

FIRST TWO VISITS: OCT. 20
NOV. 21

Barrington

Documents Not Received



School Committee Minutes:

- Readability: Good
- Thoroughness: Good
- Layout: Good
- Legal Compliance: Full

City/Town Council Minutes:

- Readability: Average
- Thoroughness: Good
- Layout: Poor
- Legal Compliance: Full

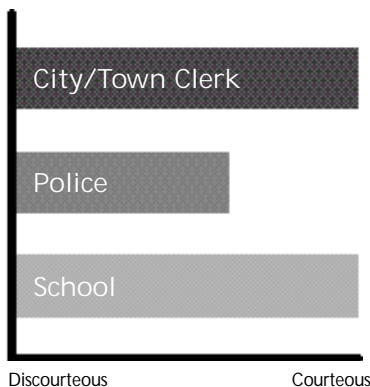
In a recent Superior Court decision, the Barrington School Committee was held in violation of the Open Meetings Law (Pine vs. Barrington School Building Committee, No. 96-5909 April 1997). This decision marked the first time a school committee has been fined for violating this statute, and "the Barrington case" quickly associated this town's name with the Open Meetings Law. Perhaps as a result, the Barrington School Department complied with all of the requests for documents. It also received the highest possible rating for demeanor. All of the requests made to the Town Clerk were fulfilled, and none required more than one visit.

While the School Department and Town Clerk fulfilled their obligations under the Open Records Law, the Police Department was less compliant. The Police permitted an inspection of the log but refused to provide arrest reports. The officers were defensive in their refusal, and received negative ratings for their demeanor. Town-wide, the researchers were asked the reason for their request and/or identification in over half of the interactions.

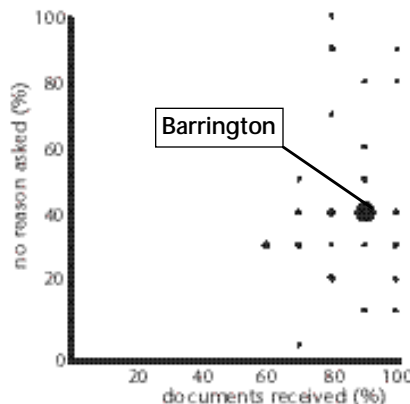
“ When I requested the meeting agendas and minutes from the Town Clerk, the clerk answered all of my questions and was generally courteous. I was directed to a private room where I could view the documents before having them copied. When another clerk disagreed on the charge for copies, the clerk helping me discovered the correct and lower price of \$0.15 per page. The Tax Assessor's office, while pleasant, was unable to grant my request because they claimed not to have such records, but informed me that if I wrote the City Treasurer with exactly what I wanted, they might be able to produce it. ”

“ On the first visit to the police station, I requested arrest and brutality reports but the clerk at the desk would not give any information until I told her our reason for the request. As I prepared to leave, a sergeant came into the lobby and asked if he could help. The specific request for the brutality reports was denied on the grounds that it was a matter of internal affairs and confidential. ”

How We Were Treated



Comparison: Cities/Towns



Discourteous

Courteous