

Observer Report – Bernalillo County

August 2023

Bernalillo County Considering Changes to Transparency Portal

The Bernalillo County commission is considering removing the names of county employees from the county's Transparency Portal. Currently you can look at the website to find the names of employees who do various jobs in the county. But problems with scammers targeting county employees using their job descriptions is driving the county to consider removing the names.

Other proposed changes might be more problematic. The commission is considering language that would limit public access to contracts. The county currently posts the complete contract language. The proposed change is "Contracts which could compromise the safety and security of the county will not be included in the contract listing." The complete contract language would still be available to the public, but would require a public records request.

The state league has an extensive position on government transparency. One part of our formal position says: "Use this government website as a repository for searchable budget and financial records, including operating budgets, expenditures over a specified amount, checks/warrants and any other budget and financial information made available to the governing body. These data should be in a non-proprietary format that maximizes the public's ability to download and analyze data."

The proposed language changes have not yet been voted on. That vote should come in early September.