ADJOURNED MEETING
July 27, 2020

The Independence City Council met for an Adjourned Meeting, July 27, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers, 111 E. Maple.

Mayor Eileen Weir, Presiding Officer of the City Council, called the meeting to order. Upon roll call, the following members of the City Council were present: Mike Huff, John Perkins, Brice Stewart, Karen DeLuccie, Mike Steinmeyer, Daniel Hobart and Mayor Eileen Weir. The following members of the City Council were absent: None.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER:

In response to Mayor Weir, City Manager, Zach Walker, stated that the presentation being provided addresses all three items. Mr. Walker stated that consultant has a representative here to also discuss the modernization of our data center.

Chief Information Officer, Jason Newkirk, provided some background information and reasons for why the modernization project is needed. Mr. Newkirk introduced IT Manager, Chris Johnson. Mr. Johnson stated that all four of these projects are being professionally managed. Mr. Johnson stated that he has been a technology project manager for over 20 years in his personal career and has done projects like this in the past. Mr. Johnson stated that we are implementing these items on a series schedule and not trying to do all this work at one time. He stated that doing one thing at a time will ensure that each project is given full attention and care during this change and can confirm success prior to moving on to the next project.

Mr. Johnson introduced Megan Raines, Account Manager with ConvergeOne. Ms. Raines stated that some of their top engineers with over 20 years of experience will be helping with the implementation of this project. Ms. Raines stated that she is very confident that we will be able to meet the time deadlines planned for this full project. Ms. Raines stated that ConvergeOne has worked with KCMO and KCPD as well as Jackson County to implement similar changes and upgrades.

Mr. Johnson stated that ConvergeOne is assisting with our cybersecurity project and data center project and Riverside Technologies is assisting with our networking project. Mr. Johnson introduced Chris Slump with Riverside Technologies. Mr. Slump thanked the city for their long term business. Mr. Slump stated that it has been a team effort with all parties to determine the needs for the city that this network will entail. Mr. Slump stated that we have all kinds of business transacting within the city and this has all been closely studied and measured leading to tonight's presented solutions. Mr. Slump stated that his company recently finished a project with the State of Nebraska, updating their entire data center and network which is similar to what the plan is for the city.

In response to Councilmember DeLuccie, Mr. Johnson confirmed that there are three projects, one project has two parts and that Riverside Technologies will not be involved in our cybersecurity support.

In response to Councilmember Huff, Mr. Newkirk stated that Item No. 3 is for hardware to upgrade the network.

In response to Councilmember Stewart, Mr. Newkirk stated that we have went through the pricing difference of buying hardware as other items reach end of life, and it would be more costly than buying all equipment at once. Mr. Newkirk also stated that we have a lot of things that are reaching end of life at the same time. Mr. Newkirk stated that in looking to the future we are trying to purchase the hardware that the entire city would need, as opposed to doing it on a per department or per project basis. Doing it in this manner will be much more efficient.

Councilmember Stewart asked if Mr. Newkirk is aware of any internal or external cyber-attacks. Mr. Newkirk stated that he would be happy to go into more detail in a closed session. Mr. Newkirk stated that on a daily basis we can check our firewall and see how many attempts were made to breach our system. While they are not successful, we do see attack attempts daily.

In response to Councilmember Hobart, Mr. Newkirk stated that the estimated time to complete is ten months, expecting full completion be the end of April 2021. Sales Director for the Local Government Market, Lucas Smith, stated that they have went through the timeline with the city and with Riverside Technologies and even if there are some hiccups along the way, they still feel they will be able to meet the April 2021 deadline. Mr. Smith confirmed that Riverside Technologies, the city and ConvergeOne have all worked very closely together to develop a realistic timeline.

Mayor Weir stated that in the past we have upgraded software that was very outdated and it has not always been a very smooth transition because of the level of conversion. She stated that this would essentially be upgrading the backbone structure that all of our software we have purchased and trained staff to use will run off of. In response to Mayor Weir, Mr. Walker stated that we have not had a significant upgrade within at least the last 8 years. Mr. Newkirk stated that we have done small purchases for departments or projects over time, but have not done a full scale upgrade of this magnitude in a very long time.

Mayor Weir stated that during this time we are very concerned about spending money and we expected to be much further along in this pandemic in terms of seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. Mayor Weir stated she did not feel like it was made clear that this is a seven year implementation. This expenditure will be spread out over the period of seven years using tax exempt financing. Mayor Weir feels as though this is a good opportunity to use that tool and potentially longer than seven years if our finances required that.

Mr. Johnson provided a visual presentation showing timelines for each project and explained training during the project as well.

In response to Mayor Weir, Mr. Johnson stated that there are four tech services employees that will be involved in this implementation. Mr. Johnson stated that the engineers on the project will be training our employees and as the IT Manager, it is his job to make sure that the processes they learn through training are documented so that if there is staff turn over, we have the training documented to train the next members of staff that come on board in the future.

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Johnson stated that they have had conversations with the vendors and manufacturers about hardware availability and that has been accounted for in each project timeline to ensure that the hardware needed can be obtained when necessary.

In response to Mayor Weir, Mr. Johnson stated that once the contract is processed by the consultant, the time clock for the project begins. If Council approves the item this evening then the contract would be signed tomorrow and then processed by the consultant within five days. Mr. Johnson stated that should the Council delay this, cost will go up due to the rising costs that take affect August 1, 2020. Mr. Johnson stated that these date estimates were confirmed one week ago.

Mr. Johnson provided additional visual slides showing breakdown for each part of this overall project.

ADJOURNED MEETING
July 27, 2020

In response to Councilmember Perkins, Mr. Newkirk stated that there will be some down time, but these will be planned for and the idea will be to make them as small as possible throughout this project.

Councilmember DeLuccie thanked Mr. Newkirk and Mr. Johnson for providing the additional information tonight and in the email that was received earlier. She stated she feels a lot better about this project.

Councilmembers DeLuccie and Perkins moved to approve Item No. 1.

Councilmember Stewart stated that every day hackers are trying to access municipalities all over the country. He stated that there have been attempts made here and we hold sensitive personal information for our citizens and city employees. Councilmember Stewart stated that we hear about the large cities in the news that get hacked, but last year in the New York Times there was an article where 22 cities were simultaneously hacked and some cities as small as five thousand people and in order to get their data back, the hackers were requesting millions of dollars. Councilmember Stewart stated that he doesn't see how we can afford not to do this. He stated that working in IT in a local government for a number of years, he has experienced a small hack and even that was very difficult to correct and restore the information.

1. Council action is requested to issue a purchase order to ConvergeOne Inc. in the amount of $1,877,067.49 for hardware and software to modernize the City's primary and disaster recovery data centers.

Upon roll call, the vote was: Ayes – Councilmembers: Huff, Perkins, Stewart, DeLuccie, Steinmeyer, Hobart and Mayor Weir. Noes – None. Absent – None. The Mayor declared the motion approved.

Councilmembers DeLuccie and Hobart moved to approve Item No. 2.

Councilmember Steinmeyer stated that he is not sure he is in a place to vote yes on this item. He stated that he has more questions about our vulnerabilities and weaknesses but is not sure a public session is the best place to discuss those matters.

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Walker stated that the Sunshine Law would not allow for a discussion on this topic to take place in a closed session. Mr. Walker stated it also is probably not a good idea to discuss our vulnerabilities in an open forum and expose those, but it cannot be discussed in a closed meeting.

Councilmember Huff stated that he hopes that Mr. Newkirk fully thought this out and is able to get this done the right way since we are past the time when this could have been discussed in private session.

In response to Councilmember Perkins, Mr. Newkirk confirmed that if we delay this item, the timeline and the cost will need to be reevaluated as those costs and procurement dates would change. Mr. Newkirk confirmed that Item No. 1 and Item No. 2 will build in safeguards for cybersecurity and this is the most cutting-edge technology that is fit for our city.

Councilmember Steinmeyer stated that he feels this is a reasonable amount to spend for the security of our residents. He stated that this is less than 1% and that is worth making sure our residents' information is not compromised. In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Newkirk stated when we worked with the vendors, our goal was to find the best fit for our city. Mr. Newkirk stated that they took into account that we have our own utilities, the size of our city, the number of buildings that we have, and number of users.

ADJOURNED MEETING
July 27, 2020

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Newkirk stated that with project number 1 has Incident Response built into that. Mr. Newkirk stated that there will be real-time monitoring of the network. He stated that if something does occur then our vendor will help us mitigate the problem and get us back up and running as quickly as possible. Mr. Newkirk stated that when he talks about mitigated risk, he is referring to cybersecurity and risk related to down time because we do not have the technology infrastructure the city should have.

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Ms. Raines stated that there is a Disaster Recovery Plan that has been laid out within the data center project. This would be an overall protection of your infrastructure should something happen.

Mayor Weir stated that she understands that cybersecurity components are layered in every phase of this project to protect the city. The Mayor stated that she feels like this is not a lot of money in comparison to our overall budget.

In response to Councilmember Hobart, Mr. Johnson stated that over the last two years we have had multiple third parties come in and do various evaluations and audits of our security systems and IT systems and each of them have rated us below where we should be. Mr. Johnson stated that these solutions together will not only move us into where we should be, but in comparison to other municipalities this will put us better than the industry average for local government as far as the standard for cybersecurity.

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Johnson stated that cybersecurity is a threat that is changing on a daily basis. Mr. Johnson stated that this solution will allow us to detect threats that do not have solutions yet through behavioral analysis, traffic on the network and through other tools and techniques. Mr. Johnson stated that will be how we protect ourselves against those threats that are unknown and emerging as we progress through this seven-year life cycle. Machine learning is part of this.

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Walker stated while projects like these are not glamorous, they are important to keep a city functioning. Mr. Walker stated that the responsibility is his and the Council's to make sure we make these investments on a regular basis so that they don't swell into multimillion-dollar projects over the year and we don't make ourselves vulnerable to any kind of attack. Mr. Walker stated that this is something we make a priority to make these investments mean something.

Councilmember Steinmeyer stated that he just wants to be sure we are doing all we can. He does not want the security of our city to have an elevated level of security for our investment.

In response to Councilmember Perkins, Mr. Walker stated that it will be important to prioritize this in the future and put performance measures and data around these items so that we can see our return on investment. Mr. Walker stated that applies to all investments we want to make in the future. Mr. Johnson stated that we are getting the best fit within our budget for our systems with this project.

In response to Councilmember Steinmeyer, Mr. Johnson stated that he cannot provide a specific percentage that should be spent on cybersecurity for our municipality. Mr. Johnson stated that all of the solutions will include protects that are required by law for our utilities but we also meet federal requirements for criminal justice information, payment card industry requirements for all credit card transactions and also for new requirements that affect our water utilities as well.

Councilmember Hobart stated that he understands Councilmember Steinmeyer's concerns, but he isn't sure what better promise we could get other than being told that these vendors have recently done these high security projects such as KCMO, the Kansas City Airport and the state of Nebraska.

ADJOURNED MEETING
July 27, 2020

Councilmember Hobart stated he feels confident in this project after hearing the additional information provided tonight.

Mr. Johnson stated that there is a bigger risk picture than just our utilities. As a municipality we are very different from a private company or other organizations. When things do go bad, we become a life safety organization and that is also a risk we are managing with these projects. Mr. Johnson stated that when things go bad, the Police Department, Fire Department, and Emergency Operations Team steps up and we have to be able to support their operations.

In response to Mayor Weir, Mr. Johnson stated that what is presented tonight is considered the bare minimum to do what needs to be done. Mr. Johnson stated that there are additional layers of protection and security that we could add to our portfolio for cybersecurity, but this is the minimum we need right now to keep us safe. Mr. Johnson confirmed that additional protections down the line can be added on top of what we are going to purchase for this solution.

2. Council action is requested to issue a purchase order to ConvergeOne Inc. in the amount of $1,567,399.50 for cyber security infrastructure and support services.

Upon roll call, the vote was: Ayes – Councilmembers: Huff, Perkins, Stewart, DeLuccie, Steinmeyer, Hobart and Mayor Weir. Noes – None. Absent – None. The Mayor declared the motion approved.

Councilmembers DeLuccie and Perkins moved to approve Item No. 3.

3. Council action is requested to issue a purchase order to Riverside Technologies Inc. in the amount of $971,995 for network hardware that is required as part of the data center and network modernization project.

Upon roll call, the vote was: Ayes – Councilmembers: Huff, Perkins, Stewart, DeLuccie, Steinmeyer, Hobart and Mayor Weir. Noes – None. Absent – None. The Mayor declared the motion approved.

INFORMATION ONLY:

1. COVID-19 Meeting Procedures: The June 15 City Council Meeting will be shared with the public via YouTube and City7. In accordance with social distancing guidelines, very limited public seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. The current social distancing maximum capacity is 31 individuals in the audience. Individuals who sign-up to speak can do so in person or online via the live meeting platform. If capacity is exceeded, speakers may be asked to wait in the lobby area and will be called in at the appropriate time. All attendees are asked to wear a cloth face covering and must participate in a health check upon entering the building. Please plan accordingly to allow time for this prior to the 6 p.m. meeting start time. Those individuals with a fever or showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked to watch the meeting on one of the virtual formats. Attendees will be required to socially distance in seats as indicated by the markings on the bench, although minors may sit with a custodial adult.   Social distancing maximum capacity is currently 31 individuals in the audience.

At 6:58 p.m., there being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned to a Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m., August 3, 2020, in the Council Chambers.

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Presiding Officer of the City Council
of the City of Independence, Missouri

ATTEST:

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City Clerk