

FIRST TWO VISITS: OCT. 21
NOV. 13

Charlestown

Documents Not Received



School Committee Minutes:

- Readability: NA
- Thoroughness: NA
- Layout: NA
- Legal Compliance: NA

City/Town Council Minutes:

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

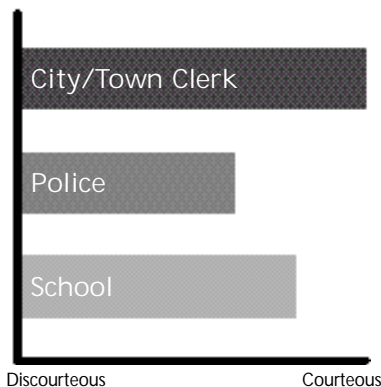
Charlestown complied with 70 percent of the requests for public documents. As in numerous other towns, there was a significant difference between the Town Clerk's office and the Police Department. The Town Clerk provided all of the documents and received the highest possible rating for their demeanor. Only half of the documents requested from the Police and three-fifths of the School Department (Chariho) requests were fulfilled. Furthermore, both the Police and the School Department scored below the departmental averages for their demeanor.

Charlestown is the only jurisdiction in the state in which researchers were asked the reason for requesting the information in every encounter. There is significant room for improvement in how citizens are treated when requesting information from the Police or School Departments. The highlight in the Charlestown research was the quality of the documents obtained.

While the Attorney General found problems with the content of the minutes, we had difficulty obtaining them. First, the researchers were denied access to the minutes. Second, a warning was issued, by the Attorney General, to the Chariho School Committee for violations of the Open Minutes Law. The Committee violated the Act by failing to notice the nature of the business to be discussed in closed session and only citing the subsection of the law.

“ The first police officer I dealt with in the Charlestown Police Department was courteous, however, he did ask me why I was there. He then told me I could not see the arrest reports because they were under investigation. When I requested three reports that were closed, he consulted a higher ranking officer. When this officer approached me, he repeatedly asked me who I was and why I wanted this report. After telling him I was just a concerned citizen, he kicked me out of the police station. ”

How We Were Treated



Comparison: Cities/Towns

