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**Subject:** Re: Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 7:11:12 AM Central Daylight Time  
**From:** Matthew Tortorice  
**To:** District 5, James Chapman, City Clerk, City Council, Paul Irwin, Anthony Irwin  
**BCC:**  
**Attachments:** MT\_Signature.png

Jonathan,

I understand your position, and I will respond simply so there is no confusion.

The City has already provided you with comprehensive financial records, including transaction-level data, check detail reports, profit and loss statements, trial balances, balance sheets, and - most recently - complete bank statements for all accounts spanning multiple years.

Taken together, these records reflect every financial transaction conducted by the City and are the same records used internally for financial reporting and oversight. At this point, the City has provided all responsive records that are maintained in the ordinary course of business.

If you have specific questions about any transaction or need clarification on particular items within those records, I am more than willing to address those. That is a reasonable and productive use of staff time.

However, broad, undefined requests for additional compilations, reorganizations, or duplicative production - particularly when the underlying data has already been provided - require significant staff time and resources. Those types of requests must be balanced against the City's obligation to maintain daily operations and continue ongoing financial cleanup and reporting work.

Because of that, the City will not prioritize blanket or redundant requests that require substantial man-hours without a clearly defined purpose or scope.

If you are requesting additional records beyond what has already been provided, you are welcome to submit a formal public records request. As with any such request, it will be processed in accordance with applicable procedures, including reasonable timeframes and any associated costs for labor and copies.

At this time, based on the records already provided - including the complete bank statements - I consider your request satisfied from a records production standpoint. If you believe specific records have not been provided, please identify them directly so they can be evaluated.

Otherwise, if your position is that additional compilation or production is required beyond the records already provided, please cite the legal basis supporting that position, particularly in light of the fact that you have been given full access to the City's financial transactions.

I remain available to work through any specific questions you have.

You can find the information request form here:

<https://www.margaretal.com/2025/02/27/margaret-information-request-form/>

You can also find my personal struggles to get any information here:

<https://www.margaretal.com/2025/06/17/reports-request-as-a-council-member-timeline/>

Regards,



Matt Tortorice  
Mayor, City of Margaret

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**From:** District 5 <[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)>

**Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2026 at 1:18 AM

**To:** Matthew Tortorice <[mayor@margaretal.gov](mailto:mayor@margaretal.gov)>; James Chapman <[argoair@yahoo.com](mailto:argoair@yahoo.com)>;

City Clerk <[cityclerk@margaretal.gov](mailto:cityclerk@margaretal.gov)>; City Council <[citycouncil@margaretal.gov](mailto:citycouncil@margaretal.gov)>; Paul Irwin <[paul@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:paul@irwinlawyers.com)>; Anthony Irwin <[anthony@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:anthony@irwinlawyers.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties

You can reset it however you would like to, it's been 48 days since I requested the information and that's well enough time to have it done. There is a mayors assistant, city clerk, and now an assistant city clerk to handle all of the information that has been requested. The city attorneys and the city clerk was included in the email and aware of the request from the beginning and no response was provided. Again it's been 48 days, and all we hear is the same response of excuses while there isn't anything done. Please let me know when I can expect an email with the full list of items requested to be sent or if additional steps need to be taken to ensure that there isn't any further delays moving forward.

Jonathan Ray  
Mayor Pro-Tem\District 5 City of Margaret  
[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)  
205-577-2135

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**From:** Matthew Tortorice <[mayor@margaretal.gov](mailto:mayor@margaretal.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 28, 2026 4:19:56 PM

**To:** District 5 <[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)>; James Chapman <[argoair@yahoo.com](mailto:argoair@yahoo.com)>; City Clerk <[cityclerk@margaretal.gov](mailto:cityclerk@margaretal.gov)>; City Council <[citycouncil@margaretal.gov](mailto:citycouncil@margaretal.gov)>; Paul Irwin <[paul@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:paul@irwinlawyers.com)>; Anthony Irwin <[anthony@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:anthony@irwinlawyers.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties

Jonathan,

I've read your responses carefully, and I want to reset this conversation in a way that reflects both reality and responsibility.

First, your original email was not a narrow or simple request - it was a broad, multi-category compilation of financial, personnel, and operational records spanning multiple years and departments. That type of request requires significant staff time to locate, verify, organize, and produce accurately. Regardless of how it is labeled, the effect is the same: it creates work assignments for City employees.

Second, you were in fact provided a response and supporting information. It was also noticed the response to your first email was not forwarded along with your follow-up email to the group, which creates an incomplete and misleading picture of what has already been addressed.

Third, you have already been provided a substantial portion of the information you are asking for, including financial transactions, checks, and reports. That has not been acknowledged, nor have you identified any specific gaps in what was provided. Instead, the scope continues to expand.

To further remove any question about access to information, here is a folder containing all available bank statements across City accounts for your review:

## Financial

This represents the full set of statements currently available and accessible.

Fourth, there is a responsibility component here that cannot be ignored. These requests are not being made in a vacuum - they are being made while staff are actively working through financial cleanup, reporting corrections, and daily operations. Continuing to generate broad, duplicative requests without engaging in the work or helping refine what is actually needed places an unnecessary burden on the same employees you are asking to produce the information.

So I need clarity from you:

- What is your specific objective with these requests?
- What decision, action, or council function are you trying to accomplish?
- Which items are actually missing from what has already been provided?

If there are additional records you are formally requesting, then they need to be submitted as a defined public records request so they can be tracked, prioritized, and completed in an orderly and legally compliant manner.

If your goal is oversight or understanding, then that responsibility does not sit solely on staff. I am willing to sit down and walk through the information with you, or have you work alongside us in reviewing and organizing it so that we are not duplicating effort or creating unnecessary work.

But what cannot continue is a pattern where large-scale requests are sent out, staff time is consumed compiling information, and there is no acknowledgment, no refinement, and no participation in the process.

We all share responsibility for moving the City forward. That includes being present, being engaged, and being accountable for the work that is being created - not just requesting it.

If you will clearly define what you need and how it ties to a legitimate council purpose, I will ensure it is addressed appropriately.

Regards,



Matt Tortorice  
Mayor, City of Margaret

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**From:** District 5 <[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)>

**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2026 at 10:02 PM

**To:** James Chapman <[argoair@yahoo.com](mailto:argoair@yahoo.com)>; City Clerk <[cityclerk@margaretal.gov](mailto:cityclerk@margaretal.gov)>; City Council <[citycouncil@margaretal.gov](mailto:citycouncil@margaretal.gov)>; Paul Irwin <[paul@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:paul@irwinlawyers.com)>; Anthony Irwin <[anthony@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:anthony@irwinlawyers.com)>; Matthew Tortorice <[mayor@margaretal.gov](mailto:mayor@margaretal.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties

Here is my follow up email regarding the requested documents and information that was said in tonight's meeting that was never asked for.

Jonathan Ray  
Mayor Pro-Tem\District 5 City of Margaret  
[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)  
205-577-2135

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**From:** District 5 <[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:46 PM  
**To:** James Chapman <[argoair@yahoo.com](mailto:argoair@yahoo.com)>; City Clerk <[cityclerk@margaretal.gov](mailto:cityclerk@margaretal.gov)>;  
City Council <[citycouncil@margaretal.gov](mailto:citycouncil@margaretal.gov)>; Paul Irwin <[paul@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:paul@irwinlawyers.com)>;  
Anthony Irwin <[anthony@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:anthony@irwinlawyers.com)>  
**Subject:** Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties

1. All information related to the county's 130k reimbursement portion for the Brookhaven grant project and timelines when information was received and how it was received and who by.
2. Copy of all invoices for all city departments from 1/2025 to 3/11/26
3. Copy of all paperwork related to the Brookhaven grant project.
4. copy of all cancelled checks from 1/2025 to 3/11/26
5. List of all city employees hired between 1/2025 and 3/11/26
6. List of all city employees salaries from 1/2021 to 3/11/26, and dates to when these salaries were approved and who they were approved by.
7. List of all digital payments and transfers since 1/2025
8. list of all credit card transactions for all city accounts since 1/2025 to 3/11/26
9. List of all individuals with a city credit card "including gas card" and all transactions from 1/2025 to 3/11/26 including spending limits.
10. List of all open accounts that the city has done business with since 1/2025 to 3/11/26 and all detailed transactions
11. List of all city bank accounts and when the accounts were established or closed since 1/2021 and detailed transactions
12. A list of who is authorized to sign bank documents at all financial establishments from 1/2021 to 3/11/26 and dates ton when they were added or removed
13. List of budget to actuals form 11/2025 to 3/11/26
14. Itemized vendor payments for every city department from 1/2025 to 3/11/26

Jonathan Ray  
Mayor Pro-Tem\District 5 City of Margaret  
[Jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:Jray@margaretal.gov)  
205-577-2135

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**Subject:** Re: Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties  
**Date:** Friday, March 13, 2026 at 10:13:36 AM Central Daylight Time  
**From:** District 5  
**To:** Matthew Tortorice, City Council, James Chapman, Paul Irwin, Anthony Irwin  
**Attachments:** MT\_Signature.png

Let's be clear, I haven't directed anyone to do anything. A request is a polite, optional appeal for action that acknowledges the recipient's autonomy, while a directive is a mandatory, authoritative order or instruction. I simply sent a request asking for documents, I did not send a DIRECTIVE! Your response email stating that I have no authority to ask for such documents is absurd! You say that we I need to ask for items to be put in the agenda at the council meetings is simply what has been done and yet you try to silence me by slamming the gavel and saying unruly interrupting words to create discussion ending things. You are all about what you want and when you want and you could care less about the citizens and council comments unless they benefit you and your strategic plans. Motions have been made at the last meeting to amend the agenda and add some items to it and said NO ITS NOT HAPPENING! So you are contradicting what you just put in your own response email! You saying that you want to move the city forward and work with everyone isn't showing that at all! I cleared my schedule for a meeting with you and the city attorney on a Friday morning, only for you to lie to my face in front of the city attorney saying that I ordered 7 vehicles and signed for them. When in fact I haven't signed ANYTHING! Then you admitted to openly lying about it and I got up and walked out and when on about my day. It's impossible to work with someone that lies about things and says that they want to move the city forward and work with the entire council.

Jonathan Ray  
Mayor Pro-Tem\District 5 City of Margaret  
[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)  
[205-577-2135](tel:205-577-2135)

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**From:** Matthew Tortorice <[mayor@margaretal.gov](mailto:mayor@margaretal.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 11:29:01 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Request for documents related to oversight of elected duties

Jonathan,

I am writing regarding your direct communications to the City Clerk requesting agenda additions, document production, and involvement in personnel matters.

To be clear, you do not have authority, acting individually or as Mayor Pro Tem, to direct City employees in the performance of their duties. Under Alabama's mayor-council form of government, the Mayor is the chief executive officer and is charged with the general supervision

and control of municipal departments, programs, and facilities. The Alabama League of Municipalities materials likewise recognize that the mayor has general supervision and control over municipal officers and affairs, and that individual councilmembers may not direct or supervise administrative personnel.

The office of Mayor Pro Tem does not create independent day-to-day executive authority while the Mayor remains in office. It functions only when the Mayor is absent or unable to act and a mayoral duty must be performed.

Accordingly, you are not to issue directions, demands, or work assignments to the City Clerk or any other City employee outside of proper council action. If you want information assembled, you may submit a written request through my office or through the front desk as a records request. If you are seeking information for a legitimate council purpose, please do so during a regular public council meeting when your request is on the agenda. I will then work with staff to help obtain records that are properly requested and reasonably identified. But you are not authorized to bypass the chain of authority and direct staff yourself.

Your document request is also substantially duplicative. You have already been provided transactions, checks, and financial reports covering October 1 through March 5, which contain much of the information you say you are seeking. To the extent your properly submitted records request, they will be gathered and produced in an orderly manner consistent with staff workload and the City's ongoing efforts to clean up and improve financial reporting.

That work is continuing, and additional information will be provided as soon as it has been properly cleaned up and can be produced accurately and responsibly.

As to the agenda, no individual councilmember has authority to add items on the council agenda by unilateral demand. The council acts as a body, not through informal direction to staff outside of a meeting.

With respect to the specific items you listed:

- Fire department report
- Water and sewer department reports

Those reports were already provided with the council packets circulated on February 27. If you have follow-up questions regarding those reports, submit them through the proper channel and I will work to get you a response.

Ordinance #039926 Purchasing Authority

No individual councilmember has authority to require placement of an item on the agenda by demand outside the meeting process.

Police chief position

This is not something that can be compelled onto the agenda by unilateral request to staff.

### Executive session

Executive session is not automatic and is not something an individual councilmember can simply demand because he disagrees with an administrative decision. It is permitted only for limited lawful purposes, must be raised in open session, and requires a vote of the council. No action may be taken in executive session. The clerk materials and League handbook also reflect that executive session is governed by the Open Meetings Act and meeting procedure, not unilateral staff direction.

With respect to employee discipline and any proposed executive session, personnel administration and employee supervision are not matters for individual councilmembers to control through side communications with staff. An individual councilmember is not automatically entitled to confidential HR records, disciplinary details, or internal personnel materials simply by asking for them. League materials further indicate that individual councilmembers generally do not have greater inspection rights than the public absent lawful authority and a legitimate basis for access.

Disagreement with an administrative decision does not create supervisory authority over employees, nor does it create a lawful basis to use executive session as a tool to second-guess discipline or pressure staff.

At the same time, I want to be clear that I remain committed to working with you and with every member of the council for the good of the City. We were all elected to serve Margaret, and I believe we are best able to do that when we work through the proper process, respect the roles of each office, and focus our efforts on the business that is genuinely before us.

That includes addressing old business that still needs council attention. There are matters already pending that should be resolved before new disputes and side issues continue to distract from the work of governing. The City has real operational and administrative needs that require our time and attention.


It also includes building the policies and structure necessary to run the City in a clear, modern, and responsible manner. We need to be focused on establishing and refining the procedures that govern how City business is conducted, how financial controls are handled, and how accountability is maintained. For example, the City has an ordinance allowing for the automatic payment of recurring bills. I proposed that we do away with that ordinance and it was tabled. Fixing those foundational policy issues is important, and more of it is needed so that City operations are governed by clear rules rather than confusion, inconsistency, or conflict.

I also need to address the tone and pattern of these interactions. Repeated attempts to bypass the mayor, pressure employees directly, and use incomplete or duplicative information to create disruption are not productive and will not be allowed to interfere with city operations. Staff are to take direction through the proper chain of authority.

I remain willing to help obtain lawful and relevant information needed for council business. But going forward, communications that direct staff, interfere with administration, or attempt to assert authority you do not possess need to stop. If you need information for a council purpose,

route it properly. If you wish to raise an item for council consideration, do so through the agenda process and by motion in open meeting.

Regards,



Matt Tortorice  
Mayor, City of Margaret

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**From:** District 5 <[jray@margaretal.gov](mailto:jray@margaretal.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:46:06 PM  
**To:** James Chapman <[argoair@yahoo.com](mailto:argoair@yahoo.com)>; City Clerk <[cityclerk@margaretal.gov](mailto:cityclerk@margaretal.gov)>; City Council <[citycouncil@margaretal.gov](mailto:citycouncil@margaretal.gov)>; Paul Irwin <[paul@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:paul@irwinlawyers.com)>; Anthony Irwin <[anthony@irwinlawyers.com](mailto:anthony@irwinlawyers.com)>  
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