

## **OPEN RECORDS REQUEST COST RECOVERY POLICY**

### **THE WATER, SEWER & GAS BOARD OF THE TOWN OF WEDOWEE**

**Effective Date: 5/29/2026**

#### **Purpose**

The Water, Sewer & Gas Board of the Town of Wedowee ("Board") maintains numerous operational, financial, engineering, customer service, personnel, and regulatory records in the course of conducting its business. Responding to requests for records requires the expenditure of employee time and Board resources. The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform method for recovering the actual administrative costs associated with locating, reviewing, compiling, redacting, reproducing, and providing requested records.

#### **Administrative Cost Recovery**

The Board may charge the requesting party for the actual costs incurred in responding to a records request. Such costs may include:

1. Employee time required to:
  - a. Receive and review the request;
  - b. Identify responsive records;
  - c. Retrieve records from physical or electronic storage;
  - d. Review records for confidential or exempt information;
  - e. Redact protected information;
  - f. Compile, organize, scan, copy, and produce records;
  - g. Correspond with the requester regarding clarification, scope, or delivery.
2. Copying and reproduction costs.
3. Electronic media costs, including flash drives, disks, or other storage devices.
4. Postage, shipping, and delivery costs.
5. Third-party vendor costs incurred by the Board to retrieve, reproduce, or provide records.

#### **Administrative Labor Rate**

The Board has determined that the fully burdened cost of the employee primarily responsible for processing records requests is Fifty-Four Dollars (\$54.00) per hour.

For billing purposes, administrative labor shall be calculated at the rate of \$54.00 per hour in increments of one-quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) hour.

#### **Minimum Administrative Charge**

Because even routine requests require administrative review, record identification, retrieval, and response preparation, a minimum administrative charge of One Hour (\$54.00) shall apply to each distinct records request.

### **Multiple Items Requested**

When a request contains multiple categories, files, accounts, projects, contracts, invoices, correspondence groups, or other distinct record sets, the Board may assess additional administrative time based upon the actual time required to locate, review, compile, and produce each requested item.

As a general guideline, simple requests typically require approximately one hour of administrative processing per requested item. Actual charges may be greater or less depending upon the complexity of the request.

### **Deposits**

For requests estimated to exceed \$100.00 in administrative costs, the Board may require a deposit of fifty percent (50%) of the estimated cost before beginning work.

For requests estimated to exceed \$500.00 in administrative costs, the Board may require full payment of the estimated cost before beginning work.

### **Final Billing**

Upon completion of the request, the Board shall provide an invoice reflecting the actual costs incurred. Any overpayment shall be refunded. Any underpayment shall be due prior to the release of the requested records.

### **Clarification of Requests**

The Board reserves the right to require clarification of any request that is vague, overly broad, unduly burdensome, or insufficiently specific to allow identification of the records sought.

### **No Waiver**

The voluntary production of records shall not constitute an admission that any particular requestor is entitled to receive records under any statute, nor shall compliance with a request waive any legal objection, privilege, exemption, confidentiality requirement, or defense available to the Board.

The Board reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time without notice.

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