

JACKSON FREE PRESS

September 17, 2019

Hinds County Board of Supervisors
316 S. President St.
Jackson, MS 39201

Re: Concern about Board of Supervisors vote to destroy public records

To the Hinds County Board of Supervisors:

The Jackson Free Press is deeply concerned about the Hinds County Board of Supervisors' vote on Monday, September 16, 2019 to destroy all files related to former administrations of the Hinds County Board of Supervisors as well as former County Administrators' files from 1984 to 2007. We believe this decision violates the records retention schedule and local government records protocols as outlined by the State of Mississippi.

More specifically, during the Sept. 16, 2019, Hinds County Board of Supervisors meeting, the County Administrator's office addressed the Hinds County Board of Supervisors regarding an "Order to Approve the Disposal of Files Related to Former Administrations of the Board of Supervisors as well as Former County Administrator's Files for the Period of from the Years of 1984-2007, Formerly Stored at the Public Defender's Building, in Accordance with Hinds County's Storage, Retention and Disposal Policy Adopted in 2017." The Board voted unanimously to approve the order, without any discussion among each other and, to our knowledge, without input from the public.

We are aware that the Hinds County Board of Supervisors is subject to the guidelines outlined in the State of Mississippi's Local Government Records protocols.

The Records Retention Schedule for the **Counties Board of Supervisors** states that the following records, listed below, must be stored permanently. Some of these records are subject to the schedule for All Local Government and Administrative Records, which appears further down:

- **Agenda Files:** permanent (municipal docket) *(updated 7/17/2018)*
- **Original Orders, Already Recorded in Minutes:** permanent (bound copies) *(updated 7/17/2018)*
- **Committee Minutes:** permanent (bound copies) *(updated 7/17/2018)*
- **Proof of Publication:** for publications relating to ordinances, until superseded or amended *(updated 4/16/2019)*
- **Grant Files, Program Records:** permanent (final reports) *(updated 4/21/2009)*
- **Activity Reports:** 3 years or permanent if annual report is not maintained *(updated 7/17/2018)*
- **Annual Reports:** permanent *(updated 7/17/2018)*

Below you will find the Records Retention Schedule for **All Local Government and Administrative Records**. Unless noted otherwise, these guidelines were all updated on 7/17/2018:

- **Minutes:** permanent
- **Activity Reports:** 3 years or permanent if annual report is not maintained.
- **Annual Reports:** permanent
- **Proof of Publication:** for publications relating to ordinances, until superseded or amended (*updated 4/16/2019*)
- **Policies, Procedures, and Plans:** permanent
- **Correspondence, Executive: Elected and Appointed Officials:** permanent
- **Litigation Files:** 10 years following the final disposition of the matter, including any settlement. Review cases involving annexation, civil rights, and other landmark or historical issues for potential permanent retention.
- **Records Disposal Documentation:** permanent

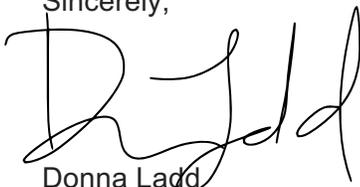
We are requesting a copy of the 2017 Hinds County "Storage, Retention and Disposal Policy" to which the order refers. Most of the state guidelines that apply to the Board of Supervisors were updated in 2018, as set forth above. Our understanding is that any 2017 policy that contradicts the 2018 Records Retention Schedule would thus be rendered obsolete, in whole or in part.

We are also requesting access to the list of documents that will be destroyed.

We respectfully request that no documents be destroyed until these public concerns and questions are answered. We also ask that you please provide us with any additional information that would help to clarify the Board's policy and vote this morning.

Please provide this information on receipt of this letter to reporter Seyma Bayram at seyma@jacksonfreepress.com. Her phone number is 601-362-6121 ext. 16.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Ladd', written in a cursive style.

Donna Ladd
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