

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Amending the Fee)
Schedule for Complying with Public)
Records Requests)
_____)

ORDER NO. 51-02

WHEREAS, it appears to the Board of Commissioners for Columbia County that there is a need to amend the structured fee schedule for costs incurred in complying with public records requests; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Revised Statutes has established such a fee schedule (ORS Chapter 205) for the duplication of documents which are recorded and/or filed in the Office of the County Clerk, but the Board of County Commissioners has the authority to establish fees for other copies and/or services provided; and

WHEREAS, it appearing to the Board that it is in the public interest to implement a County-wide standard fee schedule and related policies to govern the response of County staff to a public records request in order to avoid potential confusion or disputes over the amount of fees being charged for such requests; and

WHEREAS, County staff has analyzed the actual time required to respond to varying requests for public records to determine as closely as is reasonable the County's actual cost;

WHEREAS, certain circumstances exist which warrant an exception to the payment of or reduction in the standard fees, including routine requests handled by some County Departments; and

WHEREAS, non-sufficient fund or closed-account checks have increasingly been received by the County, oftentimes necessitating legal action and resulting in increased costs to the County, and an efficient way to minimize this problem is desired;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

- 1) The fee schedule attached hereto as Exhibit "A", and incorporated herein by this reference, is hereby adopted, and shall remain in effect until further amended or repealed through an order or resolution by the Board of County Commissioners.
- 2) Exemptions to the attached fee schedule shall be made for:

- a) County employees requesting a reasonable number of copies of documents from their personnel file, job descriptions or similar requests;
- b) job applicants when requesting reasonable information related to an official recruitment;
- c) information being exchanged in the normal course of business with other governmental agencies;
- d) reasonable requests from the news media;
- e) indigent clients under the supervision of the Juvenile Department;
- f) members of County advisory committees or other volunteers when the documents being requested are material to an issue under consideration by that committee or volunteer;
- g) property owners needing assistance from the Assessor's or Tax Office on matters related to their own property and as approved by the Assessor;
- h) documents the County is required to distribute for Board or Planning Commission hearings; and
- i) agendas or other notifications for County meetings.

3) Department Heads are to inform any party who has previously paid for fees with a check that was returned for non-sufficient funds or for any other reason that they will be required in the future to pay all fees with cash, a cashier's check or money order.

4) A charge of \$35 will be assessed for each check returned for non-sufficient funds, and each Department shall post notice of this charge in a conspicuous place readily seen by the public, said notice being attached hereto as Exhibit B.

5) Upon receipt of a public records request, staff shall immediately advise the individual making the request of the County's fee policy, to include notice of the amount that will be charged for hourly staff research time and per-page photocopy or printing costs.

4) When the cost of complying with a public records request is reasonably expected to exceed Fifty Dollars (\$50), staff shall inform the individual making the request of the estimated cost, and offer said individual the opportunity to modify or withdraw the request.

5) When the cost of complying with a public records request is reasonably expected to exceed Twenty Dollars (\$20), staff shall advise the individual making the request that payment of the estimated amount is required before the County begins to incur the

expense through staff research time, photocopying, printing, etc. Actual expenses incurred over the estimated amount shall be collected before the project is given to the individual making the request. Reimbursement of any overpayment to the County shall be mailed to the individual within 30 days.

6) When a public records request is made for production of records stored electronically which will, by necessity, require the involvement of the Information Technology Department and/or an outside vendor with related computer expertise, the party making the request shall be responsible for covering all costs, including hours worked and expenses incurred. The County may choose to utilize an outside contractor to respond to such a request.


a) Records will be produced electronically only if it is reasonable and feasible to do so. Certain applications may not easily transfer information into a readable form. In these specific cases, records will be produced by hard copy.

b) Records that are available to be produced electronically will be produced on the available media. For instance, most employees do not have access to produce records on compact disc. In these specific cases, records will be produced electronically in the form that is readily available.

c) Records produced on electronic media will only be produced on media supplied by the County, except for audio tape records as described in the Fee Scheduled, Section II.D.

DATED this 24th day of July, 2002.


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: 
Chair

Approved as to form

By: 
Commissioner

By: 
Office of County Counsel

By: 
Commissioner

COLUMBIA COUNTY FEE SCHEDULE

RESEARCH FEES / STAFF TIME: Any time required of a County employee to research, duplicate, format or produce documentation or information responsive to a public records request shall be charged as follows:

Up to fourteen (14) minutes	Free of Charge
Fifteen (15) Minutes or Longer	\$30.00 per hour

II. GENERAL DOCUMENT FEES [SEE ORDER AND SECTIONS III & IV FOR EXCEPTIONS]:

- A. **PHOTOCOPIED or PRINTED** (Standard Computerized Documents – No Formatting):
 - 1. Staff Involvement \$.25 per page
 - 2. Without Staff Involvement \$.10 per page
 - 3. Clerk's Office Photocopies \$.25 per page
 - 4. Property Assessment & Taxation Print-out:
 - For Property Owner Free
 - For All Others see charges in 1 and 2 above
- B. **FAX SENT** \$1.00 + \$.25/page
 (Billed on fax cover page; nonpayment results in no further fax privileges w/o advance payment)
- C. **ELECTRONIC** (Word Processing/Spreadsheet)
 - 1. Diskette \$5.00
 - 2. CD (If CD burner is available) \$10.00
- D. **AUDIO TAPES** (Transcripts, etc.)
 - 1. If Blank Tape Provided \$5.00
 - 2. If County Provides Tape \$10.00
- E. **SHIPPING & HANDLING** Actual Cost

III. SPECIFIC FINANCE DOCUMENTS:

- A. Audit, Printed Only \$15.00
- B. Budget, Printed Only (After Presentation Only) \$25.00
- C. Electronic Format (Approved/Adopted Budget Only) \$10.00

IV. MISCELLANEOUS ASSESSMENT/TAX/ELECTIONS DOCUMENTS:

- A. **PRINTED REPORTS**
 - 1. Standard Format (Pre-programmed) \$.25 per page
 - 2. Mailing Labels \$60.00 plus \$.0043/label
 - 3. Jury List \$50.00
 - 4. ODOT City Map \$1.50
 - 5. Precinct District Map
 - 16.25 X 19.5 \$7.50
 - 34 X 38 \$15.00
- B. **ELECTRONIC REPORTS/OTHER RECORDS**
 Information requested in electronic format; i.e., diskette or compact disc (if available) \$10.00 plus staff time as specified in Section I
- C. **COMPUTER PROCESSING CHARGES** \$20 per hour
 Any computer processing time in excess of 15 minutes will result in this extra charge
- D. **ADDITIONAL CHARGES**
 Any computer programming or formatting of reports needed before responding to public records request will result in an extra charge consisting of the actual staff time and programming costs to the County.

NOTICE

A \$35.00 fee will be charged
for each check returned for
non-sufficient funds or other
reasons.