

INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2019

The Information Systems Committee meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Amy Michael at 5:30 P.M. Present were: Present were: Rob Kairis, Bruce Ribelin, Matt Harper, Scott Rainone and Joe Bica. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Frank Seman; Director of Public Service, Kay Dubinsky; Finance Director, Kimble Cecora; City Engineer, Bob Finney; Nick Cecil and Katie Mazanek representing Quality IP; Christina West of 732 Eastland Avenue, Ravenna, Ohio; Tim Calfee of 910 Murray Avenue, Ravenna, Ohio; Larry Silenius of 123 North Walnut Street, Ravenna, Ohio, and Cliff Soudil of 464 Woodland Avenue, Ravenna, Ohio.

Ms. Michael said the first item on the agenda is a discussion of the telephone system replacement and internet service provider.

Mr. Cecil explained that the telephone system currently in place is an Avaya phone system put in through AT&T. One of the components of the system has recently failed at the Wastewater facility. It failed due to lightening damage to the system. The other unit at the Police Department is incompatible with several things they are attempting to do with the dispatch upgrades. A lot of the pieces of the system are aging out. The Avaya system was purchased through AT&T.

Ms. Michael asked if the phones at the Wastewater plant are running now.

Mr. Cecil responded that they have a solution. There is a cellphone on the computer that registers back into the system but there is no physical handset. They are on line.

Mr. Cecil said they are looking at putting a newer Cisco system in place as the next solution. The lifetime of the Cisco system itself is somewhat variable. The life of the handsets are about 10-15 years. The physical server, or core unit, that would power the phone system is about that same time, 10-15 years. The difference in this system is all of the programming and pieces inside of it, when the server ages out, they take the settings inside of it, they will just jump into the new piece of equipment. There is never a cost of reconfiguring or reprogramming. The core settings continue to move into hardware as time progresses. The other piece that really ties into that is the interconnection between all of the city's buildings. Right now it is what is called an AT&T Optiman. That system was never intended to run entire systems and data over it. The original intention of that system was always to be the interconnect between the existing Avaya phone system. Unfortunately, at some point, it was decided to use that system and use it as the data interconnect for all of the systems, actually posing a large issue with connectivity and speed to other city facilities and providing some level of performance problems with them. It was never intended for more than small level communications between four or five phone systems that's been extended into 30 to 50 computers and the phone system. That's the other part of this. That is the Spectrum quote that is actually to get a correct connection established between all of the bases.

Ms. Michael asked what prices they are looking at.

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Ms. Mazanek said for the phone system itself, the quote is just over \$93,000.00. That is with all of the pieces, parts, programming, labor and everything they have to do. There is a monthly recurring fee to manage that phone system is \$750.00 a month. They would do all of the management, auto attendance, integrating it into the dispatch system, Quality IP would manage it 100%.

Ms. Michael noted the \$93,000.00 is basically to get the new system, installation, etc., are there warranties or service contracts at additional cost?

Mr. Cecil said there is a maintenance agreement built into it. It's a line called Cisco Smartnet. They can do it as a three year recurring cost and a yearly recurring cost. That's not through Quality IP. That is if anything happens to the system, then it will be Cisco's obligation to replace those parts. The contract has the one year contract.

Ms. Michael asked how much the cost would be for the three year maintenance.

Ms. Mazanek said the current cost for one year is \$1,300.00 a year.

Mr. Cecil said that cost would be the yearly recurring for the server and two core routers. It doesn't include all of the handsets. If they choose to cover the handsets, the cost of those do not justify putting a warranty on it. The core system, the important operational part is covered in that, not the handsets. He can get the answer for the three year pricing but he does not know what that is right now.

Mr. Kluge said that his concern is security and how often it might go out. In addition, at the parks garage, there is a phone and no computers. Is it easier to install a phone out there as long as there is an internet connection?

Mr. Cecil said that as long as there is an internet connection, the phone system can actually register it. One of the powers of this system that even if they are not necessarily connected across the land or connection, one of the components of the system is that you can take one of those handsets, as long as it is preprogrammed inside the network, when you take it outside of the network, it can be programmed to automatically reconnect from any location back into the core system. The system does offer a system which they will be configuring called secured voice, which actually engages encryption over the line so that when calls are made in and out, they become encrypted and secured to the certificate that is used for that.

Mr. Cecora said that he budgeted about \$86,000.00 over the next five years in terms of core costs in the Capital Improvement budget. He split it out based on stations. There will be an increase in that but there is a place holder in the budget for that. The other item is having Quality IP manage the phones. Kate has been doing a lot of work analyzing this and doing a lot of work on the side without billing us for it. If they wish to get into that environment where Quality IP manages it, it is going to cost an additional \$750.00 a month. The other component, is the spread between what this Optiman product costs per month and what Spectrum will cost per month. The Optiman product is about \$1,800.00 a month. He doesn't know what it means or

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what it does but that's the cost. The Spectrum quote for "legit" internet service is almost \$3,500.00 a month. It's almost double per year. Right now they are charging it out to the phone lines. He doesn't exactly know what the products are, how they work and how they were intended to work. Apparently it's not internet as we would know it like in the home environment.

Mr. Cecil said that's correct. What those systems do, rather than being like a cable modem, it's a leased line. Essentially they are using AT&T to extend the reaches of the network here to all of the other city buildings. Again, the AT&T system, the Optiman, the reason it's a lesser cost is because it's lesser reliability and lesser guarantee and lesser speed and performance. It was designed to connect five internet phone devices, not 50 computers. What they are seeing in the price difference is the performance that they deliver on that system. A lot of the speed and performance issues that a lot of the satellite facilities, including the water, wastewater and annex facilities are experiencing now are because that system was not designed to take data from the core server at the Police Department and jump across that network. That network was not designed to handle that kind of traffic.

Ms. Mazanek said that in the Spectrum quote, they bundled in putting internet service at City Park.

Mr. Cecora said that it's about \$1,800.00 a month for this Optiman product. The quote for Spectrum is \$3,400.00. What does that do if they annualize the same application. He looked at it per fund and it's probably going to be General, Water and Sewer, which will take the most part. The annual increase in the General Fund will be \$5,000.00 and about \$4,500.00 in Water and Sewer. Of course, there Parks & Rec. will be involved as well as the other pro-rations involved, Street, Storm, Recycling but those are the three that are probably going to get hit the hardest.

Ms. Michael said she knows there have been a lot of issues with the current system and it has become quite a problem in some of the departments.

Mr. Cecora said that apparently the hardware has had issues. From what he understands, the city is not alone. There are companies even in Ravenna who have had problems. The internet kind of took him by surprise because he didn't understand the inner workings of it and exactly how it was set up to operate.

Mr. Kairis asked what the costs are now managing the system.

Mr. Cecora responded that there hasn't been any cost associated with managing the phone systems.

Mr. Kairis said then they are talking \$750.00 a month to manage it. That is very expensive.

Mr. Cecora concurred.

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Ms. Michael said that it is expensive but at the same time, it is very important. They need to have a phone system.

Mr. Cecora said that according to everything he has heard, they really need to do this. This is obsolete hardware.

Mr. Cecil said the vendor that actually made the hardware has gone bankrupt and under so there are not even parts available for that system.

Ms. Mazanek said there are other units that are showing signs of failure. They were able to put somewhat of a band aid on the wastewater plant issue. If the main unit goes out, there is no band aid and no one will have phones.

Ms. Michael said they need to be proactive on the communication system going into the city, especially with Police and Fire. She thinks people will need to get a hold of every department as some point in time. She does feel better knowing at least part of the money has been budgeted. She looks at it like they have gotten away with this all this time, not paying for something that was kind of band aided . She just thinks they were lucky and would hate to have some real catastrophe happen and how much more money they would have to pay.

Mr. Bica asked how the extra layer; if they are not using voice over IP, are there hard wired lines still being maintained. They did at one time from a safety, security standpoint.

Mr. Cecil said any of the hard lines that could be canceled based on not being in use have been canceled. There are still a few that remain and there will always be some. For example, fire alarm panels cannot go through a voice over. They are not permitted to do so. They need to be tied in directly.

Mr. Bica said he was under the impression they didn't have any more fire alarms. They did away with fire alarms years ago.

Mr. Cecil said that may be the case. He was just using it as an example.

Ms. Mazanek said they talked about cutting the centric lines. There is a significant amount of wires feeding through there that compensated for that internet.

Mr. Bica asked if they are maintaining any hardwired lines in the event of a catastrophic failure.

Mr. Cecil said that a big piece of this is to know that the actual delivery of the system. The way the phone calls are coming to you, isn't a voice provider across the internet. That is actually being delivered on PRI. The handsets are being given to you over voice but the actual voice service or the actual phone lines themselves will remain on the PRI server.

Mr. Bica said he doesn't think he's understanding Mr. Cecil completely. If the web is down, is the phone system down?

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Mr. Cecil responded that if the web that provides the interconnect between the buildings goes down, they will still have phone service. If the main interconnect at the front door goes down, no.

Mr. Bica asked if Spectrum goes down, there is no interruption?

Mr. Cecil said that he thinks it is important to know there are two different parts to that. Spectrum that provides the internet is a different system than the Spectrum that provides the interconnect. They could both go down independently of each other but it would depend on which one went down.

Mr. Kluge asked if Mr. Cecil could give an example as to how that might happen.

Mr. Bica said he might not have internet service on his computer but the phones are up. But the phones could be down and he could still have internet service.

Mr. Cecil said that could be still be true. Both could participate in that way.

Mr. Bica said his overarching question is, are there any landlines left.

Mr. Cecil said there aren't any in the local buildings.

Mr. Bica said he thinks they need to think this through just a little bit more on that particular end of it.

Mr. Cecil said that is completely possible. There is a system called SRXT and will it increase the quote by several thousand dollars. It is absolutely possible and the jump in price is considerable. What it does, rather than having one central router, you have several routers at each location that are prepared to take over as the backup.

Mr. Bica said that he's not talking to the extent that every building has phone service in the event of a failure. He's talking about safety services and central command. Those are the things he's talking about specifically. How they do that, it could be as simple as two or three hard lines coming into dispatch.

Mr. Cecora said that there was always some built in for redundancy.

Mr. Cecil said they have that presently. They would always be compatible with the new system. If they're not talking about full scale redundancy and just talking about emergency services, then yes, that will be retained.

Mr. Finney asked if Mr. Bica is recommending that a line be run into City Hall because it was set up as a command center.

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Mr. Bica said that he thinks that's something the administration needs to make a recommendation on. At one point in time, these two buildings were connected via hardwire. The conference room was set up as a command center. He just wants to make sure they are not losing that functionality.

Mr. Finney said he thinks they should not be connected to the internet at all. Just hardwired phone lines. Will they continue to exist?

Mr. Cecil said their plan does not include canceling it. They will still exist.

Mr. Finney said he is concerned that everyone is aware those do exist. Is the safety director aware of how those particular hard lines work and where they are located.

Mr. Cecil said he would design it to work just as they do not. They would plug into the core of the new system and if the circuit on the new system failed, the whole system in the core section, Fire, Police and city hall would all go back to the analog line.

Mr. Kairis said his main concern is, not to do with the phone system, but the fact that they are now outsourcing IT. Now they are bundling another \$750.00 per month for them to manage that. Those costs are going to continue to go up. When they got into this contract, he said it was going to get harder and harder, as they move forward, to get out because of these kinds of things. He just wanted them to be aware of that. The IT costs are going to go up. It's not because they are advancing or updating the infrastructure but because it's going to cost them more to run it. He doesn't even know what that \$750.00 pays for.

Mr. Cecil said that the maintenance of the system would include adding extensions to the system, changing auto attendants, provisioning phones, moving them around; any of the basic maintenance they aren't really able to do with the existing system. It covers them for that time.

Mr. Bica asked if that could be more of an hourly charge. He does agree \$9,000.00 a year is high. Once the system is set up with extensions done and mailboxes set up, it seems like that is somewhat if a high price per month to have a maintenance kind of thing when in reality, is it really that heavy of a maintenance issue.

Mr. Cecil said they are more than welcome to do it in an as necessary bill it basis. They could always start that way. Say there is some and they realize they are doing more, they can always revisit that conversation of having that part of the contract later. The hourly billing rate for a Cisco technician is \$175.00 an hour, starting at one hour. Those who are certified and qualified to be Cisco technicians would manage that system. Not every Quality IP technician can do that. The training is very specific to the system.

Mr. Bica said he agrees there will be a significant amount of upfront time and energy.

Mr. Cecora asked if there are any other outlying fees out there they need to look at, adding another layer of services that might not be included under the umbrella of the contract.

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Ms. Mazanek said another addition would be to manage security. There is a security package that covers network level security, security training for the employees. A lot of things are actually required so that would be another possible thing they could look at in the future. That would be another chargeable item.

Ms. Michael said what she has at her work for security is something that is online where they have to go through it, answer questions, watch a video and then submit it. Then they are checked off; would that be the same kind of thing?

Ms. Mazanek said that it is very similar, a very small part of the managed security package. They can talk about that at another time. It is ongoing training, not a one and done. They give weekly updates.

Mr. Kluge said that he thinks they are backed into a corner and they need to get this done. He doesn't see any other way out.

Ms. Michael concurred noting she thinks they are lucky to be able to operate up to this point.

Mr. Cecora said he did want to point out that the lease payments on the current system will expire the end of the year so those payments will not be overlapping at all. Those payments are about \$2,400.00 a month.

Mr. Cecil noted that when the system is installed and they decide a week later they want something changed, they are not going to be charged. That contract managing the system would not be effective until after 30 days from the date of the system being installed. If there are changes, moves, tweaks, etc., they have 30 days from the date of the installation.

After more discussion, it was decided by those present that the issue would be presented to Committee of the Whole for further consideration.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Amy Michael, Chairperson
Information Systems Committee