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Illinois FOIA Request — September 15 Lashly & Baer Council Packet, Attorney Introductions, and Pre-Vote Communications

1 message

Rector/Hailey Printing LLC <[redacted]> Wed, Oct 21, 2026 at 7:28 AM
To: foia@cityofcarmi.com

Dear Ms. Attebury:

Pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1 et seq., I request electronic copies of existing public records concerning the materials provided to Carmi City Council members before their September 15, 2026, consideration and ratification of the August 31, 2026, Agreement for Special Counsel Legal Services with Lashly & Baer, P.C.

This request specifically concerns what the aldermen were given, what they were told about the attorneys, who supplied that information, and when those communications occurred.

The requested period is August 18, 2026, through the beginning of the September 15, 2026, City Council meeting, except where an earlier record was subsequently included in or transmitted with the requested materials.

1. COMPLETE ATTORNEY PACKET PROVIDED TO ALDERMEN

Please provide the complete packet, including every document and attachment prepared for, distributed to, or made available to any alderman concerning Lashly & Baer or the proposed attorney agreement.

This includes:

- The original packet exactly as distributed to council members.
- The August 31, 2026, attorney agreement and all accompanying documents.
- The firm's proposed or approved hourly-rate and pricing schedules.
- Any cover letters, explanations, recommendations, memoranda, attorney biographies, firm profiles, office-location information, or introductory materials.
- Any proposed resolution, amendment, modification, or document concerning the one-year limitation subsequently adopted by the council.
- Any drafts or materially different versions of these materials.

If different aldermen received different versions, please provide each version.

1. WHO PREPARED AND DISTRIBUTED THE PACKET

Please provide existing records identifying:

- Who assembled, prepared, reviewed, or approved the packet.
- Who directed that it be distributed.
- Which aldermen received it.
- The dates, times, and methods of distribution.
- Emails, electronic transmissions, cover messages, delivery records, or acknowledgments documenting its distribution.

1. HOW THE ATTORNEYS WERE INTRODUCED TO THE COUNCIL

Please provide all existing nonexempt communications, presentations, notes, memoranda, and other records documenting how Lashly & Baer was identified or described to council members before the September 15 vote.

Specifically, I request records reflecting:

- What council members were told about the firm's background, qualifications, office locations, and existing municipal representation.
- Whether the firm was described as being from St. Louis, Belleville, Edwardsville, or another location.
- Who supplied those descriptions or introductory information.

- Whether council members were informed who originally recommended or referred the firm to Mayor William Stendeback or other City officials.
- Any existing records of questions raised by aldermen concerning the firm's selection, origin, representation, proposed duties, or compensation, and any responses provided.

This request includes written records documenting verbal briefings or discussions where such records exist.

1. COMMUNICATIONS BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 15 VOTE

Please provide existing nonexempt emails, text messages, correspondence, memoranda, meeting notes, and electronic communications between or involving City officials, aldermen, City Attorney Gregory Stewart, and Lashly & Baer representatives concerning:

- Preparing or distributing the attorney packet.
- Explaining the firm's selection or recommendation to council members.
- The proposed ratification of the attorney agreement.
- Changes to the agreement, including its duration and compensation.
- Questions or concerns expressed by individual aldermen before the vote.
- Instructions or recommendations concerning the council's anticipated action.

Please include responsive public-business communications maintained on personal devices or accounts where applicable.

1. RECORD CUSTODIANS

Please search records reasonably likely to be maintained by:

- Cynthia Attebury, City Clerk.
- Holly Healy, City Administrator/Economic Development.
- Former Mayor William B. Stendeback.
- Gregory K. Stewart, City Attorney.
- Members of the Carmi City Council.
- Other City personnel involved in preparing, approving, or distributing these materials.

Please also include responsive public records held by outside counsel in connection with governmental functions performed for the City, to the extent applicable under 5 ILCS 140/7(2).

1. PRODUCTION AND EXEMPTIONS

I request existing records only. I am not asking the City to create documents, answer interrogatories, or reconstruct undocumented conversations.

I recognize that genuinely privileged legal advice may qualify for exemption under 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(m). However, please produce all reasonably segregable nonexempt material, including factual records of document distribution, communications, participants, dates, attachments, and descriptions of the firm's identity and qualifications.

If records are withheld or redacted, please identify the applicable statutory exemption and provide the explanation required by 5 ILCS 140/9.

If