

## PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY FOR METRO UTILITY DEPARTMENT

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(g), Metro Utility Department (MUD) adopts this Public Records Policy to provide economical and efficient access to public records as provided under the Tennessee Public Records Act (“TPRA”) in Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-501, et seq.

### I. Definitions:

A. Records Custodian: The office, official or employee lawfully responsible for the direct custody and care of a public record. The records custodian is not necessarily the original preparer or receiver of the record.

B. Public Records: All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by MUD.

C. Public Records Request Coordinator: The individual designated in Section III.A.3 of this Policy who has the responsibility to ensure public record requests are routed to the appropriate records custodian and are fulfilled in accordance with the TPRA. The Public Records Request Coordinator may also be the records custodian.

D. Requestor: A person seeking access to a public record, whether it is for inspection or duplication.

### II. Requesting Access to Public Records

A. Public record requests will be made to the Public Records Request Coordinator (“PRRC”) or his/her designee.

B. Requests for inspection only cannot be required in writing. The PRRC should request a mailing or email address from the requestor for providing any written communication required under the TPRA.

C. Requests for inspection may be made orally or in writing using the Public Records Request Form which is attached. Requests for inspection may be made in person at 705 Fayetteville Highway, Lynchburg, TN 37352 or by mail at P.O. Box 503 Lynchburg, TN 37352. Requests for inspection may be made by phone at 931.759.4297 or by fax at 931.229.4064. Requests for inspection may also be submitted by email at [metroh20mc@gmail.com](mailto:metroh20mc@gmail.com).

D. Requests for copies, or requests for inspection and copies, must be made in writing by using the Public Records Request Form which is attached. The Public Records Request Form may be submitted to MUD in person at MUD’s office at 705 Fayetteville Highway, Lynchburg, TN 37352; by mail at P.O. Box 503, Lynchburg, TN 37352; or by email at [metroh20mc@gmail.com](mailto:metroh20mc@gmail.com).

E. Proof of Tennessee citizenship by presentation of a valid Tennessee driver’s license

(or other government-issued photo identification that includes the requestor's address) is required as a condition to inspect or receive copies of public records. If the requestor does not have such identification, the PRRC may accept a current, valid Tennessee voter's registration card.

F. The requestor may provide his or her identification in person or by sending an electronic copy to the PRRC.

### **III. Responding to Public Records Requests**

#### **A. Public Record Request Coordinator**

1. The PRRC will review public record requests and make an initial determination of the following:

- a. If the requestor provided valid evidence of Tennessee citizenship;
- b. If the records requested are described with sufficient specificity to identify them; and
- c. If MUD is the custodian of the records.

2. The PRRC will acknowledge receipt of the request and take any of the following appropriate actions:

- a. Advise the requestor of this Policy and the elections made regarding:
  - i. Proof of Tennessee citizenship;
  - ii. Form(s) required for copies;
  - iii. Fees (and labor threshold and waivers, if applicable); and
  - iv. Aggregation of multiple or frequent requests.
- b. If appropriate, deny the request in writing, providing the appropriate ground such as one of the following:
  - i. The requestor is not, or has not presented evidence of being, a Tennessee citizen;
  - ii. The request lacks specificity (offer to assist in clarification);
  - iii. An exemption makes the record not subject to disclosure under the TPRA (provide the exemption in written denial);
  - iv. MUD is not the custodian of the requested records;
  - v. The records do not exist; or
  - vi. The Requestor has not paid the estimated fees and charges for copies.
- c. If appropriate, contact the requestor to see if the request can be clarified or narrowed.
- d. Forward the records request to the appropriate records custodian for MUD.
- e. If requested records are in the custody of a different governmental entity, and the PRRC knows the correct governmental entity, advise the requestor of the correct governmental entity and PRRC for that entity, if known.

3. The designated PRRC is:

a. Name or title: The General Manager of MUD.

b. Contact information: 705 Fayetteville Highway, Lynchburg, TN 37352 (MUD office); P.O. Box 503, Lynchburg, TN 37352 (mail); phone# 931.759.4297; or email: metroh2omc@gmail.com

4. The PRRC will report annually to the Utility Board on the MUD's compliance with the TPRA pursuant to this Policy and will make recommendations, if any, for improvement or changes to this Policy.

#### B. Records Custodian

1. Upon receiving a public records request, a records custodian will promptly make requested public records available in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503. If the records custodian is uncertain that an applicable exemption applies, the custodian may consult with the PRRC, MUD's legal counsel, or the Office of Open Records Counsel (OORC).

2. If it is not practicable to promptly provide requested records because additional time is necessary to determine whether the requested records exist; to search for, retrieve, or otherwise gain access to records; to determine whether the records are open; to redact records; or for other similar reasons, then a records custodian will, within seven (7) business days from the records custodian's receipt of the request, send the requestor a completed Public Records Request Response Form which is attached.

3. If a records custodian denies a public record request, he or she will deny the request in writing as provided in Section III.A.2.b using the Public Records Request Response Form.

4. If a records custodian reasonably determines the production of records should be segmented because the records request is for a large volume of records, or additional time is necessary to prepare the records for access, the records custodian will use the Public Records Request Response Form to notify the requestor that production of the records will be in segments and that a records production schedule will be provided as expeditiously as practicable. If appropriate, the records custodian should contact the requestor to see if the request can be clarified or narrowed.

#### C. Redaction

1. If a record contains confidential information or information that is not open for public inspection, the records custodian will prepare a redacted copy prior to providing access. If questions arise concerning redaction, the records custodian should coordinate with legal counsel or other appropriate parties regarding review and redaction of records. The records custodian and the PRRC may consult with the OORC.

2. Whenever a redacted record is provided, a records custodian should provide the requestor with the basis for redaction. The basis given for redaction will be general in nature and not disclose confidential information.

#### **IV. Inspection of Records**

A. There will be no charge for just the inspection of public records.

B. The location for inspection of records within MUD's office should be determined by either the PRRC or the records custodian.

#### **V. Copies of Records**

A. A records custodian will promptly respond to a public record request for copies in the most economic and efficient manner practicable.

B. Copies will be available for pickup at a location specified by the records custodian.

C. Upon payment for postage, copies will be delivered by the United States Postal Service to the requestor's home address or other address specified by the requestor. MUD may use other means of delivery in its discretion.

D. A requestor will not be allowed to make copies of records with personal equipment.

#### **VI. Fees and Charges and Procedures for Billing and Payment**

A. Fees and charges for copies of public records should not be used to hinder access to public records.

B. Records custodians will provide requestors with an itemized estimate of the fees and charges prior to producing copies of records and may require pre-payment of such fees and charges before producing requested records.

C. When fees for copies and labor do not exceed \$20, the fees may be waived. Requests for waivers for fees above \$20 must be presented to the General Manager, who is authorized to determine if such waiver should be granted. Fees associated with aggregated records requests will not be waived.

D. Fees and charges for copies are as follows:

1. \$0.15 per page for letter and legal size black and white copies.

2. \$0.50 per page for letter and legal size color copies.

3. The actual out-of-pocket costs for flash drives or similar storage devices on which electronic copies are provided.

4. The actual cost of postage or shipping.

5. The cost of labor at an employee's hourly rate for time spent locating, retrieving, reviewing, redacting, and reproducing records, excluding the first hour of labor spent to produce the records.

6. If an outside vendor is used, the actual costs assessed by the vendor.

E. Payment is to be made in cash, by personal check or by credit card.

F. Payment in advance will be required when costs are estimated to exceed \$50.

G. Aggregation of Frequent and Multiple Requests

1. MUD will aggregate record requests in accordance with the Frequent and Multiple Request Policy promulgated by the OORC when more than (4) requests are received within a calendar month (either from a single individual or a group of individuals deemed working in concert).

2. If aggregating:

a. The PRRC is responsible for making the determination that a group of individuals are working in concert. The PRRC or the records custodian must inform the individuals that they have been deemed to be working in concert and that they have the right to appeal the decision to the OORC.

b. Routinely released and readily accessible records excluded from aggregation include, but are not limited to board meeting minutes and audit reports.

**PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM**

Metro Lynchburg Moore Co Utility Department

*The Tennessee Public Records Act (TPRA) grants Tennessee citizens the right to access open public records that exist at the time of the request. The TPRA does NOT require records custodians to compile information or create or recreate records that do not exist.*

**To: Metro Lynchburg Moore County Utility Department, General Manager, P.O. Box 503, Lynchburg, TN 37352**

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

Is the requestor a Tennessee citizen?       Yes       No

*Proof of Tennessee citizenship by presentation of a valid Tennessee driver's license (or alternative acceptable for of ID) is required as a condition to inspect or receive copies of public records. Please provide copy.*

**Request:**       **Inspection only** (The TPRA does not permit fees or require a written request for inspection only)  
 **Copy/Duplicate** (Note: Fees may apply)  
If costs for copies are assessed, the requestor has a right to receive an estimate. Do you wish to waive your right to an estimate and agree to pay copying and duplication costs in an amount not to exceed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ if so, initial here \_\_\_\_\_.

**Delivery preference:**  On-Site Pick-Up    USPS First-Class Mail    Electronic

**Records Requested:**

Provide a detailed description of the record(s) requested, including: (1) type of record; (2) timeframe or dates for the records sought; and (3) subject matter or key words related to the records. Under the TPRA, record requests must be sufficiently detailed to enable a governmental entity to identify the specific records sought. As such, your record request must provide enough detail to enable the records custodian responding to the request to identify the specific records you are seeking (add additional pages if needed):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Requestor and Date Submitted**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Public Records Request Coordinator and Date Received**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PUBLIC RECORD REQUEST RESPONSE FORM**  
Metro Lynchburg Moore County Utility Department  
705 Fayetteville Highway  
Lynchburg, TN 37352

Date \_\_\_\_\_

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In response to your records request received on (date) \_\_\_\_\_ our office is taking the action(s) indicated below:

- The public record(s) responsive to your request will be made available for inspection:  
    Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
    Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_
- Copies of public record(s) responsive to your request are:
  - Attached;
  - Available for pickup at the following location \_\_\_\_\_
- Being delivered via:
  - USPS First Class Mail     Electronically     Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Your request is denied on the following grounds:
- Your request was not sufficiently detailed to enable identification of the specific requested record(s). You need to provide additional information to identify the requested record(s).
- No such record(s) exists or this office does not maintain record(s) responsive to your request.
- No proof of Tennessee citizenship was presented with your request. Your request will be reconsidered upon presentation of an adequate form of identification.
- You are not a Tennessee citizen.
- You have not paid the estimated copying/production fees.
- The following state, federal, or other applicable law prohibits disclosure of the requested records:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- It is not practicable for the records you requested to be made promptly available for inspection and/or copying because:
  - It has not yet been determined that records responsive to your request exist; or
  - The office is still in the process of retrieving, reviewing, and/or redacting the requested records.

The time reasonably necessary to produce the record(s) or information and/or to make a determination of a proper response to your request is: \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have any additional questions regarding your record request, please contact the General Manager at the address above.