

Town of Sabattus

Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) Policy

Effective Date: 05/19/2026

Adopted By: Sabattus Select Board

Authority: 1 M.R.S.A. §§ 400–414 (Maine Freedom of Access Act)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Town of Sabattus complies with the Maine Freedom of Access Act (“FOAA”) by providing public access to records and proceedings while protecting confidential information as allowed by law. This policy establishes procedures, responsibilities, timelines, and allowable costs associated with FOAA requests.

2. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town of Sabattus to provide prompt, reasonable access to public records and proceedings in accordance with the Maine Freedom of Access Act. All Town officials, employees, contractors, and board members shall comply with FOAA requirements.

3. FOAA Public Records Officer (Contact)

The **Town Clerk** is designated as the **FOAA Public Records Officer** for the Town of Sabattus.

FOAA Contact:

Town Clerk

Town of Sabattus

190 Middle Road, Sabattus, ME 04280

Phone: (207) -_375-4331

Email: info@sabattus.org

The FOAA Officer is responsible for receiving, coordinating, tracking, and responding to FOAA requests, in consultation with department heads and legal counsel as necessary.

4. Public Records Defined

A *public record* includes any graphic, electronic, written, or recorded material that is in the possession or control of the Town and used in connection with the transaction of public or governmental business, unless specifically exempted by statute.

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Emails and text messages used for Town business
 - Reports, contracts, invoices, and financial records
 - Permits, applications, and correspondence
 - Meeting minutes and agendas
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5. Exempt and Confidential Records

The Town shall protect records that are confidential under state or federal law. Common exemptions include, but are not limited to:

- Personnel files (except as allowed by law)
- Medical and personal identifying information
- Attorney-client privileged materials
- Records made confidential by statute
- Certain law enforcement and security records

If a record contains both public and confidential information, the Town will redact exempt portions and release the remainder where feasible.

6. Submitting a FOAA Request

FOAA requests:

- Verbal or written
- Should describe the records requested with reasonable specificity
- Should be directed to the **FOAA Public Records Officer**

Requests are processed during normal business hours.

7. Response Time

The Town will acknowledge receipt of a FOAA request **within 5 business days** and will:

- Provide the records,
- Deny the request with statutory citation, or
- Provide a reasonable estimate of time needed to comply

Requests requiring extensive search, review, or redaction may take additional time.

8. Inspection of Records

Records may be inspected at the Town Office during regular business hours by appointment. Original documents will not leave Town custody. Copies may be provided subject to applicable fees.

9. Fees and Costs

The Town of Sabattus will assess fees as permitted under Maine FOAA.

A. Copying Fees

- **Paper copies:** Up to **\$0.25 per page**
- **Electronic copies:** No charge if readily available and transmitted electronically; actual media costs may be charged if physical media is required

B. Staff Time Charges

The Town may charge for staff time **after the first 2 hours**, provided the request:

- Requires more than 2 hours of staff time, and
- Involves searching for, compiling, reviewing, or redacting records

Staff time charges:

- Billed at the **lowest-paid Town employee capable of performing the task**
- Charged in **15-minute increments**

C. Redaction and Review

Time spent reviewing records for confidentiality and redacting exempt information may be billable if total staff time exceeds 2 hours.

D. Advance Payment

The Town may require **advance payment** of estimated costs exceeding **\$30** before continuing work on a request.

E. Fee Waivers or Reductions

Fees may be waived or reduced if:

- The request is in the public interest, or
 - The requester demonstrates financial hardship (at the Town's discretion)
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10. Denial of Requests

Denials must be in writing and shall:

- State the reason for denial
 - Cite the applicable statutory exemption
 - Inform the requester of available appeal rights
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11. Appeals

Any person denied access to a public record may appeal the decision as provided by 1 M.R.S.A. § 409.

12. Retention and Records Management

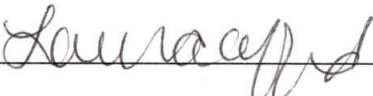
This policy does not alter records retention requirements under Maine law. Records shall be retained and disposed of in accordance with approved retention schedules.

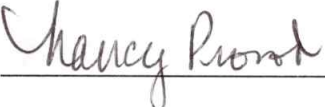
13. Training and Compliance

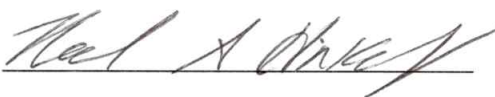
Town officials and employees involved in records creation or retention shall receive guidance on FOAA compliance. Questions regarding FOAA should be directed to the Town Clerk or legal counsel.

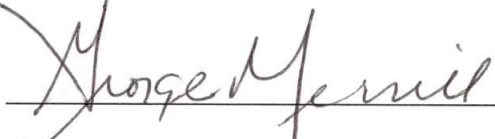
14. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as needed to reflect changes in law or Town operations.


Laura Clifford- Chair


Nancy Provost


Noel Hinkley


George Merrill


Rick Lacombe