

Ian Camacho, City Reporter
Temple Daily Telegram
10 N. 3rd St.
Temple, TX 76501
(254) 774-5222
icamacho@tdtnews.com

Received by Open Records

JUN 11 2026

June 8, 2026

Office of the Attorney General
Open Records Division
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, TX 78711-2548

RE: Formal Public Information Act Cost Complaint against Bell County WCID #2 – Prohibited Cost Estimates for Non-Existent Records

To the Open Records Division:

This is a formal written complaint submitted pursuant to Texas Government Code § 552.269. I am requesting an investigation into improper billing and cost-estimate practices by Bell County Water Control and Improvement District No. 2 (Bell County WCID #2). The district has improperly leveraged financial fee estimates for public records that its own department has since admitted do not exist.

Statement of Facts:

As a City Reporter for the *Temple Daily Telegram*, I submitted an official Texas Public Information Act request to Bell County WCID #2 seeking copies of their district bylaws and the mandatory operating policies required under Texas Water Code § 49.199 (specifically: their code of ethics, travel expenditure policy, and investment policy). In response, the district issued an official financial cost estimate/invoice, requiring payment to locate and produce these items. However, on May 12, 2026, the district's Public Information Officer/Department, Bridjet Gillis, formally confirmed to me in writing that Bell County WCID #2 operates without bylaws and lacks the legally mandated policies I requested.

Statutory Violation:

Under Texas Government Code § 552.261, a governmental body is only permitted to charge a requestor for the *actual* costs of locating, compiling, and reproducing *existing* public records. A governmental body cannot legally issue a financial cost estimate—or demand a deposit—as a prerequisite for public records it knows it does not possess. Utilizing a fee schedule as a barrier to hide the non-existence of statutory requirements misuses the Act's cost provisions.

Enclosures Provided:

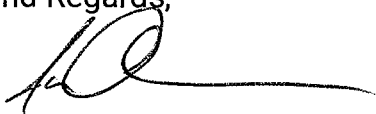
As required by the Open Records Division's complaint guidelines, I have enclosed:

1. A copy of my original Public Information Act request.
2. The initial cost estimate/correspondence issued by Bell County WCID #2 demanding payment.
3. The May 12, 2026, written admission from PIO Bridget Gillis confirms the records do not exist.

I respectfully request that your office review this billing pattern, issue a formal determination, and advise Bell County WCID #2 on the strict legal boundaries of cost estimates under the Act.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ian Camacho', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian Camacho

City Reporter, *Temple Daily Telegram*

(254) 774-5222

icamacho@tdtnews.com

10 S. Third St.

Temple TX 76501



Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>

Second Records Request

16 messages

Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>

Mon, Feb 2, 2026 at 1:56 PM

To: Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>

Hello WCID2,

I am making a records request for two WCID2 items:

- (1) Board bylaws.
- (2) Financial audits for fiscal years 2021-2025.

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code Chapter 552. Please confirm receipt and feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,
Ian Camacho
City Reporter
Temple Daily Telegram
(254) 774-5222
icamacho@tdtnews.com



Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>

Tue, Feb 3, 2026 at 8:58 AM

To: icamacho@tdtnews.com

recieved

On Mon, 2 Feb, 2026 at 4:05 PM, Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com> wrote:

To: bell cnty wcid 2

[Quoted text hidden]

Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>

Wed, Feb 18, 2026 at 9:26 AM

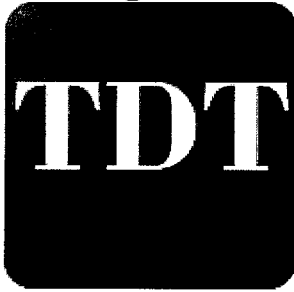
To: Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>

Hello following up on this request which was made a little more than 10 business days ago.

You had said that you had received it so I wasn't sure if you were going to email me copies or you plan to mail more.

Kind Regards,
Ian Camacho
City Reporter

Temple Daily Telegram
(254) 774-5222
icamacho@tdtnews.com



[Quoted text hidden]

Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>
To: icamacho@tdtnews.com

Wed, Feb 18, 2026 at 12:29 PM

Good afternoon,

We mail all open requests. You should be getting something within the next day or two. I would say if you don't have it by Friday please let me know.

Thank you

[Quoted text hidden]

Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>
To: Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>

Wed, Feb 18, 2026 at 4:11 PM

Thank you. You are welcome to email these in the future, they would save you time and money on printing and mailing costs as well.

But I will keep an eye out for these, thank you!

Kind Regards,
Ian Camacho
City Reporter
Temple Daily Telegram
(254) 774-5222
icamacho@tdtnews.com



[Quoted text hidden]

Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>
To: Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>

Mon, Feb 23, 2026 at 1:18 PM

Hello,

I have still not received these records.

Kind Regards,
Ian Camacho
City Reporter

Mr. Ian Camocho
10 S 3rd St Temple, Texas. 76501

Dear Mr. Ian Camocho:

The Bell County WCID #2 has received your request for by laws and 4 years of audits dated: 2026-02-03. We have determined that complying with your request will result in the imposition of a charge that exceeds \$40. Therefore, we are providing you this cost estimate as required by section 552.2615 of the Texas Government Code. This is an estimate of the charges, a final invoice will be sent to you with the copies of the bylaws and 4 years of audits.

Itemized List of Charges

DESCRIPTION	QTY X PRICE
Standard Copies	160 x \$0.10 \$16.00
Labor minutes (\$15/hour)	60 x \$0.25 \$15.00
Postage or shipping	\$10.00
Total Cost	\$41.00

Your request will be considered automatically withdrawn if you do not notify us in writing within ten business days from the date of this letter that you either:

1. (a) accept the charges;
2. (b) wish to modify your request; OR
3. (c) have sent to the Open Records Division of the Office of the Attorney General a complaint alleging that you are being overcharged for the information you have requested.

You may submit your response to the Bell County WCID #2 at:
P.O. Box 338 Little River Academy, Texas. 76502
belcountywater@embarqmail.com

Sincerely,
Bell County WCID #2

Dear Mr. Camacho,

We are writing in regards to your most recent open records request for a copy of bylaws and previous audits. We are still working on the request and should have it provided to you by March 16, 2026. We are attaching an estimate of the charges for this information.

Thank you,

Bell County WCID #2

2/18/2026

Ian Camacho

10 S. 3rd St.

Temple, TX 76501

icamacho@tdtnews.com

(254) 774-5222

Feb 26, 2026

Public Information Officer

Bell County Water Control and Improvement District No. 2

P.O. Box 339

Little River-Academy, TX 76502

belcountywater@embarqmail.com

Dear Public Information Officer,

I am writing in response to the cost estimate notice I received from Bell County WCID No. 2 pursuant to Texas Government Code § 552.2615, regarding my public information request for copies of audits from 2021 through 2025. The estimate provided totals \$41, itemized as follows: \$16 for standard copies, \$15 for labor, and \$10 for postage/shipping.

Pursuant to Texas Government Code § 552.2615(b)(2), I hereby modify my request to reduce or eliminate the associated costs. Specifically:

1. ****Narrowing the Scope****: I already possess copies of the 2021 and 2022 audits from another source. Therefore, I have narrowed my request to the 2023, 2024, and 2025 audits.
2. ****Request for Electronic Format****: As a journalist, I do not require or desire hard copies. Instead, I request that the responsive documents be provided in electronic format (e.g., PDF files) via email or a secure download link, as permitted under the Texas Government Code § 552.228. This should eliminate the need for physical copies and postage/shipping, thereby removing the \$16 standard copy charge and \$10 postage/shipping charge from the estimate.

With these modifications, the only remaining charge should be the \$15 for labor, which falls below the \$40 threshold requiring a deposit or further estimate under § 552.2615.

If any minimal additional costs are anticipated for electronic provision (e.g., negligible overhead for emailing files), I request a waiver or reduction of such charges under Texas Government Code § 552.267(a), as the release of this information serves the public interest.

As a journalist intending to disseminate this information to the public, the time limits under § 552.275 do not apply, and a waiver would align with the Act's emphasis on promoting transparency without undue financial burden.

If the modified request can be fulfilled at no cost or only for the reduced labor amount, please proceed without requiring a deposit and provide the documents promptly. If you determine that charges still apply, please provide an updated itemized estimate and explanation.

I appreciate your assistance in facilitating access to this public information.

Please confirm receipt of this modification and provide an updated response within the applicable timeframes under the Texas Public Information Act. If we cannot resolve this matter amicably, I may pursue a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General as provided under § 552.2615(b)(3) and § 552.269.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Ian Camacho

City Reporter at Temple Daily Telegram

icamacho@tdtnews.com

(254) 774-5222



Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>

Re: Request status update

3 messages

Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>
To: icamacho@tdtnews.com

Fri, Mar 13, 2026 at 1:21 PM

Good afternoon,

As per our first response sent to you, we would have the information by 3/16/26. I am attaching an updated response.

Thank you

On Fri, 6 Mar, 2026 at 11:09 AM, Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com> wrote:

To: bell cnty wcid 2

Hello,

You had received my updated request / appeal on Feb. 27.

I wanted to see what the status of this was. Thanks!

Kind Regards,
Ian Camacho
City Reporter
Temple Daily Telegram
(254) 774-5222
icamacho@tdtnews.com

 **Ian Camacho Response.docx**
14K

Ian Camacho <icamacho@tdtnews.com>
To: Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>

Fri, Mar 13, 2026 at 1:29 PM

Hi Bridjet,

Thank you for replying.

I am confused by your reply. If there are no bylaws and there are no audits at hand, then how did you determine the price if you don't have these items?

Kind Regards,
Ian Camacho
City Reporter
Temple Daily Telegram
(254) 774-5222

icamacho@tdtnews.com



[Quoted text hidden]

Bell Cnty wcid 2 <belcountywater@embarqmail.com>
To: icamacho@tdtnews.com

Fri, Mar 13, 2026 at 1:33 PM

I did not know that if we did or did not adopt bylaws, that's why we set a date so that I could do the research and try to find them if we did. I wouldn't want to say we had some if we didn't and also say that we don't have any if we did. I used the estimator on the secretary of state website. Once the material was gathered then we would have come with a set price and sent the invoice.

[Quoted text hidden]

Ian Camacho Response.docx

Open with Google Docs

Dear Mr. Camacho,

As a follow up to your request, Bell County WCID #2, I did not find anything indicating that BCWCID2 adopted bylaws. As a water control and improvement district, we are governed by Texas Water Code, Local and Government Code provisions and various statutes under Texas Law. As for the audits, we will have those available at the end of the month as we are getting them from the auditors. If you have any other questions or need anything else, please feel free to email us.

Thank you,

Bell County WCID #2

