

Topic: Why does the County Rent from Walker Law Office?

I understand there have been questions and concerns raised regarding the arrangement for office space at Walker Law Office utilized by the county prosecutor. I appreciate the opportunity to address these concerns and provide clarity on the matter.

As mandated by Idaho Code 31-1001, the county is required to provide office space with furniture for various county officials, including the prosecuting attorney. However, it's essential to note that the county has not had dedicated office space for the prosecutor for over 50 years.

In light of the county's obligations and mindful use of taxpayer resources, a practical solution has been sought to fulfill its needs. The current arrangement involves renting office space from Delton Walker, owner of Walker Law Office, who also serves as the prosecutor and operates a small part-time law practice. This setup not only provides the necessary office space but also covers additional expenses not covered by the county's budget, such as Idaho State Bar license dues, property taxes, insurance, and furniture upgrades.

The public record shows the rental history of Walker Law Office, which the county has utilized since 2009. Initially leased at \$300 per month, the office expanded to accommodate the county's needs over the years. From 2010 to 2013, the rent increased to \$400 per month, followed by a further increment to \$720 per month from 2014 to 2021. Anticipating the addition of another office to accommodate a second deputy prosecutor, the rent was raised to \$1,000 for the period of 2022 to 2024. Despite these increments, the average monthly rent over the 16-year period stands at \$661.56, considerably below market value.

Apart from rent, the only other expenses paid to Walker Law Office include reimbursements for 80% of utilities, a copier lease, and maintenance fees of \$250 annually. This arrangement offers significant benefits to the county and its residents. Renting existing office space from a local attorney eliminates the need for costly construction or furnishing of a new office building. Furthermore, the negotiated rental rate ensures responsible use of taxpayer dollars, reflecting a prudent approach to financial management.

While the rental agreement covers the basic costs of office space, it's important to recognize that there are additional expenses associated with maintaining and operating a functional office environment. Wear and tear on furniture and equipment, routine repairs, janitorial services, and other day-to-day operational expenses are not explicitly or completely covered by the rental arrangement. These incidental costs are typically borne by the tenant, in this case, the county, and accumulate over time. These ongoing expenses are inherent to any rental agreement and should be considered in evaluating the overall cost-effectiveness of the arrangement.

By utilizing existing office space within close proximity to the courthouse and other county facilities, the prosecutor can efficiently carry out their duties without disruptions or delays. This contributes to the smooth functioning of the legal system and ensures timely access to justice for our community. Renting office space from a local attorney not only meets the county's needs

but also supports fellow members of our community. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of solidarity and strengthens our local economy.

The flexibility inherent in a rental arrangement allows for adjustments to be made as needed, accommodating changes in workload or staffing requirements without the long-term commitments associated with property ownership. The county remains committed to transparent and accountable governance. Any agreements or arrangements made regarding office space rental are conducted openly and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

As the owner of Walker Law Office and your current prosecutor, I want to assure our residents that every decision made by the county is guided by a commitment to fiscal responsibility, efficiency, and the best interests of our community. The rental of office space for the prosecutor from a local attorney over the past 50 plus years represents a practical and cost-effective solution that enables us to fulfill our obligations while maximizing the value of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please feel free to reach out if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Delton Walker
Washington County Prosecutor