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POLICY SECTION

Library Public Records Commission and Policy

Introduction

It is the policy of the Licking County Library that openness leads to a better-informed citizenry, which leads to better government and better public policy. It is the policy of the Library to strictly adhere to the state's Public Records Act.

In order to best comply with this statement, the Board of Trustees of the Licking County Library hereby creates the Library's *Public Records Commission*. This Commission shall consist of the seven members of the Board of Trustees of the Licking County Library and the Library's Fiscal Officer. The Commission shall meet as business requires but no less than once every twelve months. The purpose of the meeting(s) shall be to review applications for one-time disposals of the Library's public records, to review and/or to revise the Library's public records retention schedule, and to provide rules for the retention and disposal of the Library's public records pursuant to all applicable sections of the ORC.

Section 1 - Public records

In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code and applicable judicial decisions, records are defined as any item that (i) contains information stored on a fixed medium (such as paper, electronic – including but not limited to e-mail – and other formats); (ii) is created or received by, or sent under the jurisdiction of a public office and (iii) documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Library. Public records are to be open to the public at all reasonable times with exceptions only as provided for in the law.

Section 1.1

As required by Ohio law, it is the policy of the Library that records will be organized and maintained so that they are available for inspection at all reasonable times during regular business hours and copies will be made available within a reasonable period of time (See Section 4 for the e-mail record policy). Record retention schedules are to be updated as needed and displayed conspicuously at downtown Newark Library and all branch libraries.

Section 2 - Record requests

Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

Section 2.1

If a requester makes an ambiguous or overly broad request or has difficulty in making a request for copies or inspection of public records under this section such that the Library or the person responsible for the requested public record cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested, the Library or the person responsible for the requested public record may deny the request but shall provide the requester with an opportunity to revise the request by informing the requester of the manner in which records are maintained by the Library and accessed in the ordinary course of the Library's business or duties.

Section 2.2

The requester does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide his or her identity, or the intended use of the requested public record.

Section 2.3

Only public records responsive to the request are to be available for inspection during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 10:00 am until 5:00 pm), with the exception of published holidays. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within 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.

Section 2.4

Each request should be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records.

Section 2.5

The denial of a request for public records must include an explanation of the reason why the request was denied. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. If there are redactions, each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation.

Section 3 - Costs for Public Records

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies. If the total cost of copies will exceed \$10 the requester will be asked to pay for the copies in advance.

Section 3.1

The charge for paper copies is the appropriate size and type of copy cost per page as available on the photocopiers available at the Library for public use.

Section 3.2

The charge for downloaded computer files to a computer diskette is the current applicable cost charged to the public when purchased at the Library of their computer use.

Section 3.3

There is no charge for documents e-mailed.

Section 3.4

Requesters may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies.

Section 4 - E-mail

E-mail is to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and should follow the same retention schedules.

Section 4.1

Records in personal or private e-mail accounts used to conduct public business are subject to disclosure, and all employees or representatives of the Library are instructed to retain their e-mails that relate to public business (see Section 1 Public Records) and to copy them to their Library e-mail accounts.

Section 4.2

The records custodian is to treat the e-mails from personal, private accounts, as records of the Library, filing them in the appropriate way, retaining them per established schedules and making them available for inspection and copying in accordance with the Public Records Act.

Section 5 – Library Contact

The Record Custodian is the library's Fiscal Officer. The Record Custodian may be reached at accounting@lickingcountylibrary.org or 740-349-5505.