

SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 7, 2011

Members of Service Committee present: Doug Joseph, Nathan Burd, Barth R. Cotner, Chris Long.

Other members of Council present: Fred Deskins, Jr., Mel Clemens, Council President William L. Hills. Councilwoman Leslie Kelly was absent.

Mr. Joseph: I'll open the Service Committee at 7:30 p.m. The second item is approval of agenda. Are there any additions, deletions or changes to the agenda tonight? Seeing none, the agenda will stand approved.

Item No. 3a is approval of the minutes of the Service Committee meeting held December 20, 2010. Any additions, deletions or changes to the December 20 minutes? Seeing none, those minutes will stand approved.

Item No. 3b is approval of the minutes of the Service Committee Meeting held January 4, 2011. Any changes to those minutes? Seeing none, those minutes stand approved.

Item No. 4 - Discussion: Authorize advertisement for bids for telephone system hardware and maintenance. Mr. Miller.

Safety/Service Director Miller: Thank you, Chairman Joseph, members of Council. This piece of legislation that you have before you tonight is a request to advertise for qualifications for operating and maintaining our phone system here at the City of Reynoldsburg. In the Clerk's office, I have on file an RFP that kind of describes the meat and potatoes of what it is that's required to keep our phones operating and running here at the city. This document, even as I'm speaking, is undergoing review and some scrutiny, and a little bit of changes, but again, the meat and potatoes is going to remain unchanged; and what we want to do is a lot of the questions that I have gotten since I submitted this legislation, we will answer once we receive the bids and the qualifications from potential phone suppliers and maintenance providers. Our current system is nearly ten years old. The software that operates it is no longer supported, maintenance is at an extremely high premium once our contract with Century Link expires, and when we look at the operation and maintenance of our phones over the next several years, it's worth it for us to consider all options available and that's what advertising for these qualifications will allow us to do. And with that, I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Joseph: The, it says here that the current system will no longer be supported as of March 16, 2011. Ideally, when do you want to see something in place?

Mr. Miller: Right now, we would like to have the installation of the new phone system complete by June 20th.

Mr. Joseph: Now this says March 16th we're no longer being supported. Is that going to be a problem putting something in, in June, and having this expire in March?

Mr. Miller: The time in between, if there is a needed repair, we will be paying for such on a time

and material basis.

Mr. Joseph: Okay. Do you know what that will cost?

Mr. Miller: I don't.

Mr. Joseph: Okay.

Mr. Miller: It depends on the breakdown.

Mr. Joseph: Is this something that requires multiple readings or a single reading? What's your request on that?

Mr. Miller: This is a Motion.

Mr. Joseph: A Motion.

Mr. Miller: So I believe it will get just one reading.

Mr. Joseph: Okay. Any questions from the Committee?

Mr. Deskins: Jim, in my experiences with the utilities and all those other things in management, the utilities would peck on your door to do business with you instead of you paying money to get them to come in and give us a bid. Explain that to me. Why are we spending this money to get someone to get us some good RFP's. Why can't we do that?

Mr. Miller: It's a hardware installation and it's a long-term maintenance contract that could be anywhere from one to five years, and we're going through the public bidding process to evaluate the lowest and best bidder to supply us the hardware and maintenance services that we require to operate our phones.

Mr. Deskins: I don't understand this cost. Why don't the people who are interested in serving us service, why don't they come in and give us....

Mr. Miller: That's exactly what we're asking them to do with this advertisement and I'm not sure I'm clear on the cost. I'm not at, there's no money involved here.

Mr. Deskins: I thought there was some money involved in putting this request together and....

Mr. Miller: There was some money involved in putting the request together, in putting together the technical requirements of the RFP, yes.

Mr. Deskins: Was that necessary? Evidently it is or you wouldn't have done it, but I wish somebody would explain to me, so I understand it better, why we're spending the money. Yes.

Mayor McCloud: If I may, we don't have the in-house expertise on the technical specifications Mr. Deskins. I don't, you know, it's not just we need a telephone and a telephone line. There's, just

like computer specs, there's specs. We don't have the technical in-house expertise to write the specs in terms of what we need.

Mr. Deskins: I don't think you need expertise when you've got companies coming in and presenting their program to you and explaining it in very basic terms to you what you get and what you have to pay for what you're getting.

Mayor McCloud: Well, if I understand where you're going, what you're saying is we could have gotten someone to do this for free and then allow them to bid on it and that makes me real queasy from an ethical standpoint. I would not let someone write the specs for free and then let them bid on it. I don't think that passes a straight-face test.

Mr. Deskins: I'm not saying one company. I'm saying you should have three or four pounding on your door wanting to come in and compete and give you a service.

Mayor McCloud: It would be nice.

Mr. Miller: And if I may add, Councilman Deskins, we had to determine what it was we needed. How many, you know, what's needed for the 911 system; what's needed for the offsite phones; what's needed internally for the phones. We had to first determine what it was our needs were and I'm going to agree with the Mayor - for us to tell somebody what that is, and then to have them write this up, who could be a potential bidder, this method of having a professional prepare the Request for Proposals for us, ensures us that we're going to get a balanced, apples-to-apples comparison among all of our potential bidders.

Mr. Joseph: Councilman Clemens.

Mr. Clemens: Yeah, Jim, I don't think you understand what Councilman Deskins asked you. What he's saying is, how's come we didn't have companies come in and go through the system and show us what we need and what we should have and they would have did it free. I think that's what, am I correct?

Mr. Deskins: That's exactly what I'm trying to say.

Mr. Clemens: Understand what I'm saying?

Mr. Miller: That's what this RFP asks them.

Mr. Clemens: You don't need that RFP. That's what he's saying. Why did you do that? You don't need it. You have companies come in and tell us what we need.

Mr. Miller: For free?

Mr. Clemens: There's companies that do that, you know.

Mr. Miller: For free? Okay.

Mr. Clemens: And that's beside the point on that; I don't think you're going to answer it anyway. The question I want to ask, this is the first of the year and so forth, and this, is this in the budget that's coming up? The money we're going to spend on this?

Mr. Miller: To my knowledge, no.

Mr. Clemens: But it was something we knew that was existing, that was going to happen, I mean?

Mr. Miller: Yes.

Mr. Clemens: Mayor, could I....

Mayor McCloud: Yes, we knew it was going to happen.

Mr. Clemens:but I mean, did we make any kind of estimate to put in the budget, what it's going to cost us?

Mayor McCloud: I wouldn't know where to begin.

Mr. Clemens: I mean, well, I think that's why we should have did it earlier and had it....

Mr. Joseph: Yeah, President Hills.

Mr. Hills: Maybe I can ask it, maybe not in a different way, but basically, we pay, this RFP that you've got here that is attached, have we already paid, well I know we've paid Telecom Consultant who gave us a Purchase Order or an Invoice which had no name on it and then the Purchase Order comes out as Telecommunication Technology, whatever, \$4,200 they got on December 9th. Now, for the \$4,200 they got, which are not 2011 dollars, that's 2010 dollars, is that what they put together here? Did they put together this?

Mr. Miller: Yes.

Mr. Hills: Okay, and so we probably paid this company \$4,200 to go write up saying, now, somebody go tell us what you, what equipment you could get and you said, but Jim, you, before you try to answer, we have a system in place today and we know what that system has. We have some sort of specs somewhere in this office, in this city, or we should, Administration should have, of what that warranty contract that you're concerned about, that's going away in March; and I'll give you Phase II. The March date is the end of a warr, maintenance contract, period, right? And when the maintenance contract period, they don't want to renegotiate if some of the equipment's old, that doesn't mean you can't get parts, it's just they don't want, they're going to make the cost so high that you probably don't want to enter in to it, but we have all of the information on our existing system today that we just paid \$4,200 to get on an unknown system. We have it here. Is there a reason we had to hire somebody? Now maybe just, why didn't we have somebody come and look at what we got? Here's the system we got, here's what it takes on a maintenance contract. This is everything. Now, it may be over a ten-year period, you need to increase

somewhere or decrease somewhere, but why do we start an origination? Like we don't have a phone system? So let's go pay \$4,200 for you to tell us what we think we want in this.

Mr. Miller: We gave Mr. Hayes at TTG.....

Mr. Hills: I have, who's, I'm sorry, I don't know, oh is he the gentleman from Telecom...

Mr. Miller: Yes.

Mr. Hills: Okay.

Mr. Miller: Yes, we told him what we wanted. We did that evaluation in-house, okay? We paid him to write for us the technical specifications. This is a....

Mr. Hills: He took our information and wrote it out in this, what you're calling is an RFP?

Mr. Miller: Yes.

Mr. Hills: And charged us \$4,250?

Mr. Miller: Yes and.....

Mr. Hills: And that's already been done then, hasn't it?

Mr. Miller: We.....

Mr. Hills: Because this is the fourth product here.

Mr. Miller: ...we said what we have, and what we need. He put together the technical information that would allow others to prepare an apples-to-apples bid. If I just put something out that said I want 144 phones, you know, I might have gotten a, 144 Nortel phones, or 144 AT&T phones, or 144 Avaya phones, and they all do different things, different ways....

Mr. Hills: Excuse me, or 15 different vendors....

Mr. Miller:in a different manner.

Mr. Hills:who would come in and say this is what, compared to the system you have now, this is how I can give you a compatible system and here's what the cost would be and I think that's what Fred's trying to say. There are people out there that sell this equipment that have the technology people within, inside, to look at what you've got and say we can match it, or you need to add this and delete this. I'm not, maybe you were better off spending \$4,000 of taxpayer money to have somebody else who isn't an employee of the city, or isn't using any of these phones to say 'well, we think this is what you ought to have now go find the ten or fifteen people who could tell you what you need to comply with what we've written down'.

Mayor McCloud: So are you saying you'd be willing to waive the competitive bid?

Mr. Hills: No, no but, let me, why would I, no. You've gotten away with a lot of competitive bids, Mr. McCloud.

Mayor McCloud: Is that right? How many?

Mr. Hills: How many?

Mayor McCloud: How many?

Mr. Hills: We could go back and count them, I'm not.....

Mayor McCloud: Please do, please do.

Mr. Hills: I will, I will. You've waived many things. You've got stuff on the exempt list that nobody's heard of in this city, Brad, so let's don't go there.

Mayor McCloud: You know how it got there? Council passed it.

Mr. Hills: Count to four Brad. Count to four Brad, your four. Count to four.

Mr. Deskins: I think what, I think what the original question was Brad is, can we get somebody from the outside with the knowledge of putting the system in if you already know what you want? There's companies out there, there's AT&T, there's different telephone companies out there that's going to come in here and give you a proposal of what you can do for you and you should be able to get that without a cost. That's all I was trying to bring out to you, but I....

Mayor McCloud: And maybe I wasn't clear, Mr. Deskins.

Mr. Deskins: That's all.

Mr. Hills: That's the point I got to.

Mayor McCloud: For someone to come in and, we know things like, we need this many phones, we want a hold button. We don't know the technical specifications of what all these things entail. We've got the Police Department and those phones and those backups. To have someone come in for free provide a service and then allow them to bid on that and then let's say the potential successful bidder wrote the specs for free and to deal with allegations potentially of, they wrote the specs in such a way that only they could bid on it? That makes me queasy.

Mr. Deskins: I don't think you've had this...

Mayor McCloud: And this is a sincere question, Fred. How would it work? Because I'm not following this at all.

Mr. Deskins: The experience that I have had in the past, I have wanted a service and I've asked these companies that provide a particular service, I'd send out requests to see if they're interested in bidding, or not bidding, but proposing a bid for our company, then they would come in and tell you what they could do and what the cost would be, I mean.....

Mayor McCloud: And this was in private sector?

Mr. Deskins: Yeah.

Mr. Joseph: Yes, Councilman Long.

Mr. Long: Thank you, Chairman Joseph. I've sold a number of key systems, PBX switches and so forth in my time. What that document does is establish the basis of what the city currently has now, that I believe is ten years old, what has transpired over time, technology-wise, and what a comparative product would look like if it was proposed. As opposed to having, like Fred says, having AT&T coming and okay, I'm going to go ahead and give them what they've got based upon my product and then I'm going to have another company come in and propose based upon their product. Once again, the best we would be, would be in a position of giving the best guess as to what really does fit what our current needs are as opposed to having, once again, a document that sets the playing field even, this is what we've got, this is what technology's available today and that this is what we want in the end run and these, the Police Department, the Water Department, the Street Department, the City Hall, everybody incorporated into it. I kind of agree with the Mayor that if I have a company come in and does that service for free and then winds up being the low bidder, it.....

Mr. Deskins: I think Jim made a statement that he told them what he wanted, this is what I want you to put together in a package that I need.

Mr. Long: Yes, based upon what our current system can do now and what technology's available today to be able to do as well.

Mr. Hills: If I could, Chris, you said you put together systems.....

Mr. Long: Yes.

Mr. Hills:and as you put together systems, you take somebody's known system that they have now and what their maintenance contract is doing for the equipment that's in that system that they purchased.

Mr. Long: Uh-huh.

Mr. Hills: And that's when you look at it and say this one doesn't work anymore, you need to upgrade.

Mr. Long: Right.

Mr. Hills: So now, so you may have done it as a consultant, but you've also, it would appear that

you also can take the existing information that an entity has, public or private, here's the equipment we have, we're serving these different areas, here's our warranty maintenance agreement on that equipment.....

Mr. Long: Uh-huh.

Mr. Hills:and you can take that equipment, and write a proposal of how to replace that equipment.

Mr. Long: Yes, and in the private sector, I've done that a number of times.

Mr. Hills: Yep, whether it be public or private, that same information is there. So I'm not sure I'm seeing what is talked about here. What we have done is given to a consultant the information of what we've had and had the consultant write the RFP to get to the same point that the same vendors are going to come in and say consistent with this RFP, this is what I'm going to say that I'm going to do.

Mr. Long: Okay, all right.

Mr. Hills: And they're going to bid it at, one person at \$100,000, another person at \$100,000.

Mr. Long: Right.

Mr. Hills: There's still going to be competitive bidding, it's just we've had a consultant do, it appears, we've had a consultant do \$4,200, at least \$4,200 and I'm not sure if that's \$4,200 or \$8,500. It wasn't \$4,200, did I read somewhere that's only half of what this group's going to get paid? Somewhere I think I may have heard that or read it.

Mr. Deskins: That was half of what.....

Mr. Hills: The amount of \$4,200 was half?

Mr. Miller: That's true.

Mr. Hills: So they're going to get \$8,500 to have gone out and solicit bids for us.....

Mr. Miller:and they're also helping us review the documents and they're also helping us reach a recommendation.

Mr. Hills: That's what the other \$4,200's for?

Mr. Miller: That was the entire package.

Mr. Hills: Well, I guess if we say we can't _____, what's before us is what's before us.

Mr. Joseph: Other questions or comments? Okay, I'll make a motion we send this on to Council

with recommendation for adoption. Seconded by Mr. Long. All in favor vote "Aye". (All voted "Aye") Opposed. (No response) Motion carries, thank you. That was our last item on Service Committee and we'll close at 7:48 p.m.

Service Committee

-- Nancy C. Frazier, Clerk of Council

February 7, 2011

(Transcribed - S. Cochran, Ass't. Clk. of Council)