

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

In the Matter of a Complaint by

FINAL DECISION

Shardel Ragin,

Complainant

against

Docket # FIC 2025-0254

Chief, Police Department, City of
Bridgeport; Police Department, City
of Bridgeport; City of Bridgeport; and
State of Connecticut, Division of
Criminal Justice, Office of the Chief
State's Attorney,

Respondents

April 8, 2026

The above-captioned matter was heard as a contested case on July 31, 2025, and September 29, 2025, at which times the complainant and the respondents appeared, stipulated to certain facts and presented testimony, exhibits and argument on the complaint. The complainant, who is incarcerated, appeared via teleconference, pursuant to the January 2004 memorandum of understanding between the Commission and the Department of Correction. See *Anthony Sinchak v. Freedom of Information Commission*, Docket No. CV 03-0826293, Superior Court, J.D. of Hartford at Hartford, Corrected Order dated January 27, 2004 (Sheldon, J.).

Prior to the first contested case hearing on July 31, 2025, the Division of Criminal Justice ("DCJ") filed a motion to intervene in this matter. In such motion, DCJ indicated that it objected to the respondents' disclosure of "materials sought by that portion of the claimant's FOIA request relating to the case bearing Docket No. FBT-CR22-0345858-T and the *presently pending* direct appeal therefrom bearing Docket No. SC 21044 'within the bounds of the law.'" (italics in original). By ruling dated September 29, 2025, such motion was granted. The case caption has been amended to reflect that the DCJ is designated as an intervenor in this matter. The DCJ appeared at the continued hearing on September 29, 2025, only.

Pursuant to an order of the undersigned Hearing Officer, the respondents submitted an after-filed exhibit, which has been admitted, without objection, as Respondents' Exhibit 4 (after filed): Affidavit of Jordan Francis, dated October 16, 2025.¹

After consideration of the entire record, the following facts are found, and conclusions of law are reached:

1. The Bridgeport respondents are public agencies within the meaning of §1-200(1), G.S., and the DCJ intervenor is not a public agency, except with respect to its administrative functions. See §1-201, G.S.

2. It is found, that by letter dated March 19, 2025 (the “request”), the complainant requested that the Bridgeport respondents provide him with copies of or an opportunity to inspect: “Any and all reports, police investigatory notes, police memorandums, letters, emails, case/incident reports, arrest warrants, ballistic reports, witness statements (whether handwritten, type written or taken by any other means) created directly or indirectly in connection with the arrest of Shardel Ragin D.O.B.: 7-21-1987 from January 1, 2015 to the date of your response.”

3. By complaint received and filed on April 14, 2025, the complainant appealed to the Commission, alleging that the Bridgeport respondents violated the Freedom of Information (“FOI”) Act by failing to comply with the request.

4. Section 1-206(a), G.S., provides in relevant part:

[a]ny denial of the right to inspect or copy records provided for under section 1-210 shall be made to the person requesting such right by the public agency official who has custody or control of the public record, in writing, within four business days of such request, except when the request is determined to be subject to subsections (b) and (c) of section 1-214, in which case such denial shall be made, in writing, within ten business days of such request. Failure to comply with a request to so inspect or copy such public record within the applicable number of business days shall be deemed to be a denial.

5. Section 1-206(b)(1), G.S., provides in relevant part: “[a]ny person denied the right to inspect or copy records under 1-210... or denied any other right conferred by the Freedom of Information Act may appeal therefrom to the Freedom of Information Commission, by filing a notice of appeal with said commission...”

¹ Hereinafter, unless otherwise noted, the respondent Chief, respondent Police Department and respondent City of Bridgeport, shall be collectively referred to as the “Bridgeport respondents” to differentiate such respondents from the Office of the DCJ intervenor.

6. At the hearings on this matter, the respondents' witness testified, and it is found, that by letter dated April 25, 2025, the respondents mailed the complainant an acknowledgment of receipt of his request.²

7. The Bridgeport respondents' witness testified, and it is found, that he sent such acknowledgement on the same date that they received the complainant's request.

8. The Bridgeport respondents' witness testified, and it is found, that when FOI requests are sent to the respondent Police Department via regular mail, a mail handler retrieves the mail from the post office and delivers it to the respondent Police Department, at which time, the mail room typically receives and distributes such mail to the appropriate parties within the department. The witness further testified, and it is found, that all FOI requests are delivered directly to Jordan Francis, a typist with the Records Division of the respondent Department who handles the respondent Department's FOI requests.

9. It is found that the request was delivered to Jordan Francis without a date stamp and that it is unknown when the mail handler first received the complainant's request. The Bridgeport respondents' witness testified that the respondents could not account for the lapse in time from the complainant's mailing of the request on March 19, 2025, to its delivery to Jordan Francis on April 25, 2025.

10. Consequently, it is found that, at the time of the complaint, the Bridgeport respondents had not received the request, described in paragraph 2, above, and therefore had not denied the complainant's request, or denied any other right under the FOI Act, within the meaning of §1-206(b)(1), G.S.³ Because there was no denial at the time of the complaint, it is concluded that the Bridgeport respondents did not violate the FOI Act under the facts of this case.

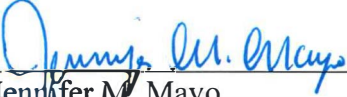
The following order by the Commission is hereby recommended on the basis of the record concerning the above-captioned complaint:

The complaint is hereby dismissed.

² The Commission notes that, contrary to the complainant's assertion at the hearings on this matter, there is nothing in the FOI Act that requires a public agency to provide responses, and identify claims of exemption at the time such agency provides an acknowledgment of receipt of a request to the complainant.

³ Despite the recommended dismissal, the Commission notes that the Bridgeport respondents, following their receipt of the request, as described in paragraphs 6 and 7, above, were working to provide, in accordance with §1-210(c), G.S., which requires the Bridgeport respondents to submit the records to the Department of Correction, certain records responsive to the request and that on or about August 19, 2025, the Bridgeport respondents provided via U.S. mail certain responsive records to the complainant.

Approved by Order of the Freedom of Information Commission at its regular meeting of April 8, 2026.


Jennifer M. Mayo
Acting Clerk of the Commission

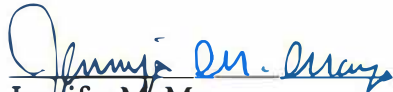
PURSUANT TO SECTION 4-180(c), G.S., THE FOLLOWING ARE THE NAMES OF EACH PARTY AND THE MOST RECENT MAILING ADDRESS, PROVIDED TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION, OF THE PARTIES OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE.

THE PARTIES TO THIS CONTESTED CASE ARE:

SHARDEL RAGIN, #301695, MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution, 1153 East Street, South, Suffield, CT 06080

CHIEF, POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF BRIDGEPORT; POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF BRIDGEPORT; AND CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, c/o Attorney Dina A. Scalo, Office of the City Attorney, 999 Broad Street, 2nd Floor, Bridgeport, CT 06604

DAVID M. KUTZNER, SUPERVISORY ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY, Office of the Chief State's Attorney, 300 Corporate Place, Rocky Hill, CT 06067


Jennifer M. Mayo
Acting Clerk of the Commission