

**CITY OF MADISON  
OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY  
Room 401, CCB  
266-4511**

Date: December 23, 2024

**Statement of the Office of the City Attorney on Public Records Requests related to Abundant Life Christian School**

The City of Madison and the Madison Police Department are committed to the utmost transparency in all aspects of our work. Under Wisconsin Public Records Laws, it is the public policy of the state that all persons are entitled to the greatest possible information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those officers and employees who represent them.

The Madison Police Department has received an unprecedented number of public records requests regarding the shooting at Abundant Life Christian School, and those requests are continuing to pour in. While records custodians are attempting to respond as quickly as possible, it is time-consuming to respond to individual requests, especially when efforts are being focused on an incident and investigation of this magnitude.

When any public records request is received, records custodians must carefully weigh the competing public interests involved when deciding to release records in their possession. Custodians begin with a presumption of complete public access to such records. However, custodians must consider whether inspection of the record could result in harm to the public interest that would outweigh the benefits of such inspection. When such harm substantially outweighs the benefits of public inspection, such records must remain confidential.

The Madison Police Department has sought guidance from the Office of the City Attorney, and while requests must be evaluated individually, requestors seeking records related to the investigation can anticipate that those requests will be denied at this time. This is an open and active investigation and releasing records at this time would compromise the integrity of that investigation.

While the Office of the City Attorney and the Madison Police Department recognize there is need to provide the greatest possible information to the public, there is also a strong public interest in ensuring that this investigation is completed thoroughly and expeditiously. We must also balance our commitment to the victims and survivors of the shooting.

When records are released, it will be an onerous process for the Madison Police Department, as much of the information contained in them is sensitive and relates to numerous juveniles, as this incident occurred in a school. We will inform the public when the investigation is closed and would ask that members of the public who are seeking records related to the investigation submit those requests at that time.