


CITY OF HALLANDALE BEACH, FLORIDA
MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 12, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

FROM: Jenorgen M. Guillen, City Clerk 

SUBJECT: Citywide Records Modernization and Compliance Initiative

As you are aware, the City Clerk's Office has been working steadfastly to ensure that citywide records comply with Florida Statutes Chapters 119, 257, and 286. The main objective is for the City to have a fully compliant, robust, and centralized records management system. Such is essential to enhancing transparency, reducing legal and administrative risk, and providing timely access to vital information for both internal use and public requests. What follows is a synopsis of how we got here, our approach to a compliant records management system, current situation, proposed re-organization and enhancements, and recommendations.

Background

This effort was primarily because the City had not fully complied with state law and industry-wide best practices related to public records and records management for many years. Recognizing this and the increasing complexity of legal requirements, technological advancements, and heightened public expectations for transparency, the City Commission took decisive action on February 21, 2024, by authorizing a professional services agreement to advance and modernize the City's Records Management Program.

Approach to Compliance

As a foundational step, the City engaged professional consultant services to update the outdated 2011 Records Management Plan and to establish a comprehensive, citywide framework that aligns with current statutory, operational, and technological standards. Consultant Steve M. Lewis has been instrumental in advancing this initiative, leading the development of the 2025 Records Management Plan and guiding the ongoing review and standardization of records management policies and procedures in accordance with Florida's General Records Schedules.

In parallel with the consultant's efforts, the City Clerk's Office, in collaboration with the Innovation Technology Department, initiated an extensive internal records assessment and cleanup campaign. Over the past several months, this citywide initiative has brought together multiple departments to inventory, organize, scan, digitize, or, when appropriate, securely dispose of outdated records.

This strategic and collaborative approach has laid the groundwork for a modernized and compliant records management program and provided critical insight into the volume and complexity of records citywide. Understanding the scope of the task ahead is essential to ensuring this vital effort's long-term success and sustainability.

Current Situation and Critical Needs

The efforts outlined above have identified the need to manage a critical portion of the City's overall records, approximately 1.7 million documents, through comprehensive indexing, digitization, and systematic organization across multiple departments. This initiative is a critical operational priority and includes several department-specific projects essential to achieving regulatory compliance, operational efficiency, and improved access to public records. The total estimated cost to complete this phase of the records management modernization effort is approximately \$350,921. However, it is essential to note that the City maintains a significantly larger volume of records, far exceeding the 1.7 million documents addressed in this initiative. This undertaking represents only a fraction of the broader citywide inventory. While it does not yet include all departments, it strategically prioritizes records with extended retention requirements and high legal, operational, and historical value, laying a strong foundation for future phases of comprehensive records modernization.

Project	Cost
Human Resources-Digitize/Index 154,000 Records	46,825
Development Services-Digitize/Index 209,000 Records	61,138
Citywide-Optiview Former Repository-Digitize/Index 1.4 Million Records	63,163
Standardized Digital Records and Staff Training	67,500
Estimated City Wide Digital Archival of Records	112,295
	\$ 350,921

The Human Resources Employee Files Archival Project is essential to ensure compliance with employment records regulations and retention requirements. Similarly, the Development Services Department (DSD) Records Archival Project will facilitate the indexing and proper digitization of critical land use and permitting documents to support operational efficiency and regulatory alignment. However, the most significant and transformative component is the Citywide Records Archive, recognized as OptiView, the City's former records depository system, which contains records dating back to 1967, with peak usage between 2006 and 2014 and minimal activity after 2019. The proposed project will create a standardized index of approximately 1.4 million digital records, migrating them into a centralized digital platform aligned with the 2025 Records Management Plan. This comprehensive effort will modernize records access across departments, eliminate outdated practices, and strengthen long-term information governance and compliance.

The estimated project cost includes funding to train staff on digital records management policies and to implement standardized procedures aligned with Florida's

General Records Schedules and the 2025 Records Management Plan, critical steps to ensure long-term program sustainability. Additionally, the budget allocates resources to digitize and index approximately 100 bankers' boxes of high-priority legal and historical records. This effort will reduce physical storage requirements, enhance accessibility, and safeguard vital documents from potential damage or loss.

This proposed initiative and critical need collectively represent a strategic investment in digital transformation, compliance, and operational excellence, reinforcing the City's commitment to accountability and open government. With an emphasis on sustainability and best practices, this comprehensive effort will enable the City Clerk's Office to safeguard vital records, enhance disaster recovery protocols, and modernize records access and retention processes. It will ensure compliance with Rule Chapters 1B-24 and 1B-26, F.A.C., while positioning the City to meet current and future regulatory demands.

Proposed Re-organization & Enhancements

To ensure the long-term success and oversight of this modernization initiative, strengthening citywide transparency, operational efficiency, and legal compliance, the City Clerk's Office will implement key organizational enhancements with the support of the City Manager's Office. Two key changes are being proposed: 1) the Addition of a Records and Contracts Manager position via re-classification from the Procurement Department to the City Clerk's Office, and 2) the Promotion of the Records Manager to Assistant City Clerk.

Assistant City Clerk

The current Records Manager, April Manning, brings a wealth of institutional knowledge and demonstrated expertise in public records law, making her well-prepared to succeed in this expanded leadership role. In 2023 and 2024, April played a pivotal role in upholding the City's commitment to transparency and legal compliance by overseeing the intake, review, and release of thousands of public records spanning multiple departments. For example, in 2023, she managed approximately 7,465 emails from the Innovation Technology Department, each containing an estimated one to six attachments, reviewed eight hours of Police Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage, processed 5,153 Police Department documents ranging from three to sixty pages each, and reviewed 1,334 Building Department records, with file sizes ranging from one to 200 pages. She also coordinated the release of 134 Planning & Zoning records, among others. In 2024, this critical workload continued with the review of 3,705 additional emails, over 20 hours of BWC footage, 4,183 Police Department records, and 2,642 Building Department records. She further managed to release 272 Code Enforcement documents, 90 Planning & Zoning records, and 55 Business Tax Regulations (BTR) files. This high-volume, high-stakes work reflects her commitment to ensuring timely, accurate, and legally compliant access to public records in accordance with Chapter 119, F.S. The breadth and complexity of these records, from digital correspondence and regulatory filings to video footage, underscore the need for sustained investment in centralized records systems, staffing, and process modernization.

As Assistant City Clerk, April will continue to lead citywide coordination of public records requests, ensuring ongoing compliance with Florida Statutes, Chapter 119, and the Federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In this expanded role, she will continue to provide training and guidance to Records Liaisons across all departments, promoting consistency, accountability, and best practices in public records management. Additionally, April will support the broader functions of the City Clerk's Office, contributing to its operational efficiency and excellence in service delivery. Her promotion is a testament to her exceptional performance. It reflects the City Clerk's Office's commitment to nurturing leadership from within and investing in individuals who exemplify professionalism, integrity, and public service.

Records and Contracts Manager

The Records and Contracts Manager position will provide citywide oversight of records retention and contract administration. This role will be responsible for managing the lifecycle of both digital and physical records in accordance with Chapters 119, 257, and 286 of the Florida Statutes. Additionally, the position will support all departments by coordinating the intake, tracking, and renewal of contracts through the Tyler Munis Contract Module. Currently, the City faces challenges locating certain records, such as cemetery deeds and legacy agreements, to name a few executed before my tenure, highlighting the need for improved oversight and management.

Recommendations

In light of the significant benefits and to ensure the proposed initiative's successful completion, it is recommended that the Commission approve a one-time investment of \$350,921, along with the associated staffing changes and enhancements. This strategic investment in records modernization is essential to achieving full regulatory compliance, enhancing government transparency, improving operational efficiency, and mitigating legal and administrative risks. The initiative represents a forward-looking approach that will deliver measurable, sustainable value across all City departments.

First, by aligning citywide records practices with Florida Statutes Chapters 119, 257, and 286 and Rule Chapters 1B-24 and 1B-26, F.A.C., the City reduces its exposure to costly legal noncompliance, fines, and litigation. Local governments often incur significant expenses from record-related lawsuits or compliance failures, with potential legal costs ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 per incident. Proactively addressing these risks through modernization offsets a significant portion of the project's cost while upholding the City's responsibility to maintain public access and transparency.

Second, digitizing and indexing approximately 1.7 million records will significantly enhance operational efficiency across the organization. For example, digitizing just 100 of our bankers' boxes alone will free up approximately 150 cubic feet of physical storage space, equivalent to a large walk-in closet or multiple filing cabinets. Currently, locating and retrieving physical records is a time-consuming, labor-intensive process. If each manual search takes an average of five minutes, this results in more than 141,000 hours

of staff time, equating to roughly 68 full-time equivalent years. Transitioning to a centralized digital records system will eliminate this inefficiency and is projected to save the City an estimated \$4.25 million in labor costs over time, based on a conservative average burdened hourly rate of \$30. These substantial savings will enable staff to focus on higher-value tasks, optimize departmental performance, and better serve the public.

Additionally, this initiative will significantly enhance transparency and public service. The City can quickly and accurately fulfill public records requests with centralized and searchable records. In 2023 and 2024 alone, over 30,000 documents were processed across departments, reflecting high demand from residents, businesses, and the media. Faster response times improve public trust and reduce the administrative burden of follow-up inquiries and complaints.

This modernization effort is vital to long-term preservation and disaster recovery. Digitizing essential legal and historical documents safeguards them from physical deterioration, loss, or damage, ensuring their continued availability for critical decision-making. These records are fundamental to maintaining government continuity, institutional memory, and legal integrity. Losing a vital record could result in costly reconstruction efforts or legal disputes, with potential financial impacts ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. A recent example highlighting the need for improved records management involves a matter between the City, FDOT, and the Town of Pembroke Park concerning the South Broward Pumping Station along I-95. Due to the absence of a copy within the City's records system, I was required to spend extended hours navigating Pembroke Park's online digital records repository to locate a 2007 agreement defining the use and maintenance responsibilities among all stakeholders. This situation underscores the critical importance of a centralized and accessible records management system to ensure timely access to vital documents and to prevent operational delays.

Finally, the re-organization that reclassifies the Records Manager as Assistant City Clerk and brings in a Records and Contracts Manager enhances internal capacity and leadership continuity. This strategic move eliminates the need to outsource key functions, ensures compliance oversight, and fosters institutional knowledge retention. These benefits result in estimated annual savings of \$50,000 to \$75,000 and strengthen the City Clerk's Office for long-term success. These enhancements align with the City Commission's strategic priorities and improve internal collaboration and service delivery.

Your consideration is greatly appreciated. I look forward to discussing the following steps and answering any questions.

cc : Dr. Jeremy Earle, City Manager
Noemy Sandoval, Assistant City Manager
Natasha Mazzie, Budget Director