



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

January 19, 2022

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Jonathon Goldman, Interim Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Receive Town Telecommunications Status Update

RECOMMENDED MOTION

Note and file – no action required.

BACKGROUND

The Town's telecommunications infrastructure includes two principal branches – telephone and internet. The telephone system is what is called a legacy Central Office Exchange (“Centrex”) system¹ procured under a state contract (currently Calnet4²) from AT&T. Like all other Centrex systems, the Town's relies on AT&T for many of what were once attractive features³. Unfortunately, AT&T has not made any significant improvements to its facilities in some time, no longer manufactures Centrex-compliant desk telephones of other equipment and apparently has no plans to ever do so again. As an example, during the course of preparing the office space in the Corporation Yard for the incoming Public Works Director, Town Staff found that the desk telephone that has last been used in that space was no longer operational, acquired a remanufactured deskset via eBay, and then had to replace that unit with another remanufactured unit when the eBay unit failed outside its 30-day warranty period. AT&T's Centrex equipment no longer advises the deskset of the correct date and time and does not provide any but the most rudimentary of point-to-point telephone communications functions. The other three desk sets in the Corporation Yard have also recently failed.

In anticipation of the upcoming need to replace the Town's telephone system, Staff has solicited a proposal from MarinIT (whose staff includes Sausalito's former IT manager responsible for successfully implementing the transition to Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (“VOIP”) telephones several years ago).

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centrex>

² <https://cdt.ca.gov/services/calnet-services/>

³ <https://fortistelecom.net/voip/centrex-vs-voip-business-telephony/>

DISCUSSION

The total proposed price for the conversion to VOIP (without taxes) includes:

- Hardware \$26,874.15
- Software Subscriptions \$10,584.00
- Extended Warranty & Support \$8,447.86
- Services \$9,300.00

There are expected to be recurring annual costs as well – although they are expected to be much less than the expected annual Centrex costs as that system becomes more and more rare.

Staff has identified potential supply-chain concerns, as well as the extreme sensitivity of making any changes to the Police and Fire Department’s 9-1-1 and other systems that the public relies on. Staff will continue to keep the Council apprised of progress on these matters – especially as the budget cycle for FY 22-23 begins.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact at this time. Procurement, recommended appropriation information will be provided to Council at future dates.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and (depending upon funding sources) the National Environmental Policy Act will be addressed at the time of procurement or authorization for construction.

ATTACHMENTS

None