

Nonprofits Publicly Release Government Records on Cooper Court Sweep

The five organizations requesting these documents hope documents shed light on government action and promote further transparency.

For Immediate Release:

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June 8th, 2016, BOISE, Idaho- The Boise/Ada County Homeless Coalition, Intermountain Fair Housing Council, TransForm Idaho, Living Independent Network Corporation and the American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho have created a website for the public use and review of the documents requested from the City of Boise concerning the events surrounding the Cooper Court sweep on December 4th, 2015. The documents can be found at <http://polr.me/xeb>. Thousands of pages of government documents are included, along with video, audio, and photographs about the planning, secrecy, operation, and aftermath of the forced displacement. The City of Boise previously estimated that the displacement operation cost Boise taxpayers about \$290,000.

“This was a truly massive and costly police action, unlike any we've seen in Boise or in Idaho that we can recall, and it's clear that there was a lot of discussion, very intentional secrecy, behind closed doors, leaving out the people impacted and key advocates who work directly with them. Now we can begin to see the hidden players and calculations behind this maddening and very troubling puzzle.” – Barbara Pinkerton, Boise/Ada County Homeless Coalition, who was President of the Coalition at the time of the mass eviction

The requesting groups have not yet completed an exhaustive review of the records due to the sheer volume of documents received. Their preliminary review, however, has already identified additional concerns that merit close scrutiny through further investigation and public discussion. The groups will continue to investigate the documents and actions performed prior, during and after the action by the groups involved.

The documents were produced under the Idaho Public Records Act without charge by the Ada County Highway District, Idaho State Police, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, and Ada County Sheriff. The City of Boise and Boise Police Department, however, demanded that the nonprofit organizations pay over \$1,500 to secure the release. Although the City of Boise has specific obligations, due to its receipt of federal funding for addressing homelessness, to provide reasonable access to pertinent records and to ensure meaningful community participation in the City's efforts regarding homelessness, when the City refused to disclose the records without payment, the nonprofit requesting organizations began a crowdfunding campaign to make the payment.

The five requesting organizations extend a huge thank you to those in the community who contributed financially to receive the documents from the City of Boise.

“We thank everyone who contributed and stood up for government accountability and transparency. Our goal is to educate and communicate about the important issue of homelessness and the people who struggle to find housing in our community. Acquisition of this material was vital to all us who advocate for these people. We must be informed to better assist and make sure this never happens again to anyone.” – Peg Richards, President, Boise/Ada County Homeless Coalition.

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