

LWVCNM Observer's Report

Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

May 13, 2026

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

Present: Jordan Juarez (Chair), Jon Herr (Vice Chair), Michael Meek, Joshua Jones (video), Katherine Bruch (video)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Inspection of Public Records

According to IPRA, Sandoval County can charge requestors for copies, but must cover the cost of labor.

Records exempt from IPRA include medical records, letters of recommendation, opinions in personnel files, trade secrets, attorney-client privileged information, confidential materials, hospital business plans tactical response plans, computer security information, grants, lease & scholarship applications while pending, victim & witness information, certain law enforcement records (e.g. graphic video footage) records on abortion doctors and the Office of the Child Advocate, voter rolls, and additional miscellaneous record types. Just because a record is exempt from IPRA doesn't mean it cannot be accessed by the public – there may be other processes for gaining access to those records.

Sandoval County has experienced a 275% increase in IPRA requests in last 6 years. Part of this is due to bad actors, such as individuals who file frivolous lawsuits and IPRA requests for information they don't need in order to choke the legal system, for-profit corporations such as Lexis-Nexis (London) who resell information gained at no cost from IPRA, and AI trainers. Another increase in burden results from increased use of bodycams – one crash request for video required viewing and redaction of 55 hours of video. (One commissioner added that viewing hours of horrific footage exposes analysts to trauma.)

Sandoval county supports two full-time IPRA positions software, bringing the cost of responding to \$191/IPRA. The county maintains a backlog of zero requests, turning most requests around quickly. The County requests help in dealing with request loads from bad actors such as those described above.

As background, the LWVNM recommends that all state and local governments adopt the following policies and practices regarding public records, over and above what is legally required by the OMA and the IPRA, within reasonable budget constraints:

- Create an inspection of public records policy and procedure whose goal is to help the public obtain the maximum amount of information they may want to discover about their government and do so in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- Publish a price list for copying different types of public records.
- Develop a policy regarding the production and cost of spreadsheets, lists, and other reports which may not already exist as public documents but whose data exist within government files and in which there is a public interest.
- Make use of the government website as a repository and ensure that information posted there is up-to-date and easy to find.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

R4Creating STEM students and staff thanked the Commission for their support and shared how it had benefited them.

Sandoval County Commission Website

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>