



# TOWN OF APPLE VALLEY

## TOWN COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and Town Council                      **Date:** August 11, 2015

**From:** Debra Thomas, Deputy Town Clerk                      **Item No:** 12  
Town Clerk's Office

**Subject:** DISCUSSION ON THE PLACEMENT OF PUBLIC RECORDS  
REQUESTS AND RESPONSES ON THE TOWN OF APPLE VALLEY  
WEBPAGE

**T.M. Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_                      **Budgeted Item:**  Yes  No  N/A

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This is a discussion item only.

### SUMMARY:

At the July 14, 2015 Town Council meeting, Mayor Pro Tem Stanton asked the Town Council to consider and bring forward for discussion a policy that all public records requests received and processed be posted on the Town of Apple Valley website in its entirety.

### BACKGROUND:

Communities throughout the state are developing methods to provide total transparency to the public through social media, the internet and community web pages. Although the intent is meant to serve the public, the ability to provide such services can cause a strain on an organization whose resources in those areas are limited. Larger communities can easily transition into these services due to their budgets and staffing levels.

Most recently, the City of Riverside has funded a Public Records Advocate to help identify records responsive to citizen records requests. In addition, the City of Riverside will be investing in new software to ensure prompt response to public records requests as well as creating an online portal to automate all record requests and responses. This community currently has ten (10) positions staffed in the City Clerk's office, which include one (1) City Clerk, one (1) Assistant City Clerk, four (4) Deputy City Clerks, four (4) City Clerk Specialists and the new Public Records Advocate. With a Fiscal Year

2015-2016 budget of \$1,605,889, the City of Riverside Clerk's Department has sufficient funds and staff to manage its current and projected workload.

The Town of Apple Valley Town Clerk's office staffs one (1) Town Clerk, one (1) Deputy Town Clerk – Administration, one (1) Deputy Town Clerk – Records Management and one (1) Records Technician position that has been vacant since 2011. The Town Clerk's office has taken on the responsibility of delegating the duties of the Records Technician between current staffing levels, which has increased existing staff workload. The Fiscal Year 2015-2016 budget for the Town Clerk's office is \$437,974.

Although the workload for the department has increased due to the vacant position and the increase in other services provided by our office, ensuring transparency by way of processing records requests has always been a priority. We strive to provide the public with its responsive records within ten (10) days as required by law, although most are responded to within three (3) to five (5) days. On average, the Town Clerk's department processes 375 records requests per year, spending approximately 700 hours processing those requests. This estimate does not include those records requests, which require additional research, redaction and review by the Town Attorney's office. Records are provided in numerous methods to make it easier for the requestor. The public is also welcome to view requested records in the office as we continue to make every effort to provide total transparency.

In order for the department to move forward with the placement of all records requests and responses online, items to consider include:

- Route, escalate, track, distribute, log and manage each request.
- Manage deadlines, track extensions, collect and charge fees.
- Monitor time per activity, including scanning records into PDF format to post on the Town's website (which often include over thousands of pages).
- A Public Records Request Management System.
- Costs for additional data storage and website formatting through our website host.
- Encryption Software.
- Additional Information Systems on-site position.
- Online payment system for individuals requesting paper copies.

This item will be presented by Mayor Pro Tem Stanton and will provide for the opportunity to present suggestions and/or receive input regarding the subject matter. If the Town Council chooses to pursue this item further after discussion, staff will conduct additional research on this issue including the total financial impact on the Town to fund this process. Findings will be agendized for a future Town Council meeting.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Not Applicable