Varying copy fees keep town hall visitors alert

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WINSTED – The price of copying documents in town hall changes from floor to floor, and that confusing policy won't change anytime soon.

Go to the police department, and police will charge 50 cents to copy a document. One floor up in town hall, Town Clerk William T. Riiska sells copies of land records for a hefty $1 per copy. Sometimes Riiska charges 25 cents for a regular document, and some stuff is free. Walk up to the third floor and the first 10 copies are free, but after that it costs a quarter.

It is a confusing policy. Acting Town Manager Paul S. Vayer was looking for a uniform policy so everyone knows how much to charge.

But selectmen decided Monday the policy is just fine. They unanimously agreed to continue the policy of allowing the first 10 pages copied for free, and then charge 25 cents, while letting police and the town clerk's office set their own policies.

Vayer had proposed an ordinance that set copying fees at 50 cents per page. Town Attorney Kevin F. Nelligan said it was in conformance with state law, and suggested adding language for certified copies at $1 for the first page, and 50 cents for additional pages.

Community lawyer Charlene LaVoie objected to charging townspeople for copies, primarily because they already are paying for the documents and the work related to them through tax dollars anyway. People should be encouraged to seek information and obtain it, and not be charged, she said.