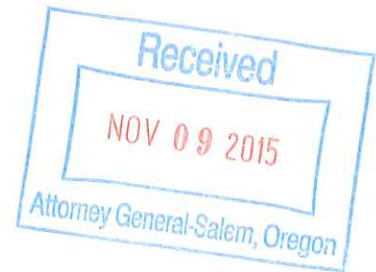


Nancy Whitney  
40 Wagner Avenue  
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November 4, 2015

Ellen Rosenblum, Attorney General  
Oregon Department of Justice  
1162 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-4096

Dear Ms. Rosenblum,

I read with interest your announcement of the task force charged with revising Oregon's public records law. I know this 1973 law was intended to open most public records to the citizens, news media, etc., in order to provide a more transparent government.

Trust me - this is **not** how it works in Columbia County. I have been requesting public records for well over 50 years now and it is something akin to how it once was to buy a car. You get the runaround, you get lied to and you get ignored in the hopes you will go away. I could astound you with horror stories of my many efforts but, for this plea for help, I will stick to my current point of interest.

As you can see from my letter to Sheriff Jeff Dickerson printed in local newspapers, (enclosed with this letter) I attended a JOCAC meeting on October 13 to request accounting records from the sheriff pertaining to federal prisoners housed in the Columbia County Jail. For your information, I also have enclosed a copy of that request.

Here is where the runaround comes in. I heard nothing for two weeks (even with the 7 day response limit). Purely by accident, I ran into a person who works for the county commissioners. She told me the sheriff had dumped my request on her desk. She said the sheriff had some papers for me for which I would need to pay \$26. The next day I went to the sheriff's office and after a 30 minute wait was told

the sheriff did not have papers for me.


I spoke with Sheriff Dickerson that afternoon. He told me he had the contract between the county jail and the US Marshall's office but did not have the accounting information for which I asked. He said the county commissioners had that. This is where the lies come in. The sheriff has his own budget, was elected to his office (not appointed by the commissioners) and has total access to any records in the county.

The person at the county commissioners' office attempted to help me but she also is getting the runaround.

Now for the "maybe she will just go away" part. I requested those same records back in 2014 and was ignored then. I did not pursue that request but I darn well am pursuing this request.

I am sick of the runaround, the lies and being ignored. Please read the information I am enclosing and then please help me. Thank you.

Nancy Whitney

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Whitney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

October 13, 2015

Sheriff Jeff Dickerson  
Columbia County Sheriff's Office  
901 Port Avenue  
St. Helens, OR 97051

Dear Sheriff Dickerson,

Pursuant to the Oregon open records law, ORS 192.410 to 192.505, I write to request a copy of any and all accounting records for the period June 2015 through August 2015 pertaining to the Federal prisoners held in the Columbia County Jail. I especially am requesting the exact cost to house each federal prisoner AND the amount reimbursed by the federal government for this period.

I am also requesting a copy of the signed agreement between the Columbia County Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Marshall's Office in connection with the housing of federal prisoners. I thought perhaps it would be more prudent to ask for these records from your office rather than through the U.S. Marshall's Service by way of the Freedom of Information Act. If your agency does not maintain these public records, please let me know who does and include the proper custodian's name and address.

I agree to pay any reasonable copying and postage fees of not more than \$50. If the cost would be greater than this amount, please notify me. Please provide a receipt indicating the charges for each document.

If you choose to deny my request, please provide a written explanation for the denial including a reference to the specific statutory exemption(s) upon which you rely. If some of these records are disclosable and others are exempt, please provide the disclosable records and let me know the exemption(s) preventing disclosure of the rest.

Please understand that we seek these records for the purposes of public interest, and we hope that the spirit of openness in Oregon government will prevail.

I expect this request to be answered within the seven day allowable period. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Nancy Whitney  
40 Wagner Ave.  
St. Helens, OR 97051  
503-397-0419

# Opinion

## LETTERS

### Unhappy about the jail levy

Here's a little something for you to ponder. I know this is a long letter but, once again, I ask for your patience. Back in 2001, the Columbia County Jail was built with taxpayer money for a final total of 29 million dollars. We were also told the jail would be self-sustaining by reimbursement from lodging federal prisoners.

Then - in November of 2013 - we were told that wasn't working out so well. At that time, according to Sheriff Dickerson's website, it was actually costing \$94 to house each federal prisoner while the county was only reimbursed \$78. That means the taxpayers were actually paying \$16 per day for the privilege of housing federal prisoners, which works out to nearly \$6,000 per prisoner per year. That levy never passed.

Again - in May of 2014 - we had another jail levy on the ballot. This time the taxpayers were refused information on what it was costing for housing federal prisoners and the amount reimbursed from the u.s. marshal's office. I know. I asked for information.

Instead voters were threatened with the possibility of closing the jail and crime running rampant throughout the county. This along with St. Helens council person Susan Conn stating, "What happens when we have violent crimes and sexual predators in the community that puts people at risk because there are 15 criminals and not only 10?" I assume this was in response to Dickerson alleging there would only be room for 10 local prisoners if the levy did not pass.

Sheriff Dickerson added "If intolerably high crime forced the county to reopen the jail, it would cost citizens twice as much as it would to have to keep it running now ..."

OK - OK - we got it. So the voters gave them a 10 million dollar operating levy to run for three years . . . with the implication that a local advisory committee would be formed to work out a plan for a self-sustaining

jail without asking the taxpayers for another levy in 2017.

And here is my reason for the history lesson. The Jail Operating Citizens Advisory Committee (JOCAC) actually was formed after the passage of the 2014 levy. They met each month. I have to admit I did not attend the meetings partly because I believe it would take time for them to coalesce into a viable working committee. I also believe they must be making real progress when I heard the meetings were now being held only four times per year.

So, I attended the JOCAC meeting on October 13. I was in for a disappointing surprise. It appears the larger percentage of the committee members object to having no authority and being strictly "advisory" in their duties.

One member went so far as to say he objected to being nothing but a cheerleader for supporting continuous levies to support the jail. Most members agreed with him.

Pursuant to the Oregon open records law, Oregon Revised Statutes 192.410 to 192.505, I presented Sheriff Dickerson with a written request (taken directly from the ORS) for accounting records pertaining to the federal prisoners housed in the Columbia County Jail. I also asked for a copy of the signed agreement between the Columbia County Sheriff's Office and the u.s. marshal's Office in connection with this subject.

Under these Oregon statutes, the time allowable to provide those records to the public is seven days. It has now been over two weeks and I have heard nothing from Sheriff Dickerson.

I asked that if the sheriff chose to deny my request for the purposes of public interest, he provide me with a written explanation for the denial. It has now been over two weeks and I have heard nothing.

The sheriff's office cannot ignore my request and do nothing. By law, that is not an option. The chief law enforcement officer in the county does not have the option to break the law.

Nancy Whitney  
St. Helens

### Hillary Clinton

Kim Strassel's response to the Benghazi hearing in The Wall Street Journal 23 Oct: "Here's what the Benghazi committee found in Thursday's hearing. Two hours into Mrs. Clinton's testimony, Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan referred to an email Mrs. Clinton sent to her daughter, Chelsea, at 11:12 the night of the attack, or 45 minutes after the secretary of state had issued a statement blaming YouTube-inflamed mobs. Her email reads: "Two of our officers were killed in Benghazi by an Al Qaeda-like group." Mrs. Clinton doesn't hedge in the email; no "it seems" or "it appears." She tells her daughter that on the anniversary of 9/11 an al Qaeda group assassinated four Americans."

All good parents understand this. Never lie to your children. This proves that Mrs. Clinton is a good mother but she, together with the President, willingly misled the country; indeed the world.

Nixon wasn't in the loop on the Watergate break-in. But like Obama, he was in the heat of a campaign and his first instinct was to cover it up. Ultimately this forced his resignation.

Wayne Mayo  
Scappoose

### CRPUD decisions questioned

This letter is to all CRPUD public and customers who voted for us to represent them.

As we can no longer remain silent and clearly realize the probability of additional lawsuits/tort claims coming, we are separating ourselves from various actions of the Columbia Peoples Utility District Board.

Richard and I have had no input in the changing of legal counsel and replacing of general managers. This was done by directors Jake Carter, Craig Melton and Harry Price. These were apparent offsite decisions with no input or any explanations of any kind; nor so much as informing the full board or being an agenda item.

We also are separating ourselves from activities beyond the scope of our authority, with input into the general manager's day-to-day operation of the PUD.

To heal and proceed, we need real leadership who is willing to have open competition for general manager and legal counsel positions. These positions must be filled with people who have a thorough knowledge of the electrical industry and public utilities.

Board Chair Dave Baker  
Director Richard Simpson  
Columbia River PUD