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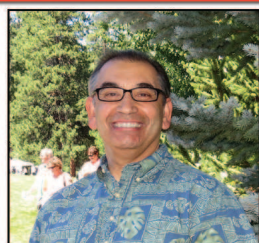
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RECORDS: Requests go to City Recorder Kathy Nelson

Continued from page 1

by special methods such as express mail.

There is also the cost of time spent by the City attorney reviewing, redacting and segregating records at the City's request, a cost that is not recoverable.

The City of Sisters charges much less than a number of other Oregon cities for this service, at \$32.33 an hour. That figure is based on the average pay per hour plus benefits of certain City employees. The \$32.33 represents numbers from five years ago. At 2015 rates, the figure would calculate to \$41.53 an hour.

In addition, there is a \$10 charge for CDs and 25 cents per copy for printed material. For comparison, Forest Grove charges 20 cents per copy (the lowest) but \$55.50 an hour, \$22 for CDs, and offers no free time. Several cities charge \$100 an hour for electronic records research.

So the citizens of Sisters

are getting a pretty good deal when it comes to procuring public records. But there is a trend developing. In 2012, \$555 was collected for public records requests; in 2013, \$741; and in 2014, \$3,536.

Through March 10, 2015, there have been 59 total public records requests. Twenty-five of those requests came from Ed Protas; 17 from Mike Morgan, both of whom have lately been very active in City politics. Four requests came from *The Nugget* and the other 13 from nine different people. Senior living facility developer Mark Adolf made three requests for documents regarding the McKenzie Meadows development, and Tom Pryor also made three requests regarding McKenzie Meadows.

Only three of the requests involved any payment of fees.

Nelson is currently working on a request that has to date filled three binders and is still in process.

The City Council has decided to address this situation in a future workshop, looking at a three-year comparison, what other cities do, and possibly establishing a new fee schedule.

High fees limit public records access in Ore.

By Jeff Barnard
Associated Press

GRANTS PASS (AP) — News organizations in Oregon report government bodies increasingly charge high fees for access to public records, despite requests to waive them in the public interest.

Oregon's public-records law gives public bodies the power to recoup their costs for pulling together, copying and redacting public records of confidential information. If the public body wants to hire a lawyer to review the

redactions, the costs quickly mount up.

In one case, *The Oregonian* newspaper in Portland asked the Oregon Department of Energy for databases on business energy tax credits and loans granted to solar energy projects. The department wanted \$9,830 for staff time and legal review. The newspaper scaled back its request to a database costing about \$500.

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum says she is organizing a task force to propose updates to the public-records laws.

www.NuggetNews.com

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