



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI

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May 20, 2011

Louisiana City Council
c/o Tom Wallace, Mayor
202 S. 3rd. St.
Louisiana, MO 63353

Dear Council Members:

The Attorney General's Office has received a complaint regarding the Louisiana City Council's compliance with Missouri's Sunshine Law. The complaint indicates: 1) the notices for council meetings list the same three statutes for closed meetings each time; 2) the tentative agenda lists very general items; and 3) the board frequently discusses non closed session issues while in closed session, including city finances.

I am enclosing 5 copies of a booklet published by Attorney General Chris Koster entitled "Missouri Sunshine Law." Please share it with your members and anyone else who assists with Sunshine Law compliance. I am sure that you will find it quite useful.

Of particular note is page 49, where § 610.020.1, RSMo, provides requirements for meeting notices. The statute provides that a public governmental body's tentative agenda should be constructed "in a manner reasonably calculated to advise the public of the matters to be considered..." The city's notice of March 14, 2011, enclosed, does not appear to meet the aforementioned standards. First of all, there is no indication of which city council this meeting notice is for. There is neither a city name nor a city seal on the meeting notice. Additionally, items such as ordinance reports, new business, and media clarification of reports appear vague. The council may wish to include more specific information, such as what new business they plan to discuss and which particular ordinances they intend to report on.

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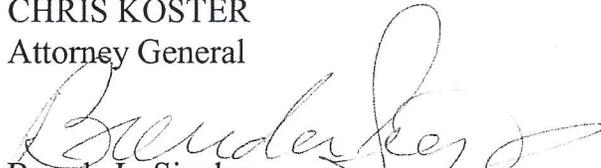
Also, with regard to the complaint that the council puts the same three subsections for closure on each notice, I would like to direct you to §610.020, RSMo. Simply listing these same subsections for meeting after meeting is not creating an agenda that is reasonably calculated “to advise the public of the matters to be considered.”

Finally, please note § 610.022.3, RSMo, requires that “Any meeting or vote closed pursuant to section 610.021 shall be closed only to the extent necessary for the specific reason announced to justify the closed meeting or vote..” A list of provisions for closed meetings and records can be found on page 51 of the booklet. Items that do not relate to these provisions should not be discussed in closed session.

Please provide a written response to these allegations, including all meeting notices, agendas, and minutes for January through May 2011, by June 3, 2011. If you have any questions about the above issues, or any other sunshine law issues, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

CHRIS KOSTER
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enclosure