

## CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

**FROM:** The Office of the City Manager    **DATE:** September 28, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Approve Resolution 2020-037, designating method for making written requests for public information and appointing a designee for the officer for public information.  
**PRESENTER:** Traci Henderson, Assistant City Secretary

### **SUMMARY:**

Senate Bill No. 944, approved during the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, allows governmental agencies to designate a single e-mail address, single mailing address and electronic submission through the governmental body's website to receive Public Information Act ("PIA") requests. City Council will consider Resolution No. 2020-037 to align the city's current practice of receiving PIA requests with Senate Bill No. 944.

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

Senate Bill No. 944 added Texas Government Code Section 552.234 – method of making written request for public information. A person may make a written request for public information under this chapter only by delivering the request by a method approved by the governing body to the applicable officer for public information or a person designated by that officer. The methods of delivery include:

- United States mail;
- Electronic email;
- Hand delivery; or
- Any other appropriate method approved by the governmental body, including facsimile transmission and electronic submission through the governmental body's internet website.

Currently, requests for public information are received at various city email addresses and requests via hand delivery can be provided to any city employee. This can prove problematic if requests are not forwarded to appropriate officers or employees responsible for compliance with the PIA. In an effort to be diligent, responsive to the public, and ensure timely compliance with the PIA, staff recommends City Council streamline the process for making written requests for public information by designating:



(1) One mailing address;

City of North Richland Hills  
Office of the City Secretary/ Chief Governance Officer  
P.O. Box 820609  
North Richland Hills, Texas 76182

(2) One electronic email address;

[openrecords@nrhtx.com](mailto:openrecords@nrhtx.com)

(3) Officer for receipt of hand delivery during business hours; and

City of North Richland Hills  
Office of the City Secretary/Chief Governance Officer  
4301 City Point Drive  
North Richland Hills, Texas 76180

(4) Designating electronic submission through the City's website "Public Information Request Center"

If approved, the city's website and the sign required by the Public Information Act informing the public of their basic rights and responsibilities will be updated with the designated methods of delivery. The city is not required to respond to a written request for public information unless the request is received by one of the approved methods by City Council.

The electronic submission via the city's website has been in use by the City Secretary's Office since 2014. The software is GovQA (WebQa), which manages requests for public information. It is user friendly and provides requestors access to their responsive records during non-business hours. The office is working with the Police Department and Municipal Court to bring those departments online to begin using GovQA on Monday, November 2, 2020.

Pursuant to state law, the City Manager is the Officer for Public Information. Resolution No. 2020-037 designates the City Secretary/Chief Governance Officer as the designee for the Officer for Public Information to receive requests for public information.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve Resolution 2020-037.