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GENERAL LETTER 86-15

TO: TOWN CLERKS
OTHER FILING OFFICERS

SUBJECT: COMBINATION TO TOWN VAULT(S)

DATE: August 18, 1986

This letter and information contained herein is in answer to numerous queries as to whether a Town Clerk can be compelled, under the statutes, to share the combinations of his vault with other town officials.

Any publication of the combination to the town vault(s), even a restricted or controlled publication, is unwise.

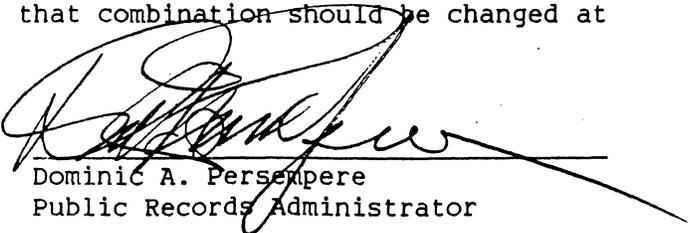
I quote a pertinent paragraph from Attorney General opinion dated December 31, 1970 written by Assistant Attorney General Sidney D. Giber, whether a Town Clerk can be compelled, under the statutes to share the combination to his vault with other town officials whose records may be deposited therein.

"The statutes are silent on this point. However, an examination of the pertinent statutes reveals an obvious intent to protect the physical existence of the records. It is also obvious intent to protect the physical existence of the records. It is also obvious that records are to be kept in their security device unless someone is present to protect the documents or to sound an alarm. The question of who may be entrusted to protect the documents during the absence of the Town Clerk cannot be compelled to divulge the combination of his vault."

The Attorney General's opinion is based on Sections 7-23 and 7-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut, which designate the town clerk as the legal custodian of public records of his town, and which make him responsible for the safety and preservation of such records.

The Public Records Administrator shall be notified of any variations to this opinion.

If there is reason to believe that the vault(s) combination is known outside the Office of the Town Clerk, that combination should be changed at once.



Dominic A. Persenpere
Public Records Administrator

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