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November 13, 2020

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

RE: Records Request –Axon Agreements & Equipment

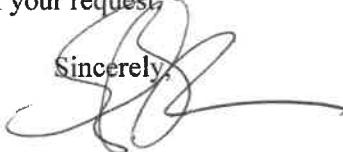
Dear Mr. Lipton:

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 Kernels 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