bidder for the now chosen Georgia Avenue site. Please provide it under this FOIA Request. I recently discovered in your email to me the building size is now 39,000 square feet. In prior City discussions, it was announced that 30,000 was required. When did that figure increase? **Was this 39,000 square foot building included in the RFP?** If you look at **JLA's website**, they believe they think they **are still building a 30,000 square foot building**. Hopefully all bidders were bidding on the same size building.

At the **North Augusta Council Study Session of 01/30/2023** Mr. Clifford made a presentation , **Resolution 2023-03** To Authorize the Budget and Funding Source for the Construction of the North Augusta Department of Public Safety Headquarters. In your letter to me dated 02/06/2023, you wrote that the presented Clifford Presentation would be placed on the City Website after the 02/06/2023 Council Meeting and would be available to the public on 02/07/2023. **As of 2/12/23, it was not available.**

- **As a third request** under this FOIA request, I would like an electronic copy of the winning proposal and a copy of "the three local and the two proposals based elsewhere in South Carolina" that bid on this building . You mention only picking larger out-of-town firms for big projects based on "**precedent**". Don't we have locally qualified firms? Using your premise for qualification, wouldn't that eliminate the possibility for local firms forever qualifying to bid and possibly get work in North Augusta?

As an additional note, there continues to be serious problems in accessing information on the City Website. When trying to access information, messages indicate that the request is not possible. It was mentioned in prior City Meetings that new software would soon be installed. Can you tell me when we can expect this upgrade?

All requested information should be provided electronically. Since my requests are for existing documents that should be readily available, I am hoping that they will be sent to me quickly and not have me wait a long period of time for this requested information.

Thank you in advance for providing the requested information.

Sincerely,
Fred Ilardi

North Augusta, SC 29841