



City of Creswell

Public Safety Fee Information Sheet

July 3, 2014

How are police services provided in Creswell?

Police services are provided by Lane County Sheriff's Department to the citizens of Creswell. The City enters into a contract each year with Lane County Sheriff's Department to continue to provide police services. The contract covers properties within Creswell city limits.

What is the Public Safety Fee?

The Public Safety Fee is a charge for service enacted by City Council via Ordinance No. 480, effective as of July 1, 2014. This fee will offset the cost of retaining an additional Lane County Sheriff's Deputy. The total cost for the additional deputy in the 2014-2015 fiscal-year is \$170,777.

How much is the fee?

The fee has been calculated at \$6.00 per month or \$72.00 per year for each residential unit and each non-residential unit on developed property within the city limits of Creswell. For more information on how a residential unit and a non-residential unit are defined, a copy of Ordinance 480 is available at Creswell City Hall for review.

How will the fee be billed?

The fee appears on your utility bill as a separate line item. This fee will be billed monthly at the same time as other utility or user fees are billed.

How can the City use the revenue collected by this fee?

Each item appearing on your bill is for a specific purpose, in the case of water and sewer utilities, these amounts are retained and tracked in separate funds and are restricted for use by the utility that collects the fee. For example, water fees collected can only be used to pay for water-related operations and improvements, and sewer fees collected can only be used to pay for sewer-related operations and improvements. The same is true with the Public Safety Fee. Any revenue generated by the public safety fee can only be used to fund public safety.

Why did the City create this fee?

In the early summer of 2013, the City of Creswell experienced a rash of property crimes. City Council responded by adding a Lane County Sheriff's Deputy to the City's contract for police services. The addition of the third deputy was paid for from General Fund Contingencies. In accordance with budget law, contingencies can only be used to pay for items which could not be planned for during the budget process. As a result of this rule, the City needed to find a way to continue to fund the third deputy.

How was this fee created?

Ordinance 480 is modeled after other cities that have implemented and currently charge a public safety fee. The amount of the fee was calculated based on the cost of the additional deputy and divided by the number of residential and non-residential units within city limits.

After many meetings and a great deal of discussion, City Council voted to approve Ordinance 480 enacting a public safety fee and directed staff to prepare the fee to be placed on utility bills within city limits. Council continued to discuss alternate ways to fund the additional deputy, including the possibility of a tax or special taxing district. It was noted that if an alternative was found, Council can vote to remove the fee.

Below is a summary of the meetings where this topic was discussed:

August 12, 2013 - City Council passed Resolution 2013-20. This is the resolution that amended the budget to use General Operating Contingency in order to hire an additional deputy. After passage of the resolution by Council, the City amended its contract with the Lane County Sheriff's Department, and the newly funded deputy began working in Creswell in September 2014.

October 7, 2013 – Interim City Administrator, Larry Patterson discussed policing service with the City Council and suggested that Council determine whether funding of the third deputy was sustainable. Council discussed holding a work session, possibly in January 2014, to determine what to do with policing services in the 2014-2015 City budget.

March 17, 2014 – The Finance Committee met to discuss the proposed budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. As part of that meeting, the addition of a third deputy was discussed and the Finance Committee supported the addition of a fee to offset the cost of the third deputy pending the outcome of the Public Safety Committee meeting on March 21, 2014.

March 21, 2014 – The Public Safety Committee met to discuss policing services for the upcoming budget year. Discussion included a public safety fee, as well as other options for funding an additional deputy.

March 31, 2014 – City Council Work Session. The Public Safety Committee Chair reported the Committee was preparing a Public Safety Survey to be placed on the City's website. He asked about the timeframe for implementing a Public Safety Fee. The Committee noted that it needs to make a formal recommendation after reviewing all the options presented and indicated that would likely occur at the April 2014 work session.

April 7, 2014 – City Council invited the community to participate in the online survey regarding public safety services. Council noted the survey could be found on the City website and results would be reviewed during the budget process.

April 17, 2014 – The Finance Committee met for a second time to review the 2014-2015 fiscal year budget. The Finance Committee made a recommendation to support the assessment of a fee to offset the cost for a third deputy for the upcoming fiscal year.

April 21, 2014 – Council received public comment regarding the public safety fee. Council discussed how a fee could be applied in an equitable manner. A summary of the online survey results were given stating that 135 people have responded to the survey with the vast majority in favor of keeping a third deputy and would also be willing to pay a fee to keep the increased level of police services. It was noted that the survey available was not a scientific survey. Discussion ensued regarding funding alternatives to the fee including a local option tax levy to be placed on property tax statements, or creation of a special public safety tax district, which would serve a larger area than Creswell city limits.

May 6, 2014 - Budget Committee – The Budget Committee Chair noted that the proposed budget included the additional deputy and Council would be seeking to collect a fee to offset the cost.

May 12, 2014 – City Administrator provided the updated results of the public safety survey and invited the community to visit the City's website and take the survey.

May 20, 2014 – Budget Committee – The Budget Committee discussed options for funding the third deputy. The Budget Committee voted to recommend approval of the proposed budget.

June 9, 2014 - Council Meeting - the first hearing for Ordinance 480 to establish a public safety fee was held. Council did not vote unanimously to pass the ordinance and it was scheduled for a second hearing on June 23, 2014.

June 17, 2014 – Budget Hearing – Council discussed possible ways to fund the additional deputy from existing revenues, then voted by majority to adopt the budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year including the fee to offset the third deputy. It was noted that Council could choose not to pass the ordinance enacting the fee at the next special meeting.

June 23, 2014 – Council Meeting – After a long discussion, Council voted to pass Ordinance 480 creating a public safety fee effective July 1, 2014 and Resolution 2014-10 establishing the Public Safety Fee.

If you have any questions, please contact the City Administrator at (541) 895-2531