

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

In the Matter of a Complaint by

FINAL DECISION

Ryan Salvas,

Complainant

against

Docket #FIC 2025-0629

David Shippee, Selectman, Board of
Selectmen, Town of Sterling; Board of
Selectmen, Town of Sterling; and Town of
Sterling,

Respondents

July 8, 2026

The above-captioned matter was heard as a contested case on May 19, 2026, at which time the complainant and the respondents appeared, stipulated to certain facts and presented testimony, exhibits and argument on the complaint. The case caption has been amended, without objection, to accurately reflect the respondents in this matter.

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

1. The respondents are public agencies within the meaning of §1-200(1), G.S.
2. It is found that, by email dated June 25, 2025, and sent directly to the personal email address of respondent David Shippee (“Mr. Shippee”), the complainant requested access to certain records. Specifically, the complainant requested the following:

“access to any and all administrative records, email communications, notes, binders/print outs, text messages, call logs, social media accounts/posts/groups, zoom/other digital calls, meetings, or memoranda generated, received, or shared by the Town of Sterling and/or its personnel—including but not limited to Victoria Robinson-Lewis, Lincoln Cooper, Susanne Tetreault, and others—that reference or involve any of the following:

- Radical Roots Farm LLP
- Ryan Salvas and Alycia Salvas
- Feral/roaming/loose pigs, wine, livestock, cattle
- 237/0 Newport Rd, Sterling, CT
- 146 Buck Hill Rd, Canterbury, CT
- Pine Hill Rd.

- Any communications shared with or referencing the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Bryan Hurlburt, USDA, FSA, NDDH, Heather Somers, Anne Dauphinais, Doug Dubitsky, Joe Courtney, Stephen Harding, APHIS, RI DEM, DEEP, DESPP, RI DOT, Prosecutors Office, SAVIN, NECCOG, Department of Health, NRCS, Livestock Conservancy, and other governmental agencies[.]”

3. It is found that Mr. Shippee did not respond to the complainant’s request, described in paragraph 2, above.

4. By complaint, dated July 16, 2025 and filed July 17, 2025, the complainant appealed to this Commission, alleging that Mr. Shippee violated the Freedom of Information (“FOI”) Act by failing to provide the records, described in paragraph 2, above.

5. Section 1-200(5), G.S., provides:

“[p]ublic records or files” means any recorded data or information relating to the conduct of the public’s business prepared, owned, used, received or retained by a public agency, or to which a public agency is entitled to receive a copy by law or contract under 1-218, whether such data or information be handwritten, typed, tape-recorded, videotaped, printed, photostated, photographed or recorded by any other method.

6. Section 1-210(a), G.S., provides, in relevant part:

[e]xcept as otherwise provided by any federal law or state statute, all records maintained or kept on file by any public agency, whether or not such records are required by any law or by any rule or regulation, shall be public records and every person shall have the right to ... (3) receive a copy of such records in accordance with section 1-212.

7. Section 1-212(a), G.S., provides, in relevant part: “[a]ny person applying in writing shall receive, promptly upon request, a plain, facsimile, electronic or certified copy of any public record.”

8. It is concluded that the requested records, to the extent they exist and are maintained by the respondents, are public records within the meaning of §§1-200(5) and 1-210(a), G.S.

9. 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.

10. 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....”

11. It is found that the respondents filed two separate postponement requests, dated January 20, 2026 and March 16, 2026, in which the respondents’ counsel represented that Mr. Shippee had been dealing with serious health issues and was unable to appear at the hearings on this matter, as scheduled. The hearing officer granted both postponement requests but informed the parties that, subsequent to the March 16th postponement request, no further postponement requests would be granted.

12. At the May 19th hearing on this matter, the respondents’ counsel represented that Mr. Shippee was still dealing with serious health issues that prevented him from appearing at such hearing. The respondents therefore submitted an affidavit of Mr. Shippee, which was admitted into evidence, without objection, and marked as Respondents’ Exhibit 1: Affidavit of David Shippee, dated May 12, 2026.

13. In his affidavit, Mr. Shippee attested, and it is found, that he is no longer a member of the respondent Board of Selectmen. Mr. Shippee also attested, and it is found, that he did not receive the complainant’s records request, described in paragraph 2, above, until he received a copy of the complaint in this matter, on or around September 17, 2025.¹

14. Consequently, it is found that, at the time of the complaint, the respondents had not denied the complainant’s records request, or denied any other right under the FOI Act, within the meaning of §1-206(b)(1), G.S. Because there was no denial at the time of the complaint, it is concluded that the 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:

1. The complaint is hereby dismissed.

¹ The Commission notes that Mr. Shippee also attested, and it is found, that upon receipt of the complaint in this matter, he conducted a diligent and thorough search of his personal email address for responsive records but did not locate any such responsive records.

Approved by Order of the Freedom of Information Commission at its regular meeting of July 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:

RYAN SALVAS, 146 Buck Hill Road, Canterbury, CT 06331

**DAVID SHIPEE, SELECTMAN, BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TOWN OF STERLING;
BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TOWN OF STERLING; AND TOWN OF STERLING, c/o
Attorney Richard P. Roberts, Halloran Sage LLP, 225 Asylum Street, Hartford, CT 06103**


Jennifer M. Mayo
Acting Clerk of the Commission