

Final Minutes IT Department Preliminary 2022 Budget January 28, 2021 Discussion with Robert LeFrancois

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Phil Rooney Chair of the subcommittee. Bob LeFrancois followed Chief Hick's presentation.

Members present were David Coffey, Bill Grome, and Chris Resmini. Absent was Jerry Pierce.

Bob had previously responded to questions submitted to him prior to the meeting and they are detailed below. At 8:30 Bob began his presentation by providing an overview to his responses.

Response to FINCOM Questionnaire

- 1) Please briefly describe how the Covid pandemic has changed the way you have managed your workforce and changed your overhead spending during 2021. Would you highlight how remote employee and student, access actions have or have not impacted department service operations and required systems hardware, security, and capabilities?

I'll try to be brief.

As essential employees, the pandemic didn't change the way I manage the IT staff. Even for the six week period where onsite IT staff was cut in half due to COVID concerns, the staff members working remotely were still able to assist with the phone administration and deployment of remote agents. Supporting remote users did initially add to our support requests but those requests have subsided with users now having six months experience in working remotely.

The pandemic did require us to re-evaluate how staff access information and systems critical to them performing their jobs and the importance of making the IT data and voice infrastructure and staff more mobile and our critical systems more accessible not only in times of disaster, but for day to day operations as well. The pandemic did make the Town Administration realize the benefits of hosted solutions, so critical systems are not siloed on the Town LAN and potentially inaccessible due to a natural, manmade, pandemic or any other disaster. Hosted solutions are also a form of disaster recovery since you've now decentralized your critical servers so they're no longer dependent on the health of the local area network (LAN).

For years, we have provided staff with laptops and the ability to work remotely, which benefitted us greatly when the pandemic hit and we were able to very quickly transition users to working remotely. Some of issues we did encounter was substantial delays in the delivery of laptops and webcams. For remote users, accessing the phone system could be done but it wasn't particular easy or transparent. We have since then installed a phone system mobility client which is currently being rolled out and will allow staff to remotely use their work phone as if they were sitting at their desk.

DRAFT 1 -Minutes General Government Subcommittee

- 2) The Preliminary 2022 Budget submitted for our review - have you actively participated in the preparation of the salary and overhead spending information? Do you have concerns that the budget submitted does not reflect your needs for 2022? If yes, please detail those needs and why you are concerned.

I prepared the IT budget as I usually do, which includes interaction with the administration. The budget I submitted does meet all the IT needs for FY22.

- 3) In 2021 what has been the biggest challenge for your department with respect to staffing or spending? Please detail why.

For staffing, we had a long time employee retire and that staff member's primary job function was phone system administration. That loss of expertise required us to add additional phone managed services through our phone support vendor, but the IT staff has become very capable of day to day phone administration requests. The biggest increase in spending was the purchase of more laptops but fortunately the CARES Act helped cover most of those initial expenses.

- 4) In 2021 have you experienced staffing reductions due to retirement or resignations? Were you able to fill those vacancies? If no, are they provided for in the 2022 Budget? If no, why not? Have support responsibilities been added or transferred to or from your department? If yes, can you briefly provide why this occurred?

I think I answered most of this in the previous question. To elaborate, the retirement of our network administrator gave us an opportunity to upgrade the position to an IT Deputy Director/Senior Network Admin position to finally provide me with a highly technical position who will have in depth technical knowledge in networking, security, firewalls, etc... I've been asking for this position for quite some time and am planning on advertising it in the next week or so.

5. The 2022 Budget contains funds for a new hosted permitting system. Will this system be installed and managed by your department? If not, why not and who will support the system? When will it be activated? Last year you indicated your department would be hiring a Systems Specialist Administrator to support the new tracking system for permits and to assist other departments. Please explain what has occurred in 2021 with respect to this hire vs plans for 2022 need for a new hosted permitting system.

The need came from the current permitting system being substantially deficient in many areas and the current and previous Community and Economic Directors expressing a need to replace it. The new permitting system will be a hosted solution that will be installed and managed by the vendor. Our System Analyst, hired in the spring, has assisted in the vendor review process and will continue providing support when a new permitting vendor is chosen. That decision is close at hand and it's hoped that the new permitting system will be implemented in the spring/early summer timeframe.

DRAFT 1 -Minutes General Government Subcommittee

6. Please assist our understanding of why the town ERP System is moving to a hosted solution.

Some of the reasoning I answered in the first question so I'll try not to be redundant, but it's part of our goal to make our workforce more mobile and de-silo on premise critical systems to a hosted solution, accessible anywhere, anytime from any device. Most Town and School Administration remote workers need access to the Town's ERP system so this move would greatly improve accessibility to the ERP system and reduce remote support calls.

7. In 2021 there was a budgeted spending of approximately \$50,000 to be spent for a security assessment of our systems. Dollars would also be spent from this budget for 24/7 security monitoring. Please provide a brief summary of what the assessment disclosed and the impact this assessment has on the 2022 Preliminary Budget. Can you confirm we have 24/7 security monitoring?

In August, 2020, we signed a contract with hosted security vendor Arctic Wolf who now provides us with 24x7 network security monitoring and internal vulnerability system testing. We also had an external penetration test done in October. For the FY22 budget, I included annual support for this product.

8. Please provide to us context by category of 2022 overhead spending and personnel dollar increases of more than 3% versus 2021. (Salaries Management, Software Servicing, and Hosted Applications)

These numbers are from the budget worksheet –

Significant Proposed Changes for the Upcoming Fiscal Year and Budget Impact

The three line items that have increased are -

Software Servicing - increased \$41,000 -

- 1) \$39,000 - Increase in Annual Support to move the Town ERP system to a hosted solution
- 2) \$4,000 for IMC Public Safety Dispatch system

Hosted Applications - increased \$80,500 -

- 1) \$60,000- annual support for a new hosted permitting system.
- 2) \$20,500 - increase is for a Disaster Recovery as a Service (DRaaS) service that allows the Town to have its critical servers in a hot standby spare mode offsite, ready to spin up in case of a disaster.

Telephone Maintenance - increased \$3,000

- 1) Increased costs for carrier services - i.e. if a critical phone circuit goes down, our phone support vendor will call Verizon and schedule the repair. This is a 24x7 service.

Bob provided the following additional clarifications and information.

- Covid 19 had a positive impact on systems security. The need to operate remotely caused the introduction of more hosted systems solutions. Hosted solutions have built in security and procedures for updating security and backing up information.
- Department and town employees learned new computer and systems skills due to Covid.

DRAFT 1 -Minutes General Government Subcommittee

- The IT Budget dollars consist of 80 % support related activities.
- Prior to Covid there was little or no remote work being performed. There are benefits for the department to have this capability.
- The use of the Town ERP system is improving due to the move to a hosted cloud based system.
- We learned there is no documented IT Systems Responsibility Handbook detailing what employees (IT and other departments) are required to do to safeguard town information and assets. The handbook would have a signature sheet to be signed and returned by the employee acknowledging they read and understand their responsibilities. Bob indicated the department should evaluate introduction of one. He appreciates the need for one.

Bob completed his discussion at 8:51.