

From: [SOWA Amy](#)
To: [Public Records Task Force](#)
Subject: Public Comment for Public Records Task Force
Date: Friday, May 06, 2016 4:57:33 PM
Attachments: [2016-05-06 Public Records Task Force Public Comments - City of Springfield.pdf](#)

Please see my attached comments to be considered during the Public Records Task Force public hearing on Monday, May 9 at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

Thank you,
Amy

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To: Members of the Public Records Task Force
From: Amy Sowa, City Recorder
Date: May 6, 2016
Subject: Public Records Task Force Public Hearing

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for the Public Records Task Force public hearing scheduled for Monday, May 9 at 4:30pm at the University of Oregon in Eugene. Below are my comments for your consideration:

- **The current laws regarding exemptions can be difficult to understand.** Many small cities do not have the luxury of a City Attorney that is readily available to assist in reviewing sensitive documents for exemptions. Simplifying those exemptions would help everyone involved. It would also help if there was a resource for those smaller cities to access when they do have a question on whether or not a record is exempt.
- Many records requests can be handled within a few days, and we make sure that is how they are handled. **Occasionally for our City, and often for other cities, there are requests that are very extensive and time consuming.** We maintain a practice of contacting the requestor within a day or two to let them know their request has been received and they will receive an estimate of when the records will be available and if there will be a cost in retrieving and processing the requested documents. A cost estimate is then provided to them so they can determine whether or not they would like to continue with the request or perhaps modify it to make it less extensive. I would ask that you take these more complicated types of requests into consideration when formulating any type of required timeline for responding to requests.
- **More complicated and extensive records requests, often from private entities, can take a large amount of staff time and resources to process.** Allowing cities to recoup those expenses in a reasonable manner ensures that the public funds are being expended appropriately.
- **Many small cities have only one staff member to respond to records requests.** A tighter timeline for processing these requests could penalize a City when that staff member is out of the office for training or a vacation.
- **Cities work hard to respond to records requests as promptly as possible, but most cities are understaffed with growing duties to perform.** We agree that responding to requests is an important responsibility for public agencies, but that must be balanced with the many other deadlines and mandates we are responsible to fulfill.