

COPY

IN THE CHANCERY COURT FOR CAMPBELL COUNTY, TENNESSEE
AT JACKSBORO

CECIL LEFORCE,)
)
 Petitioner/Plaintiff,)
)
 v.)
)
 CITY OF JELICO, TENNESSEE;)
 SANDY TERRY, in her official capacity as)
 Mayor of the City of Jellico; THE CITY OF)
 JELICO PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST)
 COORDINATOR; and THE CITY OF)
 JELICO RECORDS CUSTODIAN(S),)
)
 Respondents/Defendants.)

CASE NO.: 7CH1-2026-CV-73

CAMPBELL CHANCERY COU
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VERIFIED PETITION FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS, DECLARATORY
JUDGMENT, AND TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This action seeks immediate judicial relief arising from the City of Jellico’s failure to fully comply with a Tennessee Public Records Act request concerning the downtown Jellico farmers market pavilion project, including but not limited to engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, design revisions, shop drawings, specifications, permit records, meeting records, funding records, contracts, invoices, bids, procurement records, and records of approvals.

2. The written request was submitted on or about April 7, 2026, by counsel for Petitioner/Plaintiff to Mayor Sandy Terry and the City of Jellico. The request specifically incorporated “Exhibit A,” which requested records concerning City boards, meeting notices,

agendas, minutes, engineering documents, permitting, procurement, and funding for the pavilion project. The attached public-records request identifies Cecil LeForce as the requester and requests copies/duplicates by electronic delivery and mail.

3. Exhibit A specifically requested: “All engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, design revisions, shop drawings, specifications, and any architect or engineer correspondence for the pavilion presently under construction for the downtown farmers market.”

4. Exhibit A also requested permit applications, issued permits, inspection reports, correction notices, stop-work communications, code-review notes, construction contracts, bids, procurement records, award documents, change orders, payment requests, invoices, field orders, punch lists, closeout documents, funding records, project budgets, expenditures, reimbursements, and records showing the source and use of each dollar committed to the pavilion project.

5. Jellico has adopted the 2018 International Building Code as the Building Code of the City of Jellico, including Appendix Chapters A-J, for regulating buildings and structures and providing standards to ensure structures are safe and fit for occupation and use.

6. The Jellico Municipal Code further provides that violation or failure to comply with the adopted building code is unlawful and that each day a violation continues constitutes a separate offense.

7. Under the Tennessee Public Records Act, public records are open for inspection to Tennessee citizens unless otherwise provided by law. Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(2)(A).

8. If a requested record cannot be promptly made available, the records custodian must, within seven business days, make the record available, deny the request in writing with the basis for denial, or provide a response stating the time reasonably necessary to produce the record.

9. A Tennessee citizen whose request has been denied in whole or in part is entitled to petition for access and obtain judicial review. Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-505(a).

10. Petitioner alleges that the City's failure to produce the requested records, including the missing Exhibit A categories, constitutes a denial in whole or in part under the TPRA.

II. PARTIES

11. Petitioner/Plaintiff Cecil LeForce is a citizen of Tennessee and is entitled to inspect and receive copies of public records under the Tennessee Public Records Act.

12. Respondent/Defendant City of Jellico, Tennessee is a municipal governmental entity subject to the Tennessee Public Records Act and the Tennessee Open Meetings Act.

13. Respondent/Defendant Sandy Terry is the Mayor of the City of Jellico and is sued in her official capacity only.

14. Respondent/Defendant Public Records Request Coordinator is the person or office responsible for routing and ensuring fulfillment of public records requests made to the City.

15. Respondent/Defendant, Public Records Custodian(s) are the City officials, officers, employees, or agents who have custody or control of the requested records.

III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

16. This Court has jurisdiction under Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-505 to hear a petition for access to municipal public records.

17. Venue is proper in Campbell County because the City of Jellico is located in Campbell County, the requested records are municipal records of the City of Jellico, and the acts and omissions complained of occurred in Campbell County.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

18. On or about April 7, 2026, Petitioner, through counsel, served a Tennessee Public Records Act request on the City of Jellico, addressed to Mayor Sandy Terry.

19. The request sought records relating to the pavilion presently under construction for the downtown farmers market.

20. The request specifically included twelve categories of records in Exhibit A.

21. The City has failed to provide all requested documents.

22. More specifically, as of the filing of this Complaint, the City has failed to provide documents responsive to the following categories: Category 1 - no documents produced; Category 2 - no documents produced; Category 3 - no documents produced; Category 4 - no documents produced; Category 5 - missing documents; Category 6 - no documents produced; Category 7 - no meeting records produced / no meeting identified; Category 8 - no documents produced; Category 9 - no documents produced; Category 10 - no documents produced; Category 11 - no documents produced; and Category 12 - no documents produced.

23. These withheld or missing records include, but are not limited to, records concerning public notice, agendas, minutes, votes, engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, design revisions, permitting, inspections, contracts, bids, procurement, payment requests, invoices, funding, project budgets, expenditures, reimbursements, and approvals.

24. The pavilion project reportedly includes a \$75,000 USDA grant, \$15,000 from the Campbell County Commission, and approximately \$7,000 to \$8,000 raised through local fundraising, for total available funding of approximately \$97,000 to \$98,000 against a total estimated project cost exceeding \$100,000.

25. Because public funds are being used, the records concerning funding, procurement, contracts, invoices, expenditures, reimbursements, and approvals are public records made or received in connection with the transaction of official business.

26. Because the pavilion is currently under construction, the requested engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, permits, inspections, correction notices, code-review notes, and stop-work communications are necessary to determine whether the project complies with the Jellico Municipal Code and the adopted 2018 International Building Code.

27. Pages 130-131 of the Jellico Municipal Code show that Jellico adopted the 2018 International Building Code as its building code and incorporated that code by reference.

28. Jellico Municipal Code § 12-103 further states that a copy of the building code must be maintained in the recorder's office for public use and inspection.

29. Jellico Municipal Code § 12-104 states that failure to comply with the building code is unlawful and that each day a violation continues is a separate offense.

30. Petitioner has a substantial interest in ensuring that public funds are spent lawfully, that public construction is supported by proper engineering and permitting records, and that the public has access to records required by the Tennessee Public Records Act.

V. COUNT I - VIOLATION OF TENNESSEE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

31. Petitioner incorporates all prior paragraphs as if fully restated.

32. The requested records are public records under Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503 because they are documents, papers, electronic records, correspondence, drawings, plans, contracts, financial records, meeting records, and other materials made or received in connection with official City business.

33. The City was required to promptly make the records available or, if prompt production was not practicable, respond within seven business days by producing the records, denying the request in writing with a legal basis, or stating the time reasonably necessary to produce the records.

34. The City failed to produce all responsive records and failed to provide a lawful, complete written denial or lawful production schedule for all withheld or missing records.

35. The failure to produce records responsive to Exhibit A constitutes a denial in whole or in part.

36. Petitioner is entitled to judicial review and an order compelling access to all responsive public records.

VI. COUNT II - DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF REGARDING PUBLIC RECORDS

37. Petitioner incorporates all prior paragraphs as if fully restated.

38. An actual controversy exists regarding the City's legal duties to produce the requested records.

39. Petitioner seeks a declaration that the requested records are public records subject to inspection and copying unless the City meets its burden to identify a specific legal exemption.

40. Petitioner seeks temporary and permanent injunctive relief requiring the City to immediately search for, preserve, identify, and produce all responsive records, including records held by the mayor, recorder, public records coordinator, building/code officials, contractors, engineers, architects, consultants, or other agents acting for the City.

41. Petitioner also seeks an order requiring the City to file a sworn index identifying any withheld documents, the custodian of each document, the date of each document, the general subject matter, and the specific legal basis for withholding.

VII. COUNT III - OPEN MEETINGS ACT / SUNSHINE LAW

42. Petitioner incorporates all prior paragraphs as if fully restated.

43. The Tennessee Open Meetings Act requires meetings of governing bodies to be public, requires adequate public notice, requires minutes to be recorded and open to public inspection, and prohibits secret votes. The CTAS guidance summarizes those requirements and states that actions taken in violation of the Act are void.

44. Exhibit A requested records concerning public bodies, meeting schedules, public notices, agendas, minutes, roll call, sign-in sheets, votes, packets, exhibits, and records documenting decisions to proceed with, cancel, postpone, or modify meetings.

45. To the extent the pavilion project was approved, funded, modified, or allowed to proceed through meetings lacking adequate public notice, agendas, minutes, public votes, or required public records, Petitioner seeks a declaration that such action violated the Tennessee Open Meetings Act.

46. Petitioner further seeks an order requiring Respondents to produce all meeting records related to the pavilion project and, if violations are established, to void any action taken in violation of the Open Meetings Act and require the City to reconsider the matter in compliance with Tennessee law.

VIII. COUNT IV - TEMPORARY INJUNCTIVE RELIEF / STOP-WORK REQUEST

47. Petitioner incorporates all prior paragraphs as if fully restated.

48. The pavilion is presently under construction.

49. The City has not produced the engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, permit records, inspection records, code-review notes, or other documents necessary to confirm compliance with the Jellico Municipal Code and the adopted 2018 International Building Code.

50. The public has a strong interest in ensuring that a publicly funded structure is built with proper plans, permits, inspections, code compliance, procurement records, and financial documentation.

51. Without immediate relief, construction may continue before the public and this Court can determine whether the project is supported by required engineering, permitting, funding, and approval records.

52. Petitioner therefore requests a temporary restraining order and/or temporary injunction requiring that construction on the downtown farmers market pavilion stop until the City produces the requested engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, permits, inspection records, procurement records, and funding records, or until further order of this Court.

53. In the alternative, Petitioner requests a narrowly tailored order requiring the City to immediately produce all engineering, permitting, inspection, and funding records and prohibiting further concealed expenditure, payment, approval, or construction activity until the City certifies compliance with the TPRA and applicable building-code documentation requirements.

IX. REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner/Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court:

- A. Assume jurisdiction over this action;
- B. Issue an expedited show-cause order requiring Respondents to appear and justify the failure to produce the requested records;
- C. Declare that the requested records are public records subject to the Tennessee Public Records Act unless a specific statutory exemption applies;

D. Order Respondents to immediately produce all responsive records requested in Exhibit A;

E. Require Respondents to conduct a reasonable search of all City offices, officials, employees, contractors, engineers, architects, consultants, email accounts, text messages, electronic storage systems, paper files, and project files where responsive records may exist;

F. Require Respondents to preserve all records concerning the farmers market pavilion project, including electronic records, texts, emails, attachments, drafts, notices, agendas, minutes, invoices, contracts, engineering drawings, permits, inspection records, and funding records;

G. Require Respondents to file a sworn privilege/exemption log for any withheld records;

H. Declare that Respondents violated the Tennessee Public Records Act;

I. Declare that any proven meetings, approvals, votes, or actions taken in violation of the Tennessee Open Meetings Act are void;

J. Temporarily and permanently enjoin further construction, payments, approvals, or closeout of the pavilion project until all engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, permit records, inspection records, and related public records are produced and reviewed, or until further order of this Court;

K. Award Petitioner costs, litigation expenses, and attorney's fees to the extent permitted by Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-505 and other applicable law;

L. Grant such other, further, and general relief as the Court deems just and proper.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, this 27th day of April, 2026.

CECIL LEFORCE

Cecil LeForce

BY:

(Attorney)
Ameesh A. Kherani, BPR #030218
Kherani Law Firm, PLLC
Attorney for Petitioner
112 Cumberland Lane
Jacksboro, Tennessee 37757
Telephone: 865-777-0786
Facsimile: 865-622-8887
Email: AKherani@KheraniLaw.com

VERIFICATION

STATE OF TENNESSEE
COUNTY OF Campbell

I, Cecil LeForce, being first duly sworn, state that I am the Petitioner/Plaintiff in this action; that I have read the foregoing Verified Petition/Complaint; and that the facts stated therein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

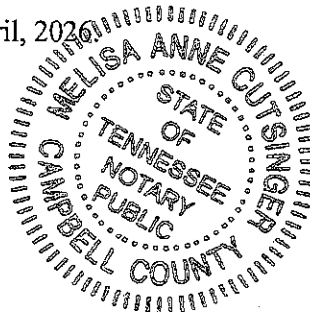
Cecil LeForce

Cecil LeForce

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of April, 2026

Melisa Anne Cutzinger

Notary Public



My Commission Expires: 5/17/2027

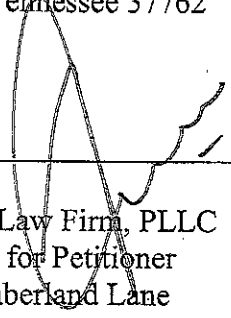
COST BOND

We acknowledge ourselves as surety for all costs, taxes and damages in this case in accordance with T.C.A. §20-12-120.

CECIL LEFORCE



Principal
336 Walker Road
Jellico, Tennessee 37762



Surety
Kherani Law Firm, PLLC
Attorney for Petitioner
112 Cumberland Lane
Jacksboro, Tennessee 37757
Telephone: 865-777-0786
Facsimile: 865-622-8887
Email: AKherani@KheraniLaw.com

ATTORNEY
AMEESH A. KHERANI, ESQUIRE



KHERANI LAW FIRM
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

OFFICE
112 CUMBERLAND LANE
JACKSBORO TENNESSEE 37757

JACKSBORO: 423-562-7085
KNOXVILLE: 865-777-0786
FACSIMILE: 865-622-8887

CAMPBELL CHANGERY COU
27 APR 2026 PM 1:51

April 7, 2026

Via First Class Mail
Via Facsimile: 423-784-3131
Via Email: santr1486@gmail.com

Sandy Terry, Mayor
City of Jellico
410 S. Main Street
Jellico, TN 37762

RE: Tennessee Public Records Act Request

Dear Mayor Terry:

Enclosed herewith please find a Tennessee Public Records Act Request which we are making in relation to the subject matter outlined in the enclosed.

I would request that the information sought in the Tennessee Public Records Request be sent, as indicated, electronically AND via UPS First Class at our office at:

112 Cumberland Lane
Jacksboro, Tennessee 37757

I am forwarding a copy of this Request to counsel for the City of Jellico, attorney, Elizabeth Burrell.

Thank you for your prompt attention and cooperation in this regard.

Sincerely yours,

Ameesh A. Kherani, Esquire

AAK/mmhb

Enclosure

cc: Client
Elizabeth Burrell (Via Facsimile: 865-463-6090; Email: Elizabeth@fbvlaw.com)



PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM

CAMPBELL CHANCERY COU
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The Tennessee Public Records Act (TPRA) grants Tennessee citizens the right to access open public records that exist at the time of the request. The TPRA does not require records custodians to compile information or create or recreate records that do not exist.

(Governmental Entity Name and Name and Contact Information for the Public Records Request Coordinator)

To: City of Jellico c/o Ms. Sandy Terry, Mayor, 410 S. Main St., Jellico, TN 37

(Insert Requestor's Name and Contact Information (include an address for any TPRA required written response))

From: Cecil LeForce c/o Ameesh A. Kherani, Kherani Law Firm, PLLC, 112 C

Is the requestor a Tennessee citizen? Yes No

Request: Inspection (The TPRA does not permit fees or require a written request for inspection only¹.)

Copy/Duplicate

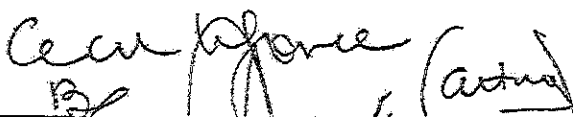
If costs for copies are assessed, the requestor has a right to receive an estimate. Do you wish to waive your right to an estimate and agree to pay copying and duplication costs in an amount not to exceed \$ 500.00 ? If so, initial here: _____

Delivery preference: On-Site Pick-Up USPS First-Class Mail
 Electronic Other: _____

Records Requested:

Provide a detailed description of the record(s) requested, including: (1) type of record; (2) timeframe or dates for the records sought; and (3) subject matter or key words related to the records. Under the TPRA, record requests must be sufficiently detailed to enable a governmental entity to identify the specific records sought. As such, your record request must provide enough detail to enable the records custodian responding to the request to identify the specific records you are seeking.

See Attached Exhibit A, which is incorporated herein by reference.


Signature of Requestor and Date Submitted

Signature of Public Records Request Coordinator and Date Received

Print Form Reset Form

¹ Note, Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-504(a)(20)(C) permits charging for redaction of private records of a utility.

EXHIBIT A

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- A complete current roster of every board, commission, committee, authority, task force, advisory group, and similar body of the City of Jellico, including each member's name, office held, chair or vice-chair status, term start date, term expiration date, appointing authority, oath of office date, and whether any seat is vacant.
- For each body listed above, the full 2026 regular meeting schedule, all special meetings already called or noticed in 2026, the normal meeting location, and any adopted policy, ordinance, rule, resolution, or written practice governing where agendas and meeting notices are posted physically and online.
- Every document identifying the City's customary public posting locations for meeting notices and agendas, including websites, bulletin boards, city hall doors, recorder's office windows, social media, or other locations used to notify the public.
- The final agenda, every draft agenda, every meeting notice, every revised notice, and every internal or external communication regarding whether the meeting time was 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m.
- All proof of posting or publication of the agenda and meeting notice, including timestamped photographs, screenshots, posting logs, emails transmitting the notice for posting, and the identity of every employee, officer, contractor, or member who prepared, posted, approved, or removed the notice or agenda.
- All emails, texts, instant messages, handwritten notes, calendar invitations, and attachments concerning scheduling, notice, quorum, expected attendance, agenda contents, and any decision to proceed with, cancel, postpone, or modify the meeting.
- If the meeting occurred: minutes, roll call, sign-in sheets, audio, video, packets, exhibits, votes taken, and every document provided to members or the public before or during the meeting. If the meeting was canceled or postponed: every record documenting that decision and the reason for it.
- All engineering drawings, sealed or stamped plans, structural calculations, design revisions, shop drawings, specifications, and any architect or engineer correspondence for the pavilion presently under construction for the downtown farmers market.
- All permit applications, issued permits, inspection reports, correction notices, stop-work communications, code-review notes, and records showing compliance with the building code adopted by the City of Jellico.
- All contracts, bids, procurement records, award documents, change orders, payment requests, invoices, field orders, punch lists, and closeout documents for the pavilion project.
- All funding records reflecting the USDA grant, Campbell County Commission contribution, local fundraising, project budget, expenditures, reimbursements, and the source and use of every dollar committed to the project.
- All Planning Commission, Historic Zoning Commission, Board of Mayor and Aldermen, or staff approvals, staff reviews, presentations, agenda packets, and meeting minutes relating to the pavilion project.