

**PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY  
FOR  
JOHNSON CITY ENERGY AUTHORITY DBA  
BRIGHTRIDGE**

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY**  
**POLICY: FM-108**  
**EFFECTIVE: 7/1/2017**  
**APPROVED BY: BOARD OF DIRECTORS (5/30/2017)**

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(g), the following Public Records Policy for JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge is hereby adopted by The Board of Directors to provide economical and efficient access to public records as provided under the Tennessee Public Records Act (TPRA) in Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-501, et seq.

The TPRA provides that all state, county and municipal records shall, at all times during business hours, be open for personal inspection by any citizen of the state of Tennessee, and those in charge of the records shall not refuse such right of inspection to any citizen, unless otherwise provided by state law. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(2)(A). Accordingly, the public records of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge are presumed to be open for inspection unless otherwise provided by law.

Personnel of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge shall timely and efficiently provide access and assistance to persons requesting to view or receive copies of public records. No provisions of this Policy shall be used to hinder access to open public records. However, the integrity and organization of public records, as well as the efficient and safe operation of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge shall be protected as provided by current law. Concerns about this Policy should be addressed to the Public Records Request Coordinator for JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge or to the Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel.

This Policy is available for inspection and duplication in the office of The President and CEO of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge. This policy shall be reviewed annually and applied consistently throughout the various departments of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge.

**I. Definitions:**

- A. Records Custodian: The official or employee lawfully responsible for the direct custody and care of a public record. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(1)(C). The records custodian is not necessarily the original preparer or receiver of the record.
- B. Public Records: All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or

ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(1)(A).

- C. Protected Customer Information: Protected customer information includes home and work addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers and other information that could be used to locate the whereabouts of a customer that is subject to an Order of Protection. The customer must present the order of protection to the utility's records custodian and receive confidential treatment of such information. Tenn. Code Ann. 10-7-503(a)(5).
- D. Public Records Request Coordinator: The individual, or individuals, designated in Section III, A.3 of this Policy who have the responsibility to ensure public record requests are routed to the appropriate records custodians and are fulfilled in accordance with the TPRA. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(1)(B). The Public Records Request Coordinator may also be a records custodian.
- E. Requestor: A person seeking access to a public record, whether it is for inspection or duplication.
- F. Protected Employee Information: Protected employee information includes records of an employee's home telephone and cell phone numbers, street address, bank account information, social security number, driver license information (except where driving or operating a vehicle is related to the employee's job), and the same information for the employee's family and household members. Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-504(f).
- G. OORC: Office of Open Records Counsel
- H. PRRC: Public Records Requests Coordinator
- I. Confidential Records: Records that would allow identification of structural or operational vulnerability or permit unlawful disruption to, or interference with the services provided by JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge. Confidential Records are not open to public inspection.
- J. Private Records: Credit card numbers, social security numbers, tax identification numbers, financial institution numbers, security codes, account number, and consumer specific energy usage data except for aggregate monthly billing information. Private records shall be treated as confidential and shall not be open for inspection by members of the public.

## II. Requesting Access to Public Records

- A. Public record requests shall be made to the Public Records Request Coordinator or his/her designee via online submission at [publicrecords@brightridge.com](mailto:publicrecords@brightridge.com) to ensure public record requests are routed to the appropriate records custodian and fulfilled in a timely manner.

- B. Requests for inspection only cannot be required to be made in writing. The PRRC should request a mailing [or email] address from the requestor for providing any written communication required under the TPRA.
- C. Requests for inspection may be made orally or in writing and mailed to 2600 Boones Creek Johnson City, TN 37615 [using the attached Form.]
- D. Requests for copies, or requests for inspection and copies, shall be made in writing [using the attached Form] and accepted via electronic form, in person or mailed to 2600 Boones Creek Rd., Johnson City, TN 37615.
- E. Proof of Tennessee citizenship by presentation of a valid Tennessee driver's license is required as a condition to inspect or receive copies of public records. For business related requests, a business license may be accepted or an individual employee who is a state resident.
- F. Monthly Board meeting agendas and minutes are posted at [www.brightridge.com](http://www.brightridge.com).

### **III. Responding to Public Records Requests**

#### **A. Public Record Request Coordinator**

1. The PRRC shall review public record requests and make an initial determination of the following:
  - a. If the requestor provided a valid Tennessee Driver's License
  - b. If the records requested are described with sufficient specificity to identify them; and if JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge is the custodian of the requested records
2. The PRRC shall acknowledge receipt of the request and take any of the following appropriate action(s):
  - a. Advise the requestor of this Policy and the elections made regarding:
    - i. Proof of Tennessee citizenship;
    - ii. Form(s) required for copies;
    - iii. Fees (and labor threshold and waivers, if applicable); and
    - iv. Aggregation of multiple or frequent requests.
  - b. If appropriate, deny the request in writing, providing the appropriate ground such as one of the following:

- i. The requestor is not, or has not presented evidence of being, a Tennessee citizen
    - ii. The request lacks specificity after failed efforts to assist
    - iii. An exemption makes the record not subject to disclosure under the TPRA. (Provide the exemption in written denial)
    - iv. JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge is not the custodian of the requested records.
    - v. The records do not exist.
  - c. If appropriate, contact the requestor to see if the request can be narrowed.
  - d. Forward the records request to the appropriate records custodian in JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge.
  - e. If requested records are in the custody of a different governmental entity, and the PRRC knows the correct governmental entity, advise the requestor of the correct governmental entity and PRRC for that entity if known.
3. The designated Public Records Requests Coordinator is:
  - a. Name: Tim Whaley, Public Relations and Governmental Affairs Director
  - b. Contact information: 2600 Boones Creek Rd., Johnson City, TN 37615  
Email: [publicrecords@brightridge.com](mailto:publicrecords@brightridge.com)
4. The PRRC shall report to the governing authority on an annual basis regarding JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge's compliance with the TPRA pursuant to this Policy and shall make recommendations, if any, for improvement or changes to this Policy.

B. Records Custodian

1. Upon receiving a public records request, a records custodian shall promptly make requested public records available in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503. If the records custodian is uncertain that an applicable exemption applies, the custodian may consult with the PRRC, counsel, or the OORC.
2. If not practicable to promptly provide requested records because additional time is necessary to determine whether the requested records exist; to search for, retrieve, or otherwise gain access to records; to determine whether the records are open; to redact records; or for other similar reasons, then a records custodian shall, **within seven (7) business days** from the records custodian's receipt of the request, send the requestor a completed Public Records Request Response Form.

3. If a records custodian denies a public record request, he or she shall deny the request in writing as provided in Section III.A.2.b using the Public Records Request Response Form.
4. If a records custodian reasonably determines production of records should be segmented because the records request is for a large volume of records, or additional time is necessary to prepare the records for access, the records custodian shall use the Public Records Request Response Form to notify the requestor that production of the records will be in segments and that a records production schedule will be provided as expeditiously as practicable. If appropriate, the records custodian should contact the requestor to see if the request can be narrowed.
5. If a records custodian discovers records responsive to a records request were omitted, the records custodian should contact the requestor concerning the omission and produce the records as quickly as practicable.
6. A records custodian's failure to respond to a request in one of the above-mentioned ways within (7) business days from the date of receipt, constitutes a denial and is actionable under TN. Code Ann. §Section 10-7-505.

#### C. Redaction

1. If a record contains confidential information or information that is not open for public inspection, the records custodian shall prepare a redacted copy prior to providing access. If questions arise concerning redaction, the records custodian should coordinate with counsel or other appropriate parties regarding review and redaction of records. The records custodian and the PRRC may also consult with the Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel.
2. Whenever a redacted record is provided, a records custodian should provide the requestor with the basis for redaction. The basis given for redaction shall be general in nature and no confidential information disclosed.

#### **IV. Inspection of Records**

- A. There shall be no charge for inspection of open public records.
- B. The location for inspection of records within the offices of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge will be determined by a predetermined location with the requestor for the duration. Alternative locations shall be determined by either the PRRC or the records custodian.
- C. Under reasonable circumstances, the PRRC or a records custodian may require an appointment for inspection between the hours of 10 AM – 2 PM Monday through Friday with the exception of JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge recognized holidays.

## **V. Copies of Records**

- A. A records custodian shall promptly respond to a public record request for copies in the most economic and efficient manner practicable.
- B. Copies will be available for pickup at a location specified by the records custodian.
- C. Upon payment for postage, copies will be delivered to the requestor's home address by the United States Postal Service or may be electronically submitted upon approval from the designated records custodian, or in person at 2600 Boones Creek Johnson City, TN 37615.
- D. A requestor will not be allowed to make copies of records with personal equipment.

## **VI. Fees and Charges and Procedures for Billing and Payment**

- A. Records custodians shall provide requestors with an itemized estimate of the charges [using Form] prior to producing copies of records and may require pre-payment of such charges before producing requested records. Fees associated with a records request may be waived at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer as the interest of the organization may require.
- B. Fees and charges for copies are as follows
  - 1. \$0.15 per page for letter- and legal-size black and white copies.
  - 2. \$0.50 per page for letter- and legal-size color copies.
  - 3. Labor when time exceeds 1 hour.
  - 4. If an outside vendor is used, the actual costs assessed by the vendor.
- C. No duplication costs will be charged for requests for less than 5 pages.
- D. Payment shall be made at 2600 Boones Creek Rd. Johnson City, TN. 37615  
Acceptable payment methods are cash, check, Visa, MasterCard and Discover
- E. Payment in advance will be required when costs are estimated to exceed \$50.00.

## F. Aggregation of Frequent and Multiple Requests

1. JC Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge will aggregate record requests in accordance with the Frequent and Multiple Request Policy promulgated by the OORC when more than (4) requests are received within a calendar month either from a single individual or a group of individuals deemed working in concert.
  - a. The level at which records requests will be aggregated is 4 whether by agency, entity, department, office or otherwise.
  - b. The PRRC is responsible for making the determination that a group of individuals are working in concert. The PRRC or the records custodian must inform the individuals that they have been deemed to be working in concert and that they have the right to appeal the decision to the OORC.
  - c. Routinely released and readily accessible records excluded from aggregation are any items linked to public access at our website [www.brightridge.com](http://www.brightridge.com).

## PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM

*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.*

**To:** Johnson City Energy Authority DBA BrightRidge  
Tim Whaley, Public Records Request Coordinator – publicrecords@brightridge.com

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Is the requestor a Tennessee citizen?**  Yes (Please attach copy of TN Driver’s License)  
 No

**Request:**  Inspection (The TPRA does not permit fees or require a written request for inspection only<sup>i</sup>).  
 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_? 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Continue to next page

---

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



**I hereby certify that neither I nor any individual with whom I am associated in making this request is the subject of an Order of Protection or Restraining Order as relates to the individual or anyone associated with him or her being the subject of my request.**

---

Signature of Requestor and Date Submitted

---

Signature of Public Records Request Coordinator and Date Received

**PUBLIC RECORD REQUEST RESPONSE FORM  
JC ENERGY AUTHORITY DBA BRIGHTRIDGE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date]

[Requestor's Name and Contact Information]: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In response to your records request received on \_\_\_\_\_ [Date Request Received], our office is taking the action(s)<sup>1</sup> indicated below:

- The public record(s) responsive to your request will be made available for inspection:  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_
- Copies of public record(s) responsive to your request are:
  - Attached;
  - Available for pickup at the following location: \_\_\_\_\_; or
  - Being delivered via:  USPS First-Class Mail  Electronically  Other: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Your request is denied on the following grounds:
  - Your request was not sufficiently detailed to enable identification of the specific requested record(s). You need to provide additional information to identify the requested record(s).
  - No such record(s) exists or this office does not maintain record(s) responsive to your request.
  - No proof of Tennessee citizenship was presented with your request. Your request will be reconsidered upon presentation of an adequate form of identification.
  - You are not a Tennessee citizen.
  - You have not paid the estimated copying/production fees.
  - Order of Protection/Restraining Order.
  - The following state, federal, or other applicable law prohibits disclosure of the requested records:  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- It is not practicable for the records you requested to be made promptly available for inspection and/or copying because:
  - It has not yet been determined that records responsive to your request exist; or
  - The office is still in the process of retrieving, reviewing, and/or redacting the requested records.

The time reasonably necessary to produce the record(s) or information and/or to make a determination of a proper response to your request is: \_\_\_\_\_.

If you have any additional questions regarding your record request, please contact Tim Whaley, Public Records Request Coordinator, at 423-952-5081 or email [twhaley@brightridge.com](mailto:twhaley@brightridge.com).

Sincerely,

[Records Custodian or Public Record Request Coordinator]  
[Name, Title, and Contact Information]

<sup>1</sup> If all requested records do not have the same response, so indicate.

**This page intentionally left blank**