



WILDWOOD

Administration and Public Works Committee

August 5, 2023 Meeting

Update on New Phone System

Overview

The Department wanted to provide an update on the City's efforts to transition to a new cloud-based phone system. The City's current phone system, the NEC UX5000 system, which is approximately 15 years old and manufacturer-discontinued, will be replaced in the coming month. IT Voice will be implementing the new cloud-based phone system, and we expect to have the new phone system live on October 10, 2023.

Earlier this year, the City's current phone system had shown signs of its age, particularly with the CPU failure in February. The system is no longer supported by NEC, and the City's phone system maintenance vendor, IT Voice, has only one spare CPU left in their inventory. Unfortunately, replacement CPUs are no longer available. Furthermore, the loss of voicemail to email licenses has impeded the City's ability to deliver important voicemail messages via email. These challenges make the system increasingly difficult and costly to support.

Considering the potential failure of the current phone system and the associated risks, the City decided to move forward with IT Voice's proposal for a new cloud-based phone system.

Implementation

Overall, the City has made significant progress toward replacing this outdated system with a more modern and efficient solution. IT Voice has been selected to implement the new cloud-based phone system, and we anticipate having the system fully operational by October 10, 2023.

During the City Council meeting in June, concerns were raised regarding the safety and security of certain hardware components included in the proposed cloud-based phone system. To address these concerns, the Department collaborated closely with IT Voice to replace the hardware in question. The revised phone system received unanimous approval from the City Council during its meeting on July 10, 2023.

As part of this transition, the Department is currently working with the City's IT Vendor, Throttlenet, to install a new switch necessary for the proper functioning of the cloud-based phone system. The estimated cost for purchasing and installing this new switch is \$1,433.71. The Department anticipates that the new switch will be installed within the next two weeks. The Department is also working with IT Voice to ensure that phone numbers and extensions are properly migrated to the new cloud-based phone system. This effort will ensure a seamless transition for our residents wanting to call City Hall.

From a financial perspective, this transition will lead to long-term savings for the City. Currently, the City incurs monthly costs of \$700.00 for maintaining the outdated phone system (maintenance agreement with IT Voice) and \$1,063.12 for phone services provided by Windstream, resulting in a total monthly expenditure of \$1,763.12. With the adoption of IT Voice's proposal, the City will pay \$1,258.57 per month for phone service, resulting in monthly savings of \$504.55.

IT Voice will thoroughly test and ensure the proper functioning of the new phone system before the City terminates its service with Windstream, which is expected to occur in November 2023. Once the new system is active, it will provide voicemail to email functionality, allowing everyone's email to receive voicemail notifications promptly.

Conclusion

By moving to the new cloud-based phone system, the City will address the current limitations and risks of the outdated phone system while realizing significant long-term cost savings. Lastly, it is important to emphasize the significance of having an updated phone system that is reliable, as it is a fundamental communication tool for the City's operations and interactions with the public. The Department looks forward to having the new phone system activated in October 2023.