

**MINUTES
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, MAY 16, 2022
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 2 EAST MAIN STREET**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ald. Silkaitis at 7:51 pm.

2. Roll Call

Present: Ald. Balla, Ald. Payleitner, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Bancroft, Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball, Ald. Bessner, Ald. Weber.

Absent: None

3. Administrative

- a. Video Gaming Statistics – March 2022 and April 2022 – Information Only, there were no comments.
- b. Fuel Tax Information, March 2022 – Information Only, there were no comments.

4. Omnibus Vote

Items with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine matters and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a council member/citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in normal sequence on the agenda.

Motion by Ald. Bessner, second by Ald. Pietryla to approve the Omnibus item.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Bongard, Ald. Bancroft, Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball; Ald. Bessner, Ald. Weber, Ald. Balla, Ald. Payleitner. Nays: None. Absent: None. Ald. Silkaitis did not vote as Chair.
Motion Carried.

5. Information Systems

- *a. Recommendation to authorize staff to award Harris Computer Systems the annual contract for CityView software support and maintenance for \$32,186.

Motion by Ald. Bessner, second by Ald. Pietryla to authorize staff to award Harris Computer Systems the annual contract for CityView software support and maintenance for \$32,186.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Bongard, Ald. Bancroft, Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball; Ald. Bessner, Ald. Weber, Ald. Balla, Ald. Payleitner. Nays: None. Absent: None. Ald. Silkaitis did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

- b. NorthStar Customer Information Systems and Utility Billing software, implementation services, and cloud hosting selection – Information Only.

This is a follow up presentation from the April 18, 2022 Government Operations Committee Meeting. Larry Gunderson shared that the NorthStar software is part of the enterprise application strategy. The Utility Billing software is no longer supported, and the Payroll system will not be supported in the near future.

Penny Lancor reviewed reasons why the current Utility Billing system is recommended to be retired. The software is difficult to learn and use, it is highly manual and runs on old technology, and there are few resources able to support it and maintain security. Penny described the current “meter to payment” process and proposed changes, and the more automated processes which are part of the NorthStar cloud solution. This system will integrate with the other essential City systems.

Larry shared that NorthStar meets all of St Charles core software requirements and received positive references from current users. The supplier is the same vendor as for CityView, which is a successful established relationship. The total cost of ownership for the NorthStar software over 5-years is lower than other solutions.

A committee member requested detailed information about the referrals/recommendations, and information about other successful users’ experience with the NorthStar system. Colleen Lavery explained that electric utility billing is much more complicated than water and sewer billing. References were focused on electric utility billing users, and the references affirmed that NorthStar’s customer support has been excellent, and the timeframe to implement was expedient.

Automated meter reading through “radio reads” will reduce staff time, and also will not require manual follow up on meters that are not accessible, which causes the City to miss revenues.

The software cost to purchase and implement is \$887,010. With the belief that technology is becoming less expensive, the committee asks to better understand the cost breakdown. The NorthStar cost is in the range of the least expensive solutions, and it funds a major income stream for the City.

The committee wants to know the “cost of failure”, the cost of missing a monthly billing cycle, how long the City can continue to use 40-year old software, and whether total failure is likely. The committee also asked about other software options, and wants to understand why NorthStar was chosen. The other bidder’s solution is less comprehensive and that company is working on customizing software to meet the City’s needs, whereas NorthStar is already capable of providing the needed software solution. It was requested that Larry email today’s presentation to the committee.

A committee member feels there is a missed opportunity to improve the customer payment experience. Having a user fee for bill payment is not desirable. It was explained that Paymentus (for bill payment) is outside software, and NorthStar’s software would allow us to use ACH (fee-less) payments. This is a separate component, and not part of the Utility Billing software proposed here. ACH payments are not possible without upgrading the Utility Billing software.

It was asked whether the City has considered developing its own software instead of purchasing from an outside vendor. Staff explained that was formerly a common practice, and now the ability to purchase developed software is more cost-effective. A committee member questioned whether the RFP included any budget information.

The NorthStar software is expected to provide a better customer experience, more visibility to real-time usage, and other details. In the future, when AMI and ACH can be implemented, it may be possible to reduce staff time and headcount supporting the utility billing functions. The committee would like to see that quantified.

Questions were asked about the number of U.S. customers using NorthStar's utility billing software, and of those, the number using the electric utility billing function. The committee wants to see clear cost justification. They need to have confidence that this software will be the right solution for the City, be reliable, and see references from other users.

The committee is not yet comfortable with this purchase and want to defer the decision until more information is made available. Staff will provide answers to the questions posed by the committee. Time will be available to digest the information, additional questions may be asked, and this item will be included on the June 6, 2022 City Council Meeting agenda.

6. Finance Department

- *a. Budget revisions, April 2022.

Motion by Ald. Bessner, second by Ald. Pietryla to approve Budget Revisions, April 2022.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Bongard, Ald. Bancroft, Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball; Ald. Bessner, Ald. Weber, Ald. Balla, Ald. Payleitner. Nays: None. Absent: None. Ald. Silkaitis did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

7. City Administration

- a. **Recommendation to Approve a Contract with BerryDunn for Strategic Plan Services.**

Heather McGuire reviewed the steps completed toward the City's next Strategic Plan. Two professional services proposals were received and considered. The committee which conducted the interviews unanimously recommends moving forward with BerryDunn. Strengths of BerryDunn's offering include local government presence and staffing experience, as well as strong focus on implementation and specified goals.

Shannon Flowers, BerryDunn project manager and co-facilitator for the St. Charles Strategic Plan project, shared that her background is in finance. She emphasized a focus on plan implementation. She will ensure that the City has goals established which resonate with elected officials and staff, a plan for achieving those goals, and tools and methods to measure success.

Several other BerryDunn team members were introduced, and their areas of expertise highlighted. Key qualifications of BerryDunn for this project include:

- Experience with Strategic Plans.

- Strong facilitation approach which results in consensus and buy-in.
- Presence in Illinois.
- Flexibility to ensure the community's needs are addressed.
- Input from staff and community as a priority.
- Focus on tailored results which can be implemented and measured.
- Excellent tools and technology which align with the budget process.

Shannon explained that stakeholder engagement is critical to develop a successful action plan. Timing for completion of BerryDunn's engagement is expected by October 31, 2022.

The City budget amount for strategic plan services is \$50,000 and was based on the 2014 Strategic Plan cost. The cost of this contract can be accommodated by When asked why BerryDunn's fees are 30% less than the other firm, Shannon explained that BerryDunn uses a superior process, focuses on priorities, and utilizes templates and learnings from prior projects.

Motion by Motion by Ald. Weber, second by Ald. Pietryla to Approve a Contract with BerryDunn for Strategic Plan Services.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Bongard, Ald. Bancroft, Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball; Ald. Bessner, Ald. Weber, Ald. Balla, Ald. Payleitner. Nays: None. Absent: None. Ald. Silkaitis did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

8. **Public Comment** – no comments
9. **Additional Items from Mayor, Council, Staff** - none
10. **Adjournment**

Motion by Ald. Lencioni, second by Ald. Wirball to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Ald. Balla, Ald. Payleitner, Ald. Bongard, Ald. Bancroft, Ald. Lencioni, Ald. Pietryla, Ald. Wirball; Ald. Bessner, Ald. Weber. Nays: None. Absent: None. Ald. Silkaitis did not vote as Chair. **Motion Carried.**

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Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact the ADA Coordinator, Jennifer McMahon, at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting. The ADA Coordinator can be reached in person at 2 East Main Street, St. Charles, IL, via telephone at (630) 377 4446 or 800 526 0844 (TDD), or via e-mail at jmcmahon@stcharlesil.gov. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation. Notices of this meeting were posted consistent with the requirements of 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq. (Open Meetings Act).