

**FY 10 “Outside Counsel” Costs 355 Percent over Budget**  
*Special to BC Free*  
**September 29, 2010**



City Attorney Dave Olsen

When it comes to getting your money’s worth for services in the City Attorney’s office at City Hall, the City Council may as well privatize the office and hire Lionel, Sawyer and Collins to do its legal work.

Last fiscal year, the city paid the law firm more than it did for the salary of its own city attorney.

Based on the Claims Paid list for legal services provided the city by Lionel, Sawyer and Collins for July 2009 through June 2010, the city paid 355 percent, nearly four times as much, for “outside legal expenses” than it had budgeted for the entire fiscal year.

During that 12-month period, the city paid the state’s most noted law firm \$160,992 for its services while it had budgeted only \$45,320 for legal expenses incurred by private law firms not located at City Hall or the Municipal Court.

For the actual 12 months on the claims paid register – July 2009 to June 2010 – the amount was \$140,256, which is still 309 percent over budget.

By adding in another \$20,736 paid in July 2010 for “services through June 2010”, the \$160,992 figure is reached.

As for the entire city attorney’s budget last fiscal year, the \$160-thousand-plus figure computes to more than 38 percent of the entire department’s budget of \$420,838.

All of the figures were taken from the 001-4400-511.60-00 account in the city attorney’s department, which is for outside legal services.

Much of the money that went to Lionel, Sawyer and Collins was for the P.R. Burke case involving work performance at the city’s wastewater treatment plant.

As for the current fiscal year running from July 2010 to June 2011, the picture is starting off just as bleak as last year.

The August 2010 costs for outside legal services by Lionel, Sawyer and Collins already amounts to \$41,510, leaving only \$23,490 for outside legal services account during the next ten months.

The \$41,510 represents 64 percent of the \$65,000 budgeted for outside legal services this fiscal year.

The primary expenses in August were \$19,385 for fighting the citizen’s three ballot initiatives and another \$13,637 for work related to a BLM easement in Eldorado Valley.

As for how much may be awarded the city to offset the amount of court costs should a court rule in the city’s favor is not known because those figures do not show up on monthly monetary reports issued by the city.

**Claims Paid July 2009 – July 2010**

*(Source: Boulder City Finance Dept.)*

|                           |                          |                           |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Jul. 09 - \$65,578</b> | <b>Aug. 09 - \$3,029</b> | <b>Sep. 09 - \$19,909</b> |
| <b>Oct. 09 - \$ 1,110</b> | <b>Nov. 09 - \$1,188</b> | <b>Dec. 09 - \$ 0</b>     |
| <b>Jan. 10 - \$ 4,600</b> | <b>Feb. 10 - \$3,626</b> | <b>Mar. 10 - \$17,443</b> |
| <b>Apr. 10 - \$ 7,327</b> | <b>May 10 - \$ 200</b>   | <b>Jun. 10 - \$13,246</b> |

**Jul. 10 (“For services through June 2010”) - \$20,736**

**Total July 09 – June 10 -- \$140,256**

**Total July 09 – July 10 -- \$160,992**