



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

345 Kellogg Boulevard West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906 (651) 259-3260

Government Records Information Leaflet No. 4 Municipal Records

Many historically important records remain in the custody of Minnesota cities. This statement identifies some of the most valuable series of municipal records. Many cities will have examples of all these records; others may have only a few. Transfer of such records to any other historical agency, public library, or museum is allowed with permission of the State Archives. Numerous other records (*e.g.*, charter, incorporation records, deeds to city property, zoning files) *not* listed on this sheet should be retained permanently by the city.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS:

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL meetings, all council committees, task forces, boards, commissions, and advisory bodies.

AGENDA PACKETS prepared for council meetings.

ANNEXATION RECORDS, including any records of towns or municipalities annexed.

ANNUAL REPORTS of all city departments and of the city's central administration.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS, unless completely reproduced in the minutes.

CORRESPONDENCE AND SUBJECT FILES of the mayor, city manager, and other department heads: Most of this material is routine and of little permanent value; however, certain files may have historical significance.

FINANCIAL RECORDS:

ANNUAL BUDGETS of the municipality.

ANNUAL AUDIT REPORTS issued by private accounting firms or by the State Auditor.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS of the municipality.

CLERK'S REGISTERS of receipts and disbursements.

TREASURER'S REGISTERS of receipts and disbursements.

ELECTION RECORDS:

ABSTRACTS OF ELECTION RETURNS: Totals of votes for each candidate.

POLL LISTS: Lists of individuals who voted.

ELECTION BOUNDARY MAPS.

PUBLICITY RECORDS:

NEWSLETTERS issued to city residents.

SCRAPBOOKS of clippings and other material relating to city government, city projects, and issues of concern to residents.

PHOTOGRAPHS and other historical data compiled for celebrations, etc.

PUBLICATIONS: Master set of city-produced studies or reports.

COURT RECORDS: Most municipal courts ceased in the 1970s.

MUNICIPAL COURT DOCKET BOOKS: Civil and criminal registers, with indexes.

MUNICIPAL COURT MINUTE BOOKS.

MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGMENT BOOKS.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE DOCKET BOOKS: Civil and criminal registers, with indexes.

POLICE DEPARTMENT RECORDS:

ANNUAL REPORTS.

JAIL REGISTERS: Log of prisoners received at the jail.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT RECORDS:

ANNUAL REPORTS.

FINANCIAL RECORDS: Summary ledgers and journals of department.

MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS:

BIRTH AND DEATH REGISTERS kept by all municipalities until 1953; some cities continued to record after that date.

CEMETERY RECORDS, including burial registers, minutes of meetings, and lot owners' records.

Many municipalities will hold records of city-owned *LIBRARIES, AIRPORTS, UTILITIES, HOSPITALS, AUDITORIUMS, FARMER'S MARKETS, CIVIC CENTERS, PARKS, NATURE CENTERS,* etc. These special activities generate historically valuable records that may not be listed on this sheet. For additional information on the proper disposal of these records, please contact the State Archives.

The preservation and orderly disposal of municipal records are governed by Minnesota Statutes 138.17, Subdivision 1. No municipal records of any kind may be destroyed or removed from municipal custody without signed authorization by the Records Disposition Panel as constituted by this statute. Further information and forms on which to request permission to destroy records on a onetime basis are available from the State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society, at the address and phone number shown above. The General Records Retention Schedule for Cities (updated in April 2005) is available online at <<http://www.mcfoa.org>>.