Jan. 9, 2020

Ethan Watson  
sent by email: ewatson@cabq.gov
Acting City Clerk
City of Albuquerque
1 Civic Plaza
Albuquerque, NM 87102

RE: Electronic Payments for Copies of Public Records

Dear Mr. Watson,

The New Mexico Foundation for Open Government (FOG) is dedicated to ensuring access to public information in New Mexico, which includes assisting both records requestors and public entities regarding compliance with the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act (“IPRA”) and assisting those who have concerns about compliance with the Open Meetings Act (OMA).

FOG has received several complaints about the City’s method of payments required for copies of public records. Why in the year 2020, can’t the City of Albuquerque accept electronic payments for records?

In a survey from Next Gen Personal Finance, almost 70 percent of Americans now use some type of electronic payment system to pay their bills. Approximately 8.2 billion bills—or 56 percent of all bills—are paid online via a biller, bank or third-party website. Even the City uses electronic payments to collect fines. Yet anyone who wants a copy of a record must take cash, or buy a money order or use a check and take it to the City – an archaic system. A system that some might argue prohibits access to public information.

I believe that the City should remedy this situation immediately and hope it takes steps towards an electronic payment system to comply with the spirit of IPRA and to ensure the public’s trust.

Sincerely,

Melanie J. Majors
Executive Director

Cc: Greg Shepperd, News Director, KOAT TV 7, GShepperd@hearst.com
Tim Maestas, News Director, KOB TV 4, tmaestas@kob.com
Iain Munro, KRQE TV 13, iain.munro@krqe.com
Tim Keller, Mayor of City of Albuquerque, glory@cabq.gov