

GIBSON LAW, P.A.

544 MAIN STREET
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39520
O. 228-467-4225 C. 228-342-3193
EDWARD@GIBSONLAWPA.COM

August 17, 2026

Ms. Christine Millard
Municipal Clerk
City of Ocean Springs
1018 Porter Ave.
Ocean Springs, MS 39565
CMRRR 9589 0710 5270 3730 4033 15

Mayor Robert Cox
City of Ocean Springs
1018 Porter Avenue
Ocean Springs, MS 39565
CMRRR 9589 0710 5270 3730 4033 15

*Re: Notice of Claim against City of Ocean Springs, Municipal Government by
Laurri Garcia*

Dear Mayor Cox and Madam Millard:

This letter provides notice of claims arising from the negligence and gross negligence committed by the City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi and its employees and staff in the failure to protect the confidential information of Laurri Garcia. This Notice is given pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated § 11-46-1 *et seq.*, as amended.

This letter is to inform you of potential negligence claims and intention to bring an action on behalf of Mrs. Laurri Garcia against the City of Ocean Springs for the failure to protect and maintain confidential information of Laurri Garcia. The letter is provided to you, pursuant to § 11-46-1 *et seq.* and requires notice of seven particulars as follows:

I. Circumstances of Injury

Ms. Laurri Garcia has thirty-two years employment with the United States government, as a public affairs officer. The Government entrusted her with secret information and entrusted her with access to classified government information. At her retirement from the federal government,

she received among other retirement benefits, a [REDACTED]

The City of Ocean Springs Mississippi hired Laurri Garcia on August 18, 2025. Upon her hire with the City of Ocean Springs, Ms. Garcia received an agreed upon salary, plus enrollment in the Mississippi government retirement program (PERS). Other benefits of her employment included health and other incidental insurance, comp time, and other benefits. Her title was Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer. Her duties included speech writing for the mayor, media releases from the city, public relations, scheduling, permitting public events, and anything else related to the Mayor and the City's public relations. Such a job requires that the community and public have faith in the public affairs officer. The position demands confidence between the community, the city and the public and a level of public trust beyond reproach.

In April of 2026, during the preparation of her 2025 personal tax return, [REDACTED] advised that in 2026 and going forward, her annual salary with the City of Ocean Springs would exceed an income threshold set by the Office of Personnel Management. Ms. Garcia would earn too much money to receive her [REDACTED] without incurring a substantial penalty. The discovery had serious financial consequences for Ms. Garcia.

Ms. Garcia approached the mayor and the municipal clerk in a private conversation. She explained [REDACTED]. On the one hand, she enjoyed her work with the City and wanted to remain in its employment. On the other hand, she had to consider the financial impact of losing her [REDACTED].

At a City of Ocean Springs Board of Alderman meeting held on April 7, 2026, and upon a motion and the requisite vote (passed unanimously) the Board entered an executive session. Executive session is a matter controlled by state statute. In adopting the Open Meetings Act, our legislature realized there are occasions when a government must operate free from public scrutiny to be effective. To that end, there has been the adoption of certain recognized exceptions to open meetings laws. One of these exceptions involves discussions relating to personnel. This exception is justified on the grounds that discussions which relate to areas such as hiring, firing, or disciplining could unjustly damage the reputation of an employee.¹

Despite promoting the appearance of privacy and confidentiality, the City of Ocean Springs made no attempt to ensure that the executive session on or about April 7, 2026, was and remained a private discussion. Prior to April 7th meeting, the City had no policy regarding the use of cell phone recording applications or recording devices during executive sessions. The City did not collect or disallow cell phones or recording devices during executive sessions. The City had no policy regarding cell phone use during the executive session. The absence of any policy or procedures protecting the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of executive session constitutes negligence, gross negligence and/or negligence *per se*, especially considering that the City of Ocean Springs had actual knowledge that one or more participants in the executive session was leaking information from the executive session to the public.

Ms. Garcia, as any reasonable person would, believed that executive session permitted her to discuss her personal financial information without it being released to the public or spread upon the City's minutes.

During the executive session of April 7, 2026, one or more city alderman, who are upon information and belief, Shannon Pfeiffer and Karen Stennis, transmitted audio by cell phone to Eric Brian Rosenberg, a/k/a/ E. Brian Rose, a local blogger. During such transmission, personal

¹ Oaks, Richard A. "The Personnel Matters Exception to the Mississippi Open Meetings Act" Mississippi College Law Review Vol. 7 Issue 2.

information about Ms. Garcia's salary and benefits were released to the public, as well as personal information about her retirement. Following the meeting, these aldermen further shared Ms. Garcia's private information with the public. This has caused Ms. Garcia much embarrassment and trouble. Ultimately, the city took no vote on Ms. Garcia's salary or employment status at that executive session. The Board only agreed to consider the transition from employee to 1099 independent contractor at a future date—essentially tabling the issue.

Following executive session, Ms. Garcia received a stellar job performance review. Around the same time as her review, Ms. Garcia elected to stay with the city as an employee. To this end, she advised the Office of Personnel Management to discontinue [REDACTED]. In doing so, Ms. Garcia surrendered about [REDACTED] annually. She believed that between her remarkable job review and her love of the work, she could continue to provide the city with excellent work as Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer.

Meanwhile, the alderman who did not honor the confidentiality or privacy of executive session funneled information about Ms. Garcia's employment, her salary, and the dilemma to Eric Brian Rosenberg, a/k/a/ E. Brian Rose, who published an online article entitled "Secret Contract Vote Raises Questions About Special Deal for City Insider." Therein, the blogger published Ms. Garcia's salary and benefits package. He disclosed the difficulties that Ms. Garcia was having with her FERS Annuity Supplement and the Office of Personnel Management. He disclosed the full value of her employment package.

On or about June 5, 2026, Ms. Garcia was constructively discharged from her employment with the City of Ocean Springs. Following, public discourse on the topic of Ms. Garcia's salary, performance, and sensationalistic articles about her relationships with elected city officials, Ms. Garcia felt that she could no longer effectively perform her job as Executive Administrator and Public Affairs Officer or work in a hostile work environment with the Board of Aldermen.

II. Nature and Extent of Injury

As a direct and legal cause of the city's failure to monitor its employees and to ensure the confidentiality of the executive session, Laurri Garcia has suffered damages in the form of pecuniary loss, emotional distress and injury to her personal reputation. As a direct and legal cause of the city's failure to monitor its employees, she was constructively discharged, in detrimental reliance upon the city [REDACTED]

In addition to these pecuniary losses, Ms. Garcia has suffered the infliction of emotional distress. She has also suffered embarrassment and damage to her reputation for the release of her personal information.

III. Time and Place of Injury

The negligent conduct of the city accrued on or about April 7, 2026, when the City of Ocean Springs entered into an executive session and failed to properly monitor its agents and elected officials and failed to have in place policies to protect the private information of personnel. It was at this time and at the City Hall of Ocean Springs that the negligent conduct occurred. Thereafter and continuing, Ms. Garcia has suffered injury. Such injuries are ongoing and continue to accrue. All conduct took place in or around Ocean Springs and Jackson County, Mississippi.

IV. Name of Persons Involved

1. Laurri Garcia
2. Robert Cox
3. Christine Millard
4. Steve Tillis
5. Karen Stennis
6. Kevin Wade
7. Robert Blackman
8. Shannon Pfieffer
9. Eric Brian Rosenberg a/k/a E. Brian Rose
10. David N. Harris, Esq.

V. Award of Money Damages Sought

This claim is brought for the full amount of all special and general damages available under the law for all injuries to Laurri Garcia, including pecuniary losses, and damages for lost wages, as she was constructively discharged from her duties, emotional distress damages, damages for embarrassment, and damage to her representation. The damages incurred are a direct and proximate result of the City of Ocean Springs' reckless disregard and gross negligence. The City of Ocean Springs negligently and recklessly failed to protect the private information of its employee disclosed during an executive session. The claimant seeks all remedies available under the MTCA, including but not limited to the greater of \$500,000.00 (Five Hundred Thousand and 00/100ths Dollars) limit under the MTCA; or the limits of any policy providing coverage to the City of Ocean Springs for the acts of negligence; or the maximum amount allowed by law or statute.

VI. Residence of Claimant at the Time of the Injury

At the time of the injury resulting in injury, the claimant resided at [REDACTED]

VII. Residence of Claimant at the Time of Claim

At this time of the negligence resulting in injury, the claimant resided at [REDACTED]

If this claim cannot be resolved within the period required commenced, Ms. Laurri Garcia shall have no alternative but to file suit and proceed with an action against any and all liable parties, including but not limited to the City of Ocean Springs, Mississippi. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Edward Gibson, Esq.