

Beko, Michele



From: Robert J. Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2026 1:28 PM
To: Beko, Michele, Zaleski, Don; Riley, Patrick; Dull, Breanna; Partin, Maggie; City Council Mail Group
Cc: Aaron Knapp
Subject: SECOND NOTICE OF Aaron C. Knapp's Intended Follow-Up for Inspection of actual documents and Recording. Aaron will be coming to city hall to inspect his requested records.

External sender <rjgargasz@gmail.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

SECOND NOTICE OF Citizen Aaron C. Knapp's Intended Follow-Up for Inspection of actual documents and Recording. Aaron will be coming to city hall to inspect his requested records.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Date: January 12, 2026 at 6:52:13 AM EST
To: City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>, Jack Bradley <jack_bradley@cityoflorain.org>, Lorain daily <erik@loraindaily.com>, Robert J Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>, Garon Petty <onelung2014@gmail.com>, Clevescene <news@clevescene.com>, Fox <tips@fox8.com>, Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>, Noelle Williams <noelle.williams@woio.com>, David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>, Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>, Rey Carrion <rey_carrion@cityoflorain.org>, Patrick Riley <patrick_riley@cityoflorain.org>, Breanna Dull <Breanna_Dull@cityoflorain.org>, Jonathan Schuppe <Jonathan.Schuppe@nbcuni.com>, Elsebeth Baumgartner <baumgartner.elsebeth@yahoo.com>, bigjoejones61@gmail.com, clandestinecanary <clandestinecanary@proton.me>, David Comer <DComer@cityoflorain.org>, Mike Failing <Mike_Failing@cityoflorain.org>, Sensai Cobra <Justice4LorainCounty@proton.me>, Michele Beko <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>, Channel WEWS <newsdesk@wews.com>
Subject: Re: Proposed Follow-Up Notice of Inspection and Recording. I will be coming to city hall to inspect my records.

Ms. Beko, Ms. Dull, Mayor Bradley, Members of City Council, and all CC'd:

I am writing to formally object to the City's production of the Mary Springkowsky emails provided over the weekend. While I acknowledge

receipt, the production is materially deficient and does not satisfy the City's obligations under Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43.

Specifically:

1. The records are overly and improperly redacted without legally sufficient explanation; and
2. The production constitutes only a partial fulfillment of the request.

By way of example, the produced emails show that Ms. Springkowski forwarded messages to herself at three separate email addresses, yet:

- The forwarded messages themselves are incomplete; and
- All responsive replies and related email threads are missing, despite being facially responsive to the request.

These omissions indicate that the City has failed to conduct a complete search of all responsive accounts and has withheld responsive records without lawful justification.

Under R.C. 149.43(B) and controlling Ohio Supreme Court precedent, a public office must:

- Conduct a reasonable and complete search for responsive records;
- Produce responsive records in full unless a specific statutory exemption applies; and
- Individually identify and justify each redaction by citing the precise statutory exemption relied upon.

Blanket or unexplained redactions, as well as the withholding of entire responsive communications, are unlawful.

Accordingly, I hereby demand that the City immediately:

1. Produce unredacted copies of the improperly redacted Springkowski emails;
2. Produce all missing responsive emails, including forwarded messages, replies, and complete email threads across all accounts used by Ms. Springkowski; or
3. In the alternative, provide a written explanation identifying:
 - o Each specific record or portion withheld;
 - o The precise statutory exemption relied upon for each redaction or withholding; and
 - o A justification sufficient to permit judicial review.

Please be advised that an incomplete or unlawfully redacted production constitutes a constructive denial under R.C. 149.43 and will be treated as such for purposes of statutory damages and further court action.

I am requesting prompt correction of these deficiencies. Absent immediate compliance, I will proceed with filing for relief without further notice.

Respectfully,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst

AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst

AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

On Dec 23, 2025, at 07:57, Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com> wrote:

Subject: Notice of Intent to Inspect Public Records and Exercise Lawful Newsgathering Rights

Ms. Dull,

This letter serves as formal notice that, beginning immediately, I will be exercising my statutory right under Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43 to **inspect public records in person** during regular business hours, where electronic production has been delayed or withheld.

Because my outstanding requests remain unresolved, I will appear at City facilities as necessary to request **on-site inspection of responsive records**, including but not limited to:

- Law Department emails referencing my name
- Emails sent or received by Mary Springowski referencing my name
- Any other records responsive to my pending public records requests

As Ohio law makes clear, inspection is a standalone right and does not depend on completion of internal review, routing, or redaction processes. Non-exempt records must be made available promptly, and any withheld portions must be accompanied by a written explanation citing specific statutory authority.

Please also be advised that while present in public areas of City facilities, I will **lawfully exercise my First Amendment right to gather news**, including **audio and video recording of public officials performing their official duties**, consistent with Ohio law and established constitutional precedent. This recording is for transparency, documentation, and reporting purposes only.

This notice is not intended to disrupt operations, nor to seek special treatment. It is intended to preserve my rights and to document compliance with Ohio's Public Records Act and the First Amendment.

If the City prefers to avoid in-person inspection, I remain willing to accept **immediate rolling electronic production** of all non-exempt records, along with a legally compliant redaction log for any withheld material.

I continue to seek resolution without litigation, but ongoing delay without production, partial production, or a statutory written denial will be treated as a constructive denial under Ohio law.

Respectfully

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst

AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that

any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

Beko, Michele

Don: Scott

From: Robert J. Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 12:44 PM
To: Zaleski, Dor; Beko, Michele; Riley, Patrick; Bowles, Scott
Cc: Aaron Knapp; Office Robert J Gargasz Co LPA
Subject: Follow Up as certain questions have not been answered/ I ask again and bolded for focus.

External sender <rjgargasz@gmail.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

To all involved:

Personal and Non-City Email Addresses Used by Mary Springowski

The records also show that Mary Springowski affirmatively used personal or non-city email accounts in connection with the same subject matter, sometimes contemporaneously with her city account.

These include:

lorainmary@gmail.com

maryspringowski@centurytel.net

springowski@gmail.com

In at least one email, she explicitly states that she is forwarding communications to her personal email "so that my attorney, my family and some friends have it for safekeeping." **That statement alone is important because it confirms deliberate republication and dissemination outside the City's email system, which directly undermines any blanket attorney client or confidentiality claims."**

It needs to be asserted that The Public Records Act requires citation to specific statutory exemptions for each redaction and does not permit descriptive labels or conclusory privilege assertions.

Knapp is demanding itemized redaction and privilege logs and record specific explanations, the City must justify each withholding or concede that no lawful basis exists.

note redactions have been accomplished and blanket attorney-client privilege has been asserted Record specific explanations and privilege log is required.

This is especially important for communications involving the Law Department and Councilmembers, where the City and its law department attorneys (witnesses to events) appears to be serving as both witnesses and advocates.

By asserting a blanket attorney client privilege and relationship that is not supported by Ohio law an improper redaction is accomplished.

These objections made by Knapp preserve the argument that many of the withheld communications are administrative, factual, or were disseminated to third parties and therefore not privileged.

Please explain whether the Law Department and its staff is representing the City Council, The City of Lorain, or Mary Springowski individually?

Besides the conflict of being witness and advocate, do you not also have a conflict counseling a defendant engaged in illegally prosecuting a defamation campaign against Aaron Knapp and his cohorts?

The privilege log is going to be invaluable in explaining each and every attorney's involvement and whether counsel was provided properly or whether an act was accomplished that may be actionable.

You may speak directly with Mr. Knapp as I have discussed with him his right to my representation in this follow up, but he has chosen to confront you directly as a citizen to obtain information that you have wrongly edited.

Who performed the redactions? Did The Council Woman do this? Please explain whether your office actually did the redactions or whether the Council woman did so?

I will be following up further with additional requests and questions that need clarification.

Robert J. Gargasz, Esq.

Sent from my iPhone

Beko, Michele



From: Robert J. Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2026 12:07 PM
To: Beko, Michele; Zaleski, Don; Riley, Patrick; Dull, Breanna; Partin, Maggie; City Council Mail Group
Cc: Aaron Knapp; Office Robert J Gargasz Co LPA
Subject: PLEASE CONFIRM THAT THE CITY OF LORAIN IS REFUSING MR. KNAPP'S REQUEST TO VIEW THE UNREDACTED EMAILS OF COUNCILWOMAN SPRINGOWSKI
NOTICE OF Aaron C. Knapp's Intended Follow-Up for Inspection of actual documents and Recording. Aaron will ...

External sender <rjgargasz@gmail.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

PLEASE CONFIRM THAT THE CITY OF LORAIN IS REFUSING MR. KNAPP'S REQUEST TO VIEW THE UNREDACTED EMAILS OF COUNCILWOMAN Mary Springowski

REQUEST and NOTICE OF Aaron C. Knapp's desired Intended Follow-Up for Inspection of actual documents and Recording.

Unless Permitted Aaron will acknowledge that you and Lorain's Law Department are REFUSING to allow him to come to city hall for the purpose of inspection the Unredacted requested records.

NOTICE OF Aaron C. Knapp's Intended Follow-Up for Inspection of actual documents and Recording. Aaron will be coming to city hall to inspect his requested records.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Date: January 12, 2026 at 6:52:13 AM EST
To: City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>, Jack Bradley <jack_bradley@cityoflorain.org>, Lorain daily <erik@loraindaily.com>, Robert J Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>, Garon Petty <onelung2014@gmail.com>, Clevescene <news@clevescene.com>, Fox <tips@fox8.com>, Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>, Noelle Williams <noelle.williams@woio.com>, David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>, Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>, Rey Carrion

<rey_carrion@cityoflorain.org>, Patrick Riley <patrick_riley@cityoflorain.org>, Breanna Dull <Breanna_Dull@cityoflorain.org>, Jonathan Schuppe <Jonathan.Schuppe@nbcuni.com>, Elisabeth Baumgartner <baumgartner.elsebeth@yahoo.com>, bigjoeljones61@gmail.com, clandestinecanary <clandestinecanary@proton.me>, David Comer <DComer@cityoflorain.org>, Mike Failing <Mike_Failing@cityoflorain.org>, Sensai Cobra <Justice4LorainCounty@proton.me>, Michele Beko <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>, Channel WEWS <newsdesk@wews.com>
Subject: Re: Proposed Follow-Up Notice of Inspection and Recording. I will be coming to city hall to inspect my records.

Ms. Beko, Ms. Dull, Mayor Bradley, Members of City Council, and all CC'd:

I am writing to formally object to the City's production of the Mary Springkowski emails provided over the weekend. While I acknowledge receipt, the production is materially deficient and does not satisfy the City's obligations under Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43.

Specifically:

1. The records are overly and improperly redacted without legally sufficient explanation; and
2. The production constitutes only a partial fulfillment of the request.

By way of example, the produced emails show that Ms. Springkowski forwarded messages to herself at three separate email addresses, yet:

- The forwarded messages themselves are incomplete; and
- All responsive replies and related email threads are missing, despite being facially responsive to the request.

These omissions indicate that the City has failed to conduct a complete search of all responsive accounts and has withheld responsive records without lawful justification.

Under R.C. 149.43(B) and controlling Ohio Supreme Court precedent, a public office must:

- Conduct a reasonable and complete search for responsive records;
- Produce responsive records in full unless a specific statutory exemption applies; and
- Individually identify and justify each redaction by citing the precise statutory exemption relied upon.

Blanket or unexplained redactions, as well as the withholding of entire responsive communications, are unlawful.

Accordingly, I hereby demand that the City immediately:

1. Produce unredacted copies of the improperly redacted Springkowski emails;
2. Produce all missing responsive emails, including forwarded messages, replies, and complete email threads across all accounts used by Ms. Springkowski; or
3. In the alternative, provide a written explanation identifying:
 - Each specific record or portion withheld;
 - The precise statutory exemption relied upon for each redaction or withholding; and
 - A justification sufficient to permit judicial review.

Please be advised that an incomplete or unlawfully redacted production constitutes a constructive denial under R.C. 149.43 and will be treated as such for purposes of statutory damages and further court action.

I am requesting prompt correction of these deficiencies. Absent immediate compliance, I will proceed with filing for relief without further notice.

Respectfully,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst

AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst

AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

On Dec 23, 2025, at 07:57, Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com> wrote:

Subject: Notice of Intent to Inspect Public Records and Exercise Lawful Newsgathering Rights

Ms. Dull,

This letter serves as formal notice that, beginning immediately, I will be exercising my statutory right under Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43 to **inspect public records in person** during regular business hours, where electronic production has been delayed or withheld.

Because my outstanding requests remain unresolved, I will appear at City facilities as necessary to request **on-site inspection of responsive records**, including but not limited to:

- Law Department emails referencing my name
- Emails sent or received by Mary Springowski referencing my name
- Any other records responsive to my pending public records requests

As Ohio law makes clear, inspection is a standalone right and does not depend on completion of internal review, routing, or redaction processes. Non-exempt records must be made available promptly, and any withheld portions must be accompanied by a written explanation citing specific statutory authority.

Please also be advised that while present in public areas of City facilities, I will **lawfully exercise my First Amendment right to gather news**, including **audio and video recording of public officials performing their official duties**, consistent with Ohio law and established constitutional precedent. This recording is for transparency, documentation, and reporting purposes only.

This notice is not intended to disrupt operations, nor to seek special treatment. It is intended to preserve my rights and to document compliance with Ohio's Public Records Act and the First Amendment.

If the City prefers to avoid in-person inspection, I remain willing to accept **immediate rolling electronic production** of all non-exempt records, along with a legally compliant redaction log for any withheld material.

I continue to seek resolution without litigation, but ongoing delay without production, partial production, or a statutory written denial will be treated as a constructive denial under Ohio law.

Respectfully

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW
Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter
Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged
Licensed Social Worker (LSW)
Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst
AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

Beko, Michele

From: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 3:32 PM
To: Soto, Rick; Kokoski, Lori
Subject: FW: response to email of 8/1/2025 @ 7:03 AM from Atty. Don Zaleski Re: LaVeck PPP

Rick & Lori – can you please review this records request from Aaron Knapp and provide us with any information you may have relative to his request? Don will reach out if he has any questions. Thanks for your help on this!

Michele

Michele T. Beko
Administrative Asst/Office Manager
Lorain Law Director's Office
200 West Erie Avenue, 3rd floor
Lorain, OH 44052
440.204.2250
Michele_beko@cityoflorain.org

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2025 2:00 PM
To: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>; Noelle Williams <Noelle.Williams@woio.com>; Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>; Lorain daily <erik@loraindaily.com>; Clevescene <news@clevescene.com>; Fox <tips@fox8.com>; Robert J. Gargas <rjgargas@gmail.com>; Garon Petty <onelung2014@gmail.com>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; Carrion, Rey <Rey_Carrion@cityoflorain.org>; David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>; Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: response to email of 8/1/2025 @ 7:03 AM from Atty. Don Zaleski Re: LaVeck PPP

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Dear Mr. Zaleski,

Thank you for your response dated August 4, 2025.

As my initial inquiry was not processed, I am now restating the matter as a formal public records request pursuant to R.C. 149.43, the Ohio Public Records Act.

Specifically, I am requesting any records maintained by the City of Lorain—including but not limited to employee handbooks, policies, procedures, training materials, or internal communications—pertaining to the following:

1. City policies or procedures governing outside or secondary employment by City employees;
2. Any internal guidance or oversight concerning City employees applying for or receiving federal relief funds (e.g., Paycheck Protection Program loans);
3. Conflict of interest, ethics, or financial disclosure requirements applicable to City employees;
4. Any relevant communications or administrative memos that address employee participation in external business ventures while employed by the City.

This request includes responsive materials held by the City's Human Resources Department, Law Department, Auditor's Office, or any other applicable entity.

I would prefer to receive the records in electronic format, if available.

Thank you for your time and compliance with your statutory obligations under R.C. 149.43. Please let me know if clarification is needed.

Sincerely,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA(p), BSSW

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

On Aug 7, 2025, at 13:28, Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

Mr. Knapp,

We have received your email dated 8.4.2025. This is not a request for public records and we have no response.

Donald M. Zaleski

Assistant Law Director

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, August 4, 2025 11:15 AM

To: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>; Lorain daily <erik@loraindaily.com>; Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>; Noelle Williams <Noelle.Williams@woio.com>; Clevescene <news@clevescene.com>; Robert J. Gargas <rjgargas@gmail.com>; Garon Petty <onelung2014@gmail.com>; Fox <tips@fox8.com>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; Carrion, Rey <Rey_Carrion@cityoflorain.org>; David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>

Subject: Re: response to email of 8/1/2025 @ 7:03 AM from Atty. Don Zaleski Re: LaVeck PPP

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Dear Mr. Zaleski,

Thank you for your prior response regarding the absence of City of Lorain records reflecting disbursement of public funds to Mr. Joseph LaVeck or any affiliated business entity.

However, I have identified two federally administered Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans made to Joseph T. LaVeck, LLC, both approved and later forgiven:

- May 1, 2020 – \$6,770 (forgiven March 25, 2021)
- February 12, 2021 – \$6,770 (forgiven October 26, 2021)

Given that Mr. LaVeck is a City employee, I respectfully request clarification on the following:

1. From which lender or agency did Mr. LaVeck or his LLC receive these federal funds?
2. Did the City have any role in facilitating, endorsing, or supporting the application or certification process for these PPP loans?
3. Does the City maintain any internal policies or oversight related to employees receiving federal business relief funds while employed in public service?

Understanding that PPP loans were federally administered, I am simply seeking transparency regarding the relationship—if any—between the City and these disbursements, especially where a City employee is involved.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA(p), BSSW

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF

Beko, Michele

From: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 11:36 AM
To: Carbonaro, Joseph
Cc: Schilens, Pamela; Schilens, Pamela
Subject: RE: Records Requests for contracts.

OK, thank you.

From: Carbonaro, Joseph <Joseph_Carbonaro@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 4:47 PM
To: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>
Cc: Schilens, Pamela <Pamela_Schilens@cityoflorain.org>; Schilens, Pamela <Pamela_Schilens@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: Re: Records Requests for contracts.

I will not be able to look for it until Thursday.

Joe

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 18, 2025, at 3:17 PM, Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

Joe I have the contract from Docuware however the agreement is not signed by any party. Do you by chance have a signed copy?

Michele

From: Carbonaro, Joseph <Joseph_Carbonaro@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 1:27 PM
To: Kalo, Ted <Ted_Kalo@cityoflorain.org>
Cc: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>; Kozjura, Joseph <Joe_Kozjura@cityoflorain.org>; Strader, John <John_Strader@cityoflorain.org>; Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>; Kozjura, Joseph <Joe_Kozjura@cityoflorain.org>; Strader, John <John_Strader@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: Re: Records Requests for contracts.

There is one agreement we have for sanitary sewer service with Sheffield Lake. The agreement should be in Docuware.

Thank you

Joe C.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 18, 2025, at 1:16 PM, Kalo, Ted <Ted_Kalo@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

I do not have any contracts with the City of Sheffield Lake.

From: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 11:49 AM
To: Koziura, Joseph <Joe_Koziura@cityoflorain.org>; Carbonaro, Joseph <Joseph_Carbonaro@cityoflorain.org>; Kalo, Ted <Ted_Kalo@cityoflorain.org>
Cc: Strader, John <John_Strader@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: FW: Records Requests for contracts.

Good Morning!

Don needs copy of the contracts listed below by you Joe. Also, if there any contracts for any type of services with the Lorain Municipal Court/Clerk of Courts Office/Sheffield Lake, please send copy of those.

Thank you – Michele

Michele T. Beko
Administrative Asst/Office Manager
Lorain Law Director's Office
200 West Erie Avenue, 3rd floor
Lorain, OH 44052
440.204.2250
Michele_beko@cityoflorain.org

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 1:05 PM
To: Koziura, Joseph <Joe_Koziura@cityoflorain.org>
Cc: Robert J. Gargas <rjgargas@gmail.com>; Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>; Carrion, Rey <Rey_Carrion@cityoflorain.org>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; Riley, Patrick <Patrick_Riley@cityoflorain.org>; Zaleski, Don <Don_Zaleski@cityoflorain.org>; Arredondo, Joel <Joel_arredondo@cityoflorain.org>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Radeff, Rocky <Rocky_Radeff@cityoflorain.org>; Morris, Jacob <Jacob_Morris@cityoflorain.org>; McCann, James - Chief <Jim_McCann@cityoflorain.org>; Harper, Anita <Anita_Harper@cityoflorain.org>; Andrew Geronimo JD <andrew.geronimo@case.edu>; Tom Niewulis <tniewulis@ncdcs.com>; Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>; Brad Dicken <BDicken@chroniclet.com>; Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>; Carissa Woytach <cwoytach@chroniclet.com>; VEK6173@aol.com; Natalio Rodriguez <natalio@centurytel.net>; Jackie Conrad <botanist62@hotmail.com>; Kathryn Kennedy <kathrynkennedy627@gmail.com>; Kirsten Hill <kirsten@kirstenhill.com>; Monica D. Pluta <Monica.Pluta@lcprosecutor.org>; Craig Snodgrass <auditor@loraincounty.com>

David J Moore <dmoore@loraincounty.us>; Iriddell@loraincounty.us;
mgallagher@loraincounty.us; Michael Scherach <mscherach.law@centurytel.net>;
Mike Doran <mikedoran@mikedoran.com>; Mike Brosky@fflorain.bank; Dennis Flores
<dennisforlorain@gmail.com>; Linda Rivera <nriyera25594@gmail.com>; Denise Wilms
<denisewilms@aol.com>; Jim Renacci <jrenacci@gmail.com>; Jeanne Petty
<jeanne_S10@yahoo.com>; sandemeilander@yahoo.com; David Yost AG
<AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>

Subject: Re: Records Requests for contracts.

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

What about contracts with the municipal court? In recent budget talk's
Sheffield Lake received or made payments to the city of Lorain for
something? What's that? Do you have an agreement for the municipal court
and Sheffield lake, or do they have their own?
How does that work?

Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA(p), BSSW

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS
INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE
INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR
ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT,
PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR
USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU
HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE
IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

On Jan 31, 2025, at 10:14, Koziura, Joseph
<Joe_Koziura@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

To all concerned,

The following items are the only contracts that this office is aware of,
at this time, concerning the cities of Lorain and Sheffield Lake.

Mutual Aide for Safety Forces

Water Pollution Control (Sewage Services)

Regards,

Joe

From: Robert J. Gargasz <rljgargasz@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:25 PM

To: Koziura, Joseph <Joe_Koziura@cityoflorain.org>; Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>; Carrion, Rey <Rey_Carrion@cityoflorain.org>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; Riley, Patrick <Patrick_Riley@cityoflorain.org>; Zaleski, Don <Don_Zaleski@cityoflorain.org>; Arredondo, Joel <joel_arredondo@cityoflorain.org>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Radeff, Rocky <Rocky_Radeff@cityoflorain.org>; Morris, Jacob <Jacob_Morris@cityoflorain.org>; McCann, James - Chief <Jim_McCann@cityoflorain.org>

Cc: Harper, Anita <Anita_Harper@cityoflorain.org>; Andrew Geronimo JD <andrew.geronimo@case.edu>; Robert J Gargasz <rigargasz@gmail.com>; Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>; Tom Niewulis <tniewulis@ncdcs.com>; Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>; Brad Dicken <BDicken@chroniclet.com>; Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>; Carissa Woytach <cwoytach@chroniclet.com>; VEK6173@aol.com; Natalio Rodriguez <natalio@centurytel.net>; Jackie Conrad <botanist62@hotmail.com>; Kathryn Kennedy <kathrynkennedy627@gmail.com>; Kirsten Hill <kirsten@kirstenhill.com>; Monica D. Pluta <Monica.Pluta@lcprosecutor.org>; Craig Snodgrass <auditor@loraincounty.com>; David J Moore <DMoore@loraincounty.us>; jriddell@loraincounty.us; mgallagher@loraincounty.us; Michael Scherach <mscherach.law@centurytel.net>; Mike Doran <mikedoran@mikedoran.com>; Mike Brosky@fflorain.bank; Dennis Flores <dennisforlorain@gmail.com>; Linda Rivera <nriviera25594@gmail.com>; Denise Wilms <denisewilms@aol.com>; Jim Renacci <jrenacci@gmail.com>; Jeanne Petty <jeanne_810@yahoo.com>; sandemellander@yahoo.com; David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>

Subject: Fwd: Records Requests for contracts.

External sender <rigargasz@gmail.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

ALL

Garon had requested city contracts Lorain has with Sheffield Lake, Ohio, service and monetary contracts lists.

Per 149.43 or any ORC that requires the public records to be made public when asked for.

As you are or may be a custodian of such records please provide them as requested by Mr. Petty.

The response provided by the Law Department is not adequate as it should have been referred to the appropriate custodian of the appropriate records.

The service director and auditor should each be a repository of such public records, correct?

Please respond to Mr. Petty.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Garon Petty
<garonpetty@roadrunner.com>
Date: January 28, 2025 at 3:38:00 PM EST
To: Lindsay Carr <Lindsay.Carr@ohioago.gov>, lcp@lcprosecutor.org, NortheastRegion@ohioauditor.gov
Cc: "Harper, Anita" <Anita_Harper@cityoflorain.org>, "Andrew Geronimo, JD" <andrew.geronimo@case.edu>, Robert J Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>, Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>, Tom Niewulis <tniewulis@ncdcs.com>, Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>, Brad Dicken <BDicken@chroniclet.com>, Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>, Carissa Woytach <cwoytach@chroniclet.com>, VEK6173@aol.com, Natalio Rodriguez <natalio@centurytel.net>, Jackie Conrad <botanist62@hotmail.com>, Kathryn Kennedy <kathrynkennedy627@gmail.com>, Kirsten Hill <kirsten@kirstenhill.com>, "Monica D. Pluta" <Monica.Pluta@lcprosecutor.org>, Craig Snodgrass <auditor@loraincounty.com>, David J Moore <DMoore@loraincounty.us>, jriddell@loraincounty.us, mgallagher@loraincounty.us, Michael Scherach <mjscherach.law@centurytel.net>, Mike Doran <mikedoran@mikedoran.com>, Mike.Brosky@fflorain.bank, Dennis Flores <dennisforlorain@gmail.com>, Linda Rivera <nriviera25594@gmail.com>, Denise Wilms <denisewilms@aol.com>, Jim Renacci <jrenacci@gmail.com>, Jeanne Petty <jeanne_810@yahoo.com>, sandemailander@yahoo.com, David Yost AG

<AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>

Subject: Records Requests for contracts.

Hello Ms Carr, Lorain County Prosecutor and
Northeast Region of Ohio Auditor,

I am now asking for an investigation why I cant
get my records request fulfilled from the City of
Lorain, Ohio?

Hello, please send me a list of all contracts the
city of Lorain, Ohio has with the city of Sheffield
Lake, Ohio, service and monetary contracts
lists.

Per 149.43 or any ORC that requires the public
records to be made public when asked for.

Thank You

Garon Petty January 17, 2025

"Mr. Petty,

Please be informed that this office is not the
keeper of any documents which constitute "a list
of all contracts the City of Lorain has with the
City of Sheffield Lake, Ohio and monetary
contracts lists." You may wish to contact the
Utilities Dept.

Law Director Riley" January 27, 2025

Help us in Lorain, Ohio please,
Garon Petty

Beko, Michele

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 12, 2026 6:35 AM
To: Beko, Michele; Brian Ames; Lorain daily; Robert J. Gargas; Garon Petty; Clevescene; Fox; Riley, Patrick; Carrlon, Rey; Mike Mason; Noelle Williams; City Council Mail Group; David Yost AG; Bradley, Jack; Dull, Breanna; Failing, Mike; Jonathan Schuppe; Sensai Cobra; LaVeck, Joseph; Morris, Jacob; Sheriff Jack Hall; Elsebeth Baumgartner; Beko, Michele; clandestinecanary; Craig Snodgrass; aos_siu Ohio Auditor; Darryl Tucker; Congresswoman Kaptur; David O'Brien; Brad Dicker; Rights ADA; Comer,David; David Yost AG; City Council Mail Group; Bradley, Jack; Dull, Breanna; Jonathan Schuppe; Scott Noll
Subject: Re: Completion of 13 Individualized Requests – Continued Compliance

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Ms. Beko:

I am following up on your December 3, 2025 email advising that the requested email records had been forwarded to the IT Department. As of today, more than one month has passed, and I have received no further update, timeline, or production.

Last week, I spent multiple days at City Hall to obtain inspection of a single custodian's emails (Springowski). That request has now been filled partially. I am requesting inspection of the remaining responsive email records that were the subject of your December 3 update.

Under R.C. 149.43(B), I am requesting to inspect the responsive records today. Inspection does not require copying, duplication, or additional processing beyond making the records available, and it is the least burdensome method of access contemplated by the statute.

Please advise immediately:

1. Where and when today the records will be made available for inspection, or

2. If the City contends the records are not yet ready, a specific written explanation of what remains outstanding and why inspection cannot occur today.

Given the length of time that has elapsed and my recent in-person inspection of other custodians' emails, further delay without justification is not reasonable under Ohio law.

I am present and available to inspect the records today and am seeking prompt confirmation.

Respectfully,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst

AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

See you later this morning!

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW

Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter

Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged

Licensed Social Worker (LSW)

Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst
AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

On Dec 3, 2025, at 12:33, Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thank you for the response. I look forward to hearing back. Make it a wonderful day!

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW
Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter
Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged
Licensed Social Worker (LSW)
Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst
AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

On Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 12:13 12 PM EST, Beko, Michèle
<michele_beko@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

Please be advised that our office has sent a request to our IT Department to obtain the information you have requested in the below email. I do not know exactly what the IT Dept's time frame will be to obtain this information as it is quite voluminous. I will keep you updated as I hear from IT.

Michèle

Michele T. Beko

Administrative Asst/Office Manager

Lorain Law Director's Office

200 West Erie Avenue, 3rd floor

Lorain, OH 44052

440.204.2250

Michele_beko@cityoflorain.org

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 10:53 AM

To: Beko, Michele <Michele_Beko@cityoflorain.org>; Robert J. Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>; Garon Petty <onelung2014@gmail.com>; Cleveland Scene <news@clevescene.com>; Lorain Daily <erik@loraindaily.com>; Mike Mason <Mike.Mason@woio.com>; Noelle Williams <Noelle.Williams@woio.com>; Fox <tips@fox8.com>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; Carrion, Rey <Rey_Carrion@cityoflorain.org>; David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>; Brian Ames <bmames00@gmail.com>; Dull, Breanna <Breanna_Dull@cityoflorain.org>; Riley, Patrick <Patrick_Riley@cityoflorain.org>; LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>; Failing, Mike <Mike_Failing@cityoflorain.org>; Morris, Jacob <Jacob_Morris@cityoflorain.org>; Kalo, Ted <Ted_Kalo@cityoflorain.org>; Jonathan Schuppe <Jonathan.Schuppe@nbcuni.com>; Craig Snodgrass <auditor@loraincounty.com>; Sensai Cobra <Justice4LorainCounty@proton.me>

Subject: Re: Completion of 13 Individualized Requests – Continued Compliance

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Subject: Final Clarification and Request for Written Confirmation Under R.C. 149.43

Director Riley, Ms. Beko, and Counsel Falbo:

I am writing to follow up on my public records requests that have been pending for more than one month. As previously explained, I have now provided clarified, Boolean-based search terms, a fixed date range, and a single custodian per request. These clarifications were made specifically to address the concerns your office raised in its November 3 communication.

At this point, the requests require only a standard keyword search of email records. The Ohio Supreme Court has repeatedly held that such searches—when tied to defined keywords and a date range—are valid, enforceable, and not overly broad, including:

- State ex rel. Zidonis v. Columbus State Community College, 133 Ohio St.3d 122 (2012)
- State ex rel. Morgan v. Strickland, 121 Ohio St.3d 600 (2009)
- State ex rel. Summers v. Fox, 2019-Ohio-3712

These decisions make clear that keyword-limited email requests do not require subjective interpretation and do not constitute an overly broad or ambiguous demand under R.C. 149.43(B).

Because the statutory obligation is to provide records within a reasonable period of time, and because the requests are now fully specified and ministerial in nature, I am requesting written confirmation of one of the following:

1. That your office has begun processing the searches, or
2. The estimated date of production and any permissible cost estimate under R.C. 149.43(B).

Please provide this written confirmation within 48 hours of receipt of this message.

If the City continues to delay or deny the requests without legal justification, I will proceed with filing under R.C. 2743.75 with the Ohio Court of Claims. If non-compliance persists after the special master's recommendation, I will file a mandamus action under R.C. 149.43(C) seeking statutory damages and all additional remedies available under the statute.

My goal remains timely, professional compliance with Ohio's Public Records Act. I am hopeful the City will take this final opportunity to resolve the matter cooperatively and without further escalation.

Respectfully,

Aaron C. Knapp, LSW, BSSW

Lorain, Ohio

a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW
Investigative Journalist, Government Accountability Reporter
Editor-in-Chief, Lorain Politics Unplugged
Licensed Social Worker (LSW)
Public Records Litigant & Research Analyst
AaronKnappUnplugged.com

NOTICE: This electronic message contains information that may be confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected from disclosure. It is intended solely for the use of the individual(s) or entity(ies) to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, disclosure, copying, distribution, or use of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete all copies from your system. Thank you.

On Nov 26, 2025, at 12:17, Aaron Knapp <a24xbeaverman@yahoo.com> wrote:

Subject: Final Notice Before Filing Under R.C. 2743.75 and R.C. 149.43

Director Riley, Ms. Beko, and Counsel Falbo:

Your office has been in possession of this request for more than a month. A "reasonable time" under R.C. 149.43(B) has long passed. I have already clarified the request in precise, Boolean terms that require no interpretation and only a straightforward database search.

At this point, I am providing **forty eight hours** to confirm one of the following in writing:

1. That your office has begun running the search, or
2. The date of production and any permissible cost estimate.

If I do not receive written confirmation by the end of this forty eight hour period, I will immediately file a complaint with the Ohio Court of Claims under R.C. 2743.75. If non-compliance continues following the special master's recommendation, I will file a mandamus action under R.C. 149.43(C) seeking statutory damages, attorneys' fees, and all remedies available.

The continued delay and unsupported denials are now part of the record for possible referral under R.C. 2921.44(E), which prohibits a public office from knowingly or recklessly failing to perform duties imposed by law.

I will not allow further delay. Please respond within forty eight hours.

Respectfully,
Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, BSSW

Lorain, Ohio

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

On Tuesday, November 11, 2025 at 06:56:32 AM EST, Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com> wrote

Director Riley, Ms. Bako, and Counsel Falbo:

I acknowledge your November 3, 2025 response referencing the term "discuss" as the reason stated for denying the requests as overly broad or ambiguous.

To eliminate any claimed ambiguity, I am narrowing and clarifying the requests. These clarifications do not change the scope of what was originally requested. They simply remove the term your office has asserted is problematic.

CLARIFIED REQUEST

(Applies to each individual custodian already identified)

Record Type: Email (including attachments)
Date Range: January 1, 2025 through August 31, 2025
Search Terms (Boolean, enter exactly as shown):

("Aaron Knapp" OR "Aaron C. Knapp" OR "Aaron Christopher Knapp" OR "Knapp" OR "a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com")

Return any responsive email in which the above terms appear in the **subject line, body text, sender field, recipient field, forwarding header, or attachment metadata**. No interpretation of intent, context, or meaning is required. This request requires only the use of standard email search functions.

Controlling Law

The Ohio Supreme Court has expressly held that keyword-limited email searches within a defined date range are valid, enforceable, and not overly broad.

- *State ex rel. Zidonis v. Columbus State Comm. Coll.*, 133 Ohio St.3d 122, 2012-Ohio-4228, ¶21
- *State ex rel. Morgan v. Strickland*, 121 Ohio St.3d 600, 2009-Ohio-1901
- *State ex rel. Summers v. Fox*, 2019-Ohio-3712, ¶18

These decisions post-date and limit the applicability of the *Farr/Taber* reasoning previously cited. The statute requires a **reasonable search**, not subjective interpretation. This clarification removes the interpretive issue your office raised, leaving only the ministerial task of running the database query.

Final Opportunity to Comply

This request has now been pending for over one month. Any further delay would not be consistent with the requirement under R.C. 149.43(B) to provide responsive records within a reasonable period of time

Please confirm in writing within five (5) business days either:

- 1 That processing has begun, or
- 2 The estimated date of production and any permissible cost estimate under R.C. 149.43(B).

If the City does not comply or continues to rely on unsupported grounds for withholding records, I will file a complaint under R.C. 2743.75. If non-compliance persists after a Court of Claims ruling, I will initiate a mandamus action under R.C. 149.43(C) seeking statutory damages of \$100 per business day, up to \$1,000 per request, along with attorney's fees.

Please also be advised that knowing or reckless failure to perform duties imposed by R.C. 149.43 may constitute a violation of R.C. 2921.44(E) (failure to perform a legal duty). I am documenting the pattern of prolonged delays and unsupported denials for potential referral after the conclusion of the R.C. 2743.75 proceeding.

Respectfully,
Aaron C. Knapp, LSW, BSSW
Lorain, Ohio

On Friday, October 10, 2025 at 10:29:17 AM EDT, Aaron Knapp
<a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com> wrote:

Ms. Beko,

That completes the last of the 13 individualized public records requests I've submitted today. I want to note that I'm genuinely disappointed it became necessary to file them separately when the original consolidated request sought the exact same material — simply framed more efficiently.

Forcing citizens to break a single lawful request into a dozen pieces is not in the letter or spirit of Ohio's Public Records Act. The statute, case law, and Attorney General's Sunshine Manual all emphasize cooperation, reasonable interpretation, and assisting requesters in obtaining public records, not creating procedural roadblocks.

At this point, I've fully complied with every "specificity" demand that could possibly be raised. Each request now names one custodian, one record type, a defined date range, and fixed search terms. It should not take another denial or delay to begin production.

Please advise whether the City intends to continue this pattern of obstruction or whether we can move forward with the professional cooperation required by law, code, and basic human decency.

Respectfully,
Aaron C. Knapp, LSW, BSSW
4220 Talbot Ln
Lorain, OH 44055
a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com

**Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW, COCA
NASW Member ID: 886836612**

NOTICE THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

Beko, Michele

From: LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 2:07 PM
To: Failing, Mike
Cc: Carrion, Rey
Subject: FW: Response to Public Records Denial and Misapplication of R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v)

DC Failing:

Can we please discuss?

Thanks.

Joseph T. LaVeck, Esq
Chief Asst. Law Director & Police Legal Advisor
200 W. Erie Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lorain, Ohio 44052
joseph_laveck@cityoflorain.org

From: LaVeck, Joseph
Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 1:46 PM
To: 'Aaron Knapp' <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>; City Council <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Robert J. Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; <onelong2014@gmail.com>; Lorain PD Records Request <LPDRecordsRequest@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: RE: Response to Public Records Denial and Misapplication of R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v)

Mr. Knapp:

Thank you for your email. I am in the process of re-reviewing the records and checking City records. I am working to provide a timely response to you.

Thank you.

Best Regards,

Joseph T. LaVeck, Esq
Chief Asst. Law Director & Police Legal Advisor
200 W. Erie Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lorain, Ohio 44052
joseph_laveck@cityoflorain.org

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 1:36 PM
To: LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Robert J. Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; Garon Petty <onelong2014@gmail.com>; Lorain PD Records Request <LPDRecordsRequest@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: Response to Public Records Denial and Misapplication of R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v)

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA, BSSW
4220 Talbot Lane
Lorain, OH 44055
Email: a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com

July 13, 2025

Joseph T. LaVeck, Esq.
Assistant Law Director & Police Legal Advisor
City of Lorain
200 W. Erie Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lorain, Ohio 44052
Email: joseph.laveck@cityoflorain.org

RE: Response to Public Records Denial and Misapplication of R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v)

Dear Attorney LaVeck:

Thank you for your July 24, 2023 response to my public records request regarding a complaint reportedly submitted to the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage & Family Therapist Board by a member of the Lorain Police Department. I respectfully submit this written reply to clarify the applicable legal standards and to dispute your cited basis for denial.

You state that "even if there was a complaint made or information provided by a City of Lorain employee to the Board," any complaint or information provided would be confidential and therefore not a public record," citing R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v) and R.C. 4757.38(B)(1). However, your interpretation misapplies these statutes by conflating the confidentiality obligations of the receiving agency (i.e., the Social Work Board) with those of the originating public office (i.e., the City of Lorain).

1. The Email Complaint, If Sent from a City-Issued Account, Is a Public Record Under Ohio Law

Under Ohio's Public Records Act, a "public record" includes any document, regardless of format, "that is created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction of any public office of the state or its political subdivisions, which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office." R.C. 149.011(G); see also R.C. 149.43(A)(1).

It is well-settled that emails sent from city-owned computers or email accounts, relating to public business, are public records. See *State ex rel. Wilson-Simmons v. Lake Cty. Sheriff's Dep't*, 82 Ohio St.3d 37 (1998); see also *State ex rel. Toledo Blade Co. v. Seneca Cty. Bd. of Comm'rs*, 120 Ohio St.3d 372, 2008-Ohio-6253.

A complaint submitted by a police officer or any city employee using city email or during the course of official duties documents the activities of the city office. The city's copy—whether in a sent folder, server archive, or data backup—is subject to R.C. 149.43, regardless of where else it may have been sent. As confirmed in *State ex rel. Cincinnati Enquirer v. Krings*, 2000 Ohio App. LEXIS 5854, the public's right of access does not depend on where a record ends up, but where it originated and whether it documents public business.

2. The Confidentiality of the Board's Investigative Records Does Not Extend to the City's Copy

You cite R.C. 4757.38(B)(1), which indeed prohibits the Social Work Board from disclosing complaints or investigative records. However, this statute applies only to the Board, it does not prohibit the originating agency

from disclosing the same document. There is no language in R.C. 4757.38 that extends this confidentiality mandate to third-party public offices like the City of Lorain. As the Ohio Attorney General's *Sunshine Laws Manual* explains, an exception to the Public Records Act must be "explicit," and cannot be implied or inferred from another agency's rules or duties.

Moreover, the Supreme Court of Ohio has been clear that a public record does not become confidential simply because it was later transferred to another agency with stricter disclosure laws. See *State ex rel. Findlay Publishing Co. v. Hancock Cty. Bd. of Comm'rs*, 80 Ohio St.3d 134 (1997).

3. R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v) Does Not Apply Absent a Specific Prohibition on Release by Law

R.C. 149.43(A)(1)(v) excludes from disclosure only records "the release of which is prohibited by state or federal law." To invoke this exemption, a public office must show that a specific statute *prohibits the public office in question*—in this case, the City of Lorain—from releasing the record. There is no such statute here. Again, R.C. 4757.38(B)(1) governs the Board—not your office, not the police department.

Unless you can cite an actual statute that forbids the City of Lorain from releasing an email authored and sent by one of its employees from city servers, the record remains a public record and must be disclosed.

4. Public Accountability Demands Disclosure When a Complaint Is Filed in the Name of a Public Agency

Finally, I reiterate that the complaint in question was allegedly submitted not merely by a private citizen, but by an individual claiming to act on behalf of "the Lorain Police Department." If a complaint was filed purporting to represent a public agency, it absolutely qualifies as a matter of public interest, accountability, and transparency. It raises significant ethical and administrative questions if a city employee falsely represented the agency to an outside licensing body, and the public has a right to inspect such correspondence.

5. Next Steps

I remain committed to resolving this matter cooperatively. However, if your office continues to deny this request without proper statutory justification, I will proceed with a formal complaint to the Ohio Court of Claims under R.C. 2743.75. Additionally, I will consider filing a whistleblower retaliation claim based on the retaliatory nature of the original complaint and the City's subsequent actions affecting my employment and licensure.

Please respond within a reasonable timeframe and reconsider the City's position in light of the above analysis. I request that the City of Lorain conduct a search of all city email servers, including Chief McCann's, for any communications sent to the Social Work Board between June 2023 and July 2023 referencing me or purporting to represent the Lorain Police Department.

Respectfully,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA(p), BSSW

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW, CDCA
NASW Member ID: 886836612

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

Beko, Michele

From: Bowles, Scott <Scott_Bowles@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 12:08 PM
To: Kokoski, Lori
Subject: RE: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

It appears to me that the initial request from Mr. Petty is asking for:

- (1) a list of names of all police officers that have resigned;
- (2) a list of names of all police officers that have retired; and
- (3) a list of police officers that have been disciplined for the years 2023, 2024, 2025.

If no such lists exist, the record holder is under no obligation to create such records, *State ex rel. Griffin v. Schimeyer*, 166 Ohio St. 3d 258, P5 (2021); *State ex rel. Lanham v. Smith*, 112 Ohio St. 3d 527, P15 (2007) (“Respondents have no duty to create or provide access to nonexistent records.”); *Alt v. Cuyahoga Cty. Prob. Dep’t*, 2017-Ohio-4250, P16 (2017). However, if such records do exist, *and* they are not subject to any exception from public records request, then they must be provided. O.R.C. Ann. 149.43; *State ex rel. Ohio Patrolmen’s Benevolent Ass’n v. City of Mentor*, 89 Ohio St. 3d 440, P1 (2000).

Regarding Mr. Knapp’s requests, it appears that he is asking for research to be conducted or to identify records containing the information. “The Public Records Act does not compel a public office ‘to do research or to identify records containing selected information.’” *State ex rel. Shaughnessy v. City of Cleveland*, 149 Ohio St. 3d 612, P10. “Public Officials are not required to research records in order to determine which records contain selected information sought by the requestor. *State ex rel. Howson v. Edmonson*, 2024-Ohio-4619, P25.

Knapp writes: “Each officer has a record in his file showing he left. Provide each one of those for every officer who left...”

If it is necessary to search each officer’s file to determine whether the file contains a responsive document, that would task the keeper of the records with researching and/or identifying records containing selected information, which the record holder is under no obligation to do. *State ex rel. Shaughnessy*, 149 Ohio St. 3d 612 at P10.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Scott Bowles
Assistant Prosecutor
City of Lorain Law Department
(440) 204-2250

From: LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 11:10 AM
To: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>
Cc: Bowles, Scott <Scott_Bowles@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: RE: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

Lori,

I am looping Mr. Bowles into this conversation, as I will be out of the office here shortly.

Best Regards,

Joseph T. LaVeck, Esq
Chief Asst. Law Director & Police Legal Advisor
200 W. Erie Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lorain, Ohio 44052
joseph_laveck@cityoflorain.org

From: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 10:45 AM
To: LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: RE: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

This was the original request from Petty.

Hello Lori, Please send me the names of all police officers who have resigned, retired, been disciplined for the years 2023, 2024, and 2025 per ORC 149.43

Then Knapp requested:

So you are refusing to give us the names of these officers, correct?

I assume you have a "law" to reference?

Can't just say no. You guys like to play games. Let's just go back to the court of claims again. Stop stone walling.

Provide the law on which you are denying this request.

I provided the law you cited stating that I do not have to create a record...

From: LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 10:07 AM
To: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: RE: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

Lori:

I am unsure as to what is exactly being requested? Does your office retain records indicating the termination of employment between the City of Lorain and the employee? You have a legal obligation to assist Mr. Knapp in obtaining what he is requesting, though based upon his emails it is unclear to me what exactly he has requested.

Thanks.

Best Regards,

Joseph T. LaVeck, Esq
Chief Asst. Law Director & Police Legal Advisor
200 W. Erie Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lorain, Ohio 44052
joseph_laveck@cityoflorain.org

From: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 9:06 AM
To: LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>
Subject: FW: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

Please advise ...

Thanks,

Lori

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 8:48 AM
To: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>
Cc: Garon Petty <garonpetty@roadrunner.com>; Robert J Gargas <rjgargas@gmail.com>; Tony Cillo <antcillo.cillo@gmail.com>; Lindsay Carr <lindsay.carr@ohioago.gov>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>; Riley, Patrick <Patrick_Riley@cityoflorain.org>; Brad Dicken <BDicken@chroniclef.com>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>
Subject: Re: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

I'm not asking you to create anything. I'm asking for all officers who'd left. You don't have retention records. Ok back to the court of claims. You really are this ignorant?

Each officer has a record in his file showing he left. Provide each one of those for every officer who left and stop trying to argue. It's not your money that you are costing taxpayers.

Stop. You do not have the education to fight me on this.
Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA(p), BSSW

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS

INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

On Feb 6, 2025, at 08:30, Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

Here is the legal authority:

"A public office has no duty under R.C. 149.43 to create new records by searching for and compiling information from existing records."

Reinel v. Butler City Auditor, 2018-Ohio-2914, 2018 Ohio Misc. LEXIS 63

From: Aaron Knapp <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 5:55 PM

To: Garon Petty <garonpetty@roadrunner.com>

Cc: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>; Robert J Gargasz <rjgargasz@gmail.com>; Tony Cillo <antcillo.cill@gmail.com>; Lindsay Carr <lindsay.carr@ohioago.gov>; City Council Mail Group <CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; LaVeck, Joseph <Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>; Riley, Patrick <Patrick_Riley@cityoflorain.org>; Brad Dicken <BDicken@chroniclet.com>; Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; David Yost AG <AGOCARES@ohioago.gov>

Subject: Re: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

External sender <a4xbeaverman@yahoo.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

So you are refusing to give us the names of these officers, correct?

I assume you have a "law" to reference?

Can't just say no. You guys like to play games. Let's just go back to the court of claims again. Stop stone walling.

Provide the law on which you are denying this request.

Aaron Christopher Knapp, LSW, CDCA(p),BSSW

NOTICE: THIS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE TRANSMISSION CONTAINS INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL OR PRIVILEGED. THE INFORMATION IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ENTITY(IES) NAMED ABOVE. IF YOU ARE NOT THE INTENDED RECIPIENT, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT ANY DISCLOSURE, COPYING, DISTRIBUTION, OR USE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS INFORMATION IS PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION IN ERROR, PLEASE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFY THE SENDER AND DELETE THE COPY YOU RECEIVED.

On Feb 3, 2025, at 13:12, Garon Petty <garonpetty@roadrunner.com> wrote:

Thank you.

Garon Petty

On Feb 3, 2025, at 11:44 AM, Kokoski, Lori
<Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org> wrote:

Mr. Petty,

Please see the response from the Law Department.

Thanks,

Lori

Lori,

Ohio law does not require you to produce a record in order to respond to a public records request.

Best Regards,

Joseph T. LaVeck, Esq
Chief Asst. Law Director & Police Legal Advisor
200 W. Erie Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lorain, Ohio 44052

-----Original Message-----

From: Garon Petty <garonpetty@roadrunner.com>

Sent: Saturday, February 1, 2025 9:25 AM

To: Kokoski, Lori <Lori_Kokoski@cityoflorain.org>

Cc: Bradley, Jack <Jack_Bradley@cityoflorain.org>; McCann, James - Chief <Jim_McCann@cityoflorain.org>; Comer, David <DComer@CityofLorain.org>; Riley, Patrick <Patrick_Riley@cityoflorain.org>; Harper, Anita

<Anita_Harper@cityoflorain.org>; Zaleski, Don
<Don_Zaleski@cityoflorain.org>; LaVeck, Joseph
<Joseph_LaVeck@cityoflorain.org>; City Council Mail Group
<CityCouncilMailGroup@cityoflorain.org>; Carrion, Rey
<Rey_Carrion@cityoflorain.org>

Subject: Names of all police Officers who have left Lorain PD

External sender <garonpetty@roadrunner.com>

Make sure you trust this sender before taking any actions.

Hello Lori, Please send me the names of all police officers who have resigned, retired, been disciplined for the years 2023, 2024, and 2025 per ORC 149.43.

Thank you,
Garon Petty

Beko, Michele

From: Dull, Breanna <Breanna_Dull@cityoflorain.org>
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 10:52 AM
To: Riley, Patrick; Zaleski, Don
Cc: Beko, Michele; Falbo, Carlie
Subject: Requested Info
Attachments: 1.21.25_Reg_Mins.pdf

Minutes are attached.

Link to the 1/16 Meeting video: <https://lorainoh.suiteonemedia.com/event/?id=2803>

