

TOMMY BATTLE  
MAYOR

CITY OF HUNTSVILLE  
OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

TREY RILEY  
JOCELYN J. BOUSTANI  
K. CLAUDIA ANDERSON  
M. BRUCE PITTS  
POLLY BLALOCK  
JEANNE DOWDLE RIZZARDI  
EDWARD E. BLAIR  
JOEL G. HOLLEY  
WHITNEY P. ABOKO-COLE  
E. BLAIR DAWKINS  
MELISSA J. LONG

308 FOUNTAIN CIRCLE  
POST OFFICE BOX 308  
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA 35804

TELEPHONE (256) 427-5026  
FAX NO. (256) 427-5043

November 13, 2020

MELISSA STOKES  
Claims Representative

Beryl Lipton  
MuckRock News  
DEPT MR 692422  
411A Highland Ave.  
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

RE: Records Request –Axon Agreements & Equipment

Dear Mr. Lipton:

I have received your request of October 15, 2020 for records under the Alabama Open Records Law § 36-12-40 et seq.

The FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) as a matter of clarification is a federal provision that is primarily concerned with the several federal agencies and making certain information is public and available, but that act does not have applicability to state and local entities. Section 36-12-40, commonly referred to as the Alabama Open Records Law, states that “*every citizen* has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public writing of this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by statute.” It is therefore axiomatic that an Alabama statute that references the rights of a citizen denotes the rights of a person who is a resident of this state.

The Alabama Supreme Court has limited the import of section 36-12-40 to Alabama citizens. See *State ex rel Kernells v. Ezell*, 291 Ala. 440. (Ala.1973). Also, in *Stone v. Consol. Publ’g Co.*, 404 So. 2d 678, 681 (1981) which states that public writings of the state are records that record the activities of public officers so that the status or condition of ...activities can be known by *our citizens*. The United States Supreme Court in *McBurney v. Young*, 133 S. Ct. 1709, 1714 (2013) ruled that a state’s public records law limited access to public records to only the citizens of that state. MuckRock is, therefore, not considered a *citizen*. Alabama Attorney General Opinion 2018-030 has concluded that generally, access to public records is limited to requests by Alabama citizens only.

Accordingly, we are unable to fulfill your request.

Sincerely,



Edward E. Blair  
Assistant City Attorney