

The Caledonia Township  
Board Policy  
For the  
Inspection of Tax and Assessment Records

## **Public Inspection**

### **Access**

Upon receiving a verbal or written request to inspect Township Tax and Assessment records, the Township shall furnish the requesting person with a reasonable opportunity and reasonable facilities for inspection and examination of its Tax and Assessment records. Depending upon the nature of the request a Township Official may be assigned to facilitate the records request.

### **Inspection**

The public may be allowed to inspect public records. The public does not have unlimited access to Township Offices, and a person may be required to inspect records at a specified counter or table, and in view of Township Personnel. An appointment may be requested if records have to be assembled to be reviewed. Township officials assisting with inspection of public records, shall inform any person inspecting records that only pencils, and no pens or ink, may be used to take notes. Copies of the records may be produced to facilitate public inspection.

### **Format**

The Township Clerk (or their designee) is responsible for identifying if records or information requested by the public is stored in digital or electronic files.

### **Removal of Documents**

A person cannot remove books, documents, records or files from the Township or the place the Township has provided for the inspection without permission of the Township Official assigned to the request. No documents shall be removed from the office except by court order, subpoena or for audit purposes. Documents may be removed from their storage location by the Township Official assigned to the request to accommodate public inspection of those documents. When documents are removed, as identified above, the official assigned to the task, shall be given a receipt listing the records being removed.

## **Copies May Be Required to Enable Public Inspection of Records**

The official, assigned to the request and who is responsible for the records, will determine (*by policy, on a case-by-case basis, or both*) when the township will provide copies of original records, to protect old or delicate original records, to allow for blacking out of exempt information or because the original record is a digital file or database not available for public inspection. A fee will be charged for copies made to enable public inspection of records.

## **Record Fees**

In all cases, Township Officials shall use the most economical means available to make copies of public records, including digital copies of documents or recordings. E-mail may be used to distribute or mail records where documents are available in internet format,

### **Labor costs for research**

The Township shall charge a labor cost of either \$10.00 per hour multiplied by the total time or a flat rate of \$1.50. The cost is to be determined by the rate closest to the real labor cost to search, examine, review, edit, separate, redact or exempt (from non-exempt sources) requested information.

**Copy costs**

The Township shall charge the actual copying cost (\$.30 per page of copy) to make a copy to accommodate a request to inspect.

**Labor costs for copy production**

The Township shall charge a labor cost of either \$10.00 per hour multiplied by the actual time of preparing and delivering requested copies or a flat rate of \$1.50 to make the copy. The cost is to be determined by the rate closest to the real labor cost.

**Postage costs**

The Township shall charge actual postage or shipping costs and the actual cost of the envelope or mailer.

**Waived Due to Indigency of Person Making a Request for Assessment Records**

A public record search shall be made and a copy of a public record shall be furnished without charge for the first \$20 of the fee for each request to a person who is entitled to information under this policy and who submits an affidavit stating that, at the time the request is submitted, the person is either receiving public assistance or is unable to pay the cost because of indigency. "Indigency" is determined by the township's poverty guidelines annually adopted for property tax poverty exemption applications (or "the federal poverty thresholds annually compiled and published by the Bureau of the Census prior to December 31 of each year").

**Fifty-Percent Good Faith Deposit for Costs over \$50**

If the costs estimated for a specific request exceed \$50, the person requesting the record(s) shall make a good faith deposit before the township will process the request. The deposit shall not exceed one- half (50%) of the estimated total fee.