



HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Hamilton Police Services Board
BOARD MEETING DATE:	February 29, 2024
SUBJECT:	Five Year Report: Freedom of Information Branch Statistics
REPORT NUMBER:	24-012
SUBMITTED BY:	Frank Bergen, Chief of Police
SIGNATURE:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Freedom of Information (FOI) Branch maintains annual statistics on the number of access to information requests received for the release of records held by the HPS; these statistics are also reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario
- Under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*, institutions may collect fees associated with search time, photocopying, and materials used to satisfy a request; the fees are governed by O. Reg. 823

INFORMATION

Over the past five years, the volume of FOI requests has remained fairly consistent. We presume that the reduction in requests for 2020 and 2021 has been an effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. The complexity of individual requests continues to increase over the years. Files are often more voluminous due to the type and detail of the information sought. As a result, the time spent on individual files has increased from 3.5 hours/file in 2016 to 5.8 hours/file in 2021.

The following table reflect the number and category of requests received during the past five years, and includes staff time used, appeals filed, and fees collected:

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Year	Personal Records	General Records	Total Requests	Appeals Filed	Staff time* (hours)	Application Fees Collected
2023	798	612	1410	9	253	\$6925
2022	796	504	1300	13	210	\$6405
2021	561	548	1109	7	190	\$5370
2020	559	492	1051	6	235	\$5015
2019	967	608	1575	11	330	\$7780

*Staff time is the number of hours spent by various staff across the Police Service in the collection and provision of records to comply with requests.

The necessities of the pandemic have also brought new efficiencies to the practice of the Freedom of Information Unit. For example, staff are now using a secure, encrypted cloud site to provide requesters access to their records. This eliminates the need for requesters to attend the station to receive their records and eliminates courier costs. These process changes are now a part of the regular course of business.

In 2023, the Freedom of Information Unit was able to respond to 91% of the requests within the 30-day legislated time period.

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