



OFFICE OF MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON
CITY OF CHICAGO

March 20, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC CORRESPONDENCE

Jimmy Tobias

160176-65137882@requests.muckrock.com

RE: Notice of Response to FOIA Request
FOIA File No.: F069610

Dear Jimmy Tobias,

On behalf of the City of Chicago Office of the Mayor, I am responding to your Freedom of Information Act request received by this department on March 13, 2024, requesting:

Any and all written or electronic communications, including emails, DMs, and texts, between Stacey Davis Gates and one or more of the following officials: Jason Lee, Rich Guidice, Jennifer Johnson and/or Brandon Johnson. This request seeks records produced since March 1, 2024.

Your request was reviewed by the undersigned. A search of the Mayor's Office records was conducted based on the parameters provided. Information responsive to your request for emails is available and attached.

Please be advised that certain information has been redacted from the enclosed responsive records pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(b) and 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(c). Details of the redactions are set forth below:

Section 7(1)(b) exempts from disclosure "[p]rivate information, unless disclosure is required by another provision of this Act, a State or federal law or a court order." 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(b). The FOIA, in 5 ILCS 140/2(c-5), defines "private information" as follows:

"Private information" means unique identifiers, including a person's social security number, driver's license number, employee identification number, biometric identifiers, personal financial information, passwords or other access codes, medical records, home or personal telephone numbers, and personal email addresses. Private information also includes home address and personal license plates, except as otherwise provided by law or when compiled without possibility of attribution to any person."

Therefore, personal telephone numbers and meeting ID passcodes, pins and call-in numbers were redacted as such information is exempt pursuant to Section 7(1)(b).

Please be advised that City issued cell phone numbers were also redacted pursuant to 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(c) of FOIA. Section 7(1)(c) exempts from inspection and copying the following:

“[P]ersonal information contained within public records, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy... ‘Unwarranted invasion of personal privacy’ means the disclosure of information is that highly personal or objectionable to reasonable person and in which the subject’s right to privacy outweighs any legitimate public interest in obtaining the information.” *Id.*

As publicly available City issued cell phone numbers would subject these employees to invasive and unsolicited communications, the disclosure of this information would burden employees’ privacy interest. Additionally, access to this information would not advance the public interest in understanding “the affairs of government and the official acts and policies of those who represent them[.]” 5 ILCS 140/1. Further, the landline numbers and other email addresses for these employees is available to the public, which further limits the de minimis public interest in the contact information of the requested employees. See *Shurtleff v. United States Environmental Protection Agency*, 991 F. Supp. 2d 1, 18 (D.D.C. Sept. 30, 2013) (“The EPA has proffered a substantial privacy interest at stake in disclosing the official internal email address of the EPA Administrator and the work email address of employees at the EOP: these few individuals have ‘a significant personal interest in preventing the burden of unsolicited emails and harassment.’”); *Buckovetz v. U.S. Department of the Navy*, Case No. 14-cv-2115-BEN, 2016 WL 4801335 at *2-3 (S.D. Cal. Apr. 7, 2016) (affirming the redaction of an employee’s cell phone number, because “the [employee’s] privacy rights in this information outweigh the public’s interest in disclosure”).

In regard to the remainder of your request, please be advised that there are no responsive records.

You have the right to a review under 5 ILCS 140-9.5(a) by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General, 500 South 2nd Street, Springfield, Illinois 62706, Phone: (877)299-3642, Fax: (217)782-1396, E-mail: public.access@ilag.gov. You may also seek judicial review of a denial under 5 ILCS 140/11 by filing a lawsuit in the State Circuit Court.

Sincerely,

Hibo Aden
FOIA Officer