

*May 11*

Meredith:

Please consider this a request for the following information:

1. Job application, title, hire date, salary and all other publicly available information on Linda Blendowski and Judge Caputo's daughter.
2. The internal affairs report and any records on disciplinary actions taken as a result of missing funds in inmate accounts at the jail. It's my understanding that \$25,000 was discovered missing from inmate trust accounts at the jail several years ago and that two people were fired. The ORA requires TCSO to release records of all final disciplinary actions resulting in loss of pay, suspension, demotion or termination.
3. The current complete list of all reserve deputies, including advanced reserves. I was provided a list containing 115 names last month but I want to ensure this list is up to date. Additionally, please provide date each reserve was hired and the job application submitted by each. These are all public records under the ORA.

Please respond to this email so I know it has been received. I've sent three previous emails asking to be placed on the media email list and received no response.

Sincerely,

Ziva Branstetter  
Editor in Chief  
The Frontier  
[www.readfrontier.com](http://www.readfrontier.com)  
918-520-0406

*May 11*

Hi Ziva-we are in receipt of your request & will process it appropriately. Gathering, scanning, & reacting every app of every reserve will take a significant period of time & resources.

I will look at the questions re: allegations of inmate funds missing as well & see what, if anything, there is.

I will get the records on Blendowski & Caputo as well.

You will be added to the contacts list. From this point forward, Terry Simonson will be the media contact FYI.

Meredith Baker

Sent from my iPhone

*May 11*

Ziva, please see below.

1. Job application, title, hire date, salary and all other publicly available information on Linda Blendowski and Judge Caputo's daughter.  
Caputo, Kathryn: Hired 6/7/13. She works in the civil division. Requested info on salary. Pulling app.  
Mary Monica Blendowski: Hired June 2010. Title is deputy. Pulling app. Requested salary info.
2. The internal affairs report and any records on disciplinary actions taken as a result of missing funds in inmate accounts at the jail. It's my understanding that \$25,000 was discovered missing from inmate trust accounts at the jail several years ago and that two people were fired. The ORA requires TCSO to release records of all final disciplinary actions resulting in loss of pay, suspension, demotion or termination.

IA Reports/case files are not open records. We have no records responsive to this request-I believe (but am not certain) there was a resignation by the lady who handled inmate accounts. I will forward your request for info to the Sheriff.

3. The current complete list of all reserve deputies, including advanced reserves. I was provided a list containing 115 names last month but I want to ensure this list is up to date. Additionally, please provide date each reserve was hired and the job application submitted by each. These are all public records under the ORA.

As we chatted about earlier, I will ask the people reviewing the reserve files to pull apps. Once they are pulled it certainly would be easier (at least for me!) to have you come inspect the records. This would definitely save some time. Once they are pulled I will touch base.

Thanks!  
Meredith

*May 11*

Thanks for the quick reply. Appreciate you all looking up that info for us.

What exemption are you using to determine that IA reports are not open records? This is an IA report that is complete and resulted -- I understand -- because \$25,000 was missing from the jail. The woman who was asked to resign was named [REDACTED]. There should be a report about this and it should be made public, as it involves missing public funds.

We will be writing about this issue so please let me know what the official response is.

*May 11*

Sure.

51 O.S. Section 24.A.7.A.1. There was not a final disciplinary action specifically because of the resignation. Inmate trust accounts are actually not comprised of taxpayer dollars.  
Meredith L. Baker, OBA No. 30840  
General Counsel  
Tulsa County Sheriff's Office

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May 11

The Open Records Act provides that if exempt material is intermingled with otherwise public records, that the agency has a duty to redact the exempt portion and provide the rest. While I am not conceding that this complete report is exempt from the Open Records Act, I request that you redact names and identifiers and provide the remainder of the report,

Additionally, please provide all emails, memos and other reports regarding missing funds from the jail inmate accounts from Jan. 1, 2009 to the present.

I would assume if \$25,000 in funds were missing that would constitute a possible crime that the sheriff's office would have notified the DA's office of and written other reports about.

Sincerely,  
Ziva Branstetter  
Editor in Chief  
The Frontier  
918-520-0406  
@readfrontier  
@zivabranstetter

May 12

Meredith: The most recent state audit speaks to a number of problems that state auditors have raised repeatedly (since 2009) with the sheriff's office in its handling of these inmate trust accounts.

There were a number of policy reforms -- including creation of commissary accounts -- and a report required by state law that the sheriff's office said in its response to the last audit it would implement. The report was supposed to be provided to the BOCC by January.

Please provide copies of all policies, policy changes and reports produced as a result of these repeated audit findings on inmate trust accounts.

Also I request any email sent or received by the sheriff's office related to these audit findings and missing funds related to the jail since Jan. 1, 2009. It would be simpler to provide me a copy of the redacted 2009 IA report but if the decision is to continue to withhold that, I will seek alternate records to get the truth.

I also request an interview with the sheriff about the repeat findings of these audits. Did he know about these problems? Why were they not fixed when first raised by the auditors years ago?

Sent from my iPhone

May 13

Good morning Meredith .. I'm checking on the status of my outstanding records requests on the salary and job information (titles, hire date and job application) for Mary Blendowski and Kathryn Caputo as well as access to the job applications of the reserve deputies. I would assume that information can be provided in the near future, as I am only asking to review these applications.

I have also requested a redacted copy of the IA report involving the missing inmate trust funds. Please confirm whether the Sheriff's Office intends to release this, as I believe the Open Records Act requires, or *any* information about what actions it took to respond to the missing inmate trust funds. It appears that Robin Strobe was allowed to resign and no other action was taken. She had numerous financial issues at the time these thefts were believed to have occurred, including a foreclosure.

Was the DA's office notified?

Was there any attempt to recover the funds?

How much money was discovered missing and when?

Auditors raised this very issue in several state audits and TCSO said the financial weaknesses would be addressed but apparently they were not. Why not?

In the most recent state audit, the sheriff's Office has pledged to create a system of commissary accounts and file a report to the BOCC by Jan. 15. The audit says this is required by state law. Was that report submitted? If so, please provide a copy.

I am writing a story detailing numerous financial issues raised in state audits going back to 2009.

These include multiple issues involving inmate trust funds, inventory control and federal grant funds (Justice Assistance Grants). It appears the problems with the federal grant funds occurred at the same time the Violent Crimes Task Force changed from involving surrounding cities to a task force limited to TCSO. Auditors questioned more than \$137,000 in costs due to missing time sheets and other issues.

It would be really good for the sheriff's office to sit down with me so I can ensure I have your full response to these issues.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at 918-520-0406.

Sincerely,  
Ziva Branstetter  
Editor in Chief  
The Frontier  
918-520-0406

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*May 28 comprehensive records request:*

12. The internal affairs report and any related memos, reports or emails about the possible theft or loss of inmate trust funds since Jan. 1, 2010. If the report contains information that you believe is exempt under the ORA, please cite the specific exemption. In that event, I request that the material such as names that you believe is exempt be redacted and the remaining portion of the record be provided, as required under the ORA.

Michelle / Justin: In light of the email I have seen today written by you regarding your request that alleged thefts from the inmate trust funds be investigated, I reiterate my previous requests from May 11 and May 12 for all records related to the possible theft of inmate trust funds. I've included one of several emails below and have also pasted Meredith Baker's denial several days later below that.

Essentially, Meredith refused to release any records of this matter to The Frontier after a public records request, saying they were "not taxpayer funds" and that someone had resigned so the records were exempt. We continue to believe this is a violation of the spirit if not the letter of the Open Records Act. Please release these records to us. There is no exemption in the act for the reasons she has stated.

I am ccing Michael Willis here so that the county commissioners can be made aware of the previous records denial in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ziva Branstetter  
Editor in Chief  
The Frontier

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