

Dear Editor:

Salida City Council recently voted to make it more difficult for the “wrong” citizens to obtain public documents from the city via the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA). If there is nothing to hide, what was the problem with the existing policy?

A CORA request was submitted to the city of Salida on May 15 for all correspondence from the Poncha Springs mayor to Salida elected officials or employees from 10/1/18 to 4/30/19. At first Salida said it would take more than three days to respond.

After five business days, Salida responded: “There are no documents in the City’s possession that are responsive to your request. So, therefore there are no documents subject to disclosure in compliance with the Colorado Open Records Act.”

The same CORA request was emailed to Poncha Springs – and after two business days, the following letter from the Poncha Springs mayor was included in Poncha Springs’ CORA response:

*“November 12, 2018*

*“Mayor Wood,*

*“ [\*\*\*] about the recently hired Salida Administrator. [\*\*\*]”*

Lo and behold: after three weeks another response was received from Salida. The above correspondence was included, and Salida stated: “This information was not in the City’s possession at the time of your request, but is now available.”

CRS 24-72-202 (6)(a)(II) concerning CORA states: “Public records includes the correspondence of elected officials ...” This document is correspondence to an elected official, so where was it for the last seven months? Who did not legally turn this document over to the city to be part of the record and why? And, what caused Salida to revisit this completed CORA now?

What’s the difference between Poncha Springs and Salida? Simple – Poncha Springs had nothing to hide.

Melanie Cymansky,

Salida