



# TOWN OF CHILMARK, MASSACHUSETTS

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**Jennifer L. Christy**  
Town Clerk

To: Honorable Board of Selectmen  
From: Jennifer L. Christy, Chilmark Town Clerk  
Re: Records Access Officer Appointment  
Date: July 13, 2017

On January 10, 2017, I was appointed the Records Access Officer (RAO) for the Town of Chilmark. At that time I agreed to return to you in six months to report on how a single appointed RAO has worked for the Town and to provide a recommendation for Records Access Officer appointment in Chilmark.

Since January 1, 2017, I have received and logged 88 public record requests. I was able to satisfy many of the requests directly, but requests for public records held outside of the Town Clerk Department are common. The appointment of department heads as RAOs, accompanied by the supervision and guidance of "super" RAOs, would help to insure that the public's record requests are processed in a timely, proper and accurate manner. The appointment of department head RAOs would also encourage all departments to maintain their records in a format that is easily accessed, leading to a more transparent information landscape overall.

The list of departments that I recommend have an appointed RAO is attached and combined with a set of required guidelines that the Town must provide to the public. I recommend the Town Clerk and the Executive Secretary be appointed as the 'super' RAOs due to the familiarity these two positions have with the regular provision of public records.

During these last six months, the Town has taken steps to improve the experience of those making public record requests. The Town's website has been updated with a conspicuous PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST link on the homepage in order to facilitate requests. Additionally, Department Heads and Board Chairpersons attended a public records training session on May 25, 2017 led by an attorney from the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Public Records Division. This last step of appointment of RAOs in each major department will further improve our Town's service to the public.

Thank you,

Jennifer L. Christy  
Town Clerk