



Administrative Report

H.10., File # 21-2251

Meeting Date: 5/18/2021

To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

From: CHRISTOPHER BENSON, INFORMATION TECH DIRECTOR

TITLE

APPROVE AGREEMENT WITH COM-STRAT, LLC FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSULTING AND PHONE SYSTEM REPLACEMENT SERVICES FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$55,750 FOR THE TERM MAY 18, 2021 - MAY 17, 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City's phone system is reaching end of life and needs to be replaced. In August, 2019 the City Council approved the Information Technology Department's recommendation to use Com-Strat, LLC (Com-Strat) to help guide us through the vetting and selection process of a new Unified Communications System (UCS). They were to provide service and guidance in three critical areas in the selection of a new UCS: Requirements Documentation, Vendor Evaluation & Technology Selection through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and Implementation Support.

The project, originally under way with Com-Strat in FY19-20 was paused due to budget uncertainty during the COVID pandemic. The original agreement for telecommunications consulting services with Com-Strat expired at the end of 2020, however the requirements documentation and RFP development were previously completed. This project continuation will pick up where we left off with minimal overlapping services other than minor updates to the requirements documentation due to the constantly changing technological landscape. Project funding was carried over from FY19-20 to FY 20-21.

Com-Strat, as a technology consulting company, has extensive municipal experience and does not sell, nor are they aligned with, any vendor's equipment or services.

BACKGROUND

The City's use of a centralized phone system goes back to the 1970's. Since 1989, there have been several major upgrades to the City's telecommunications system. Analog to digital in 1989, digital upgrade in 1996, digital to hybrid VoIP in 2003, then the last major upgrade in 2008 when we moved to a 100% Voice-over-IP (VoIP) infrastructure. There have been minor upgrades, updates and improvements throughout.

The City's telecommunication system touches all parts of the organization. It is a mission critical enterprise system vital to the daily operation of all City Departments and is used extensively to communicate internally, with outside agencies, vendors and the public. Although the existing phone

system is a VoIP system, it operates like a traditional PBX (private branch exchange) in that it basically connects City telephone extensions to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

A UCS is a set of communication services and solutions bundled together as one single cohesive solution. It enables the use of voice, data, Internet, video and other communication services through an integrated product or system developed by a single vendor or in collaboration with supported partners. As the City continues to embrace cloud architectures including Microsoft Office 365, it is the right time to make the move to a UCS.

Past telecommunication upgrades were managed by IT staff as each system, even though it may have been a significant core operational change, still operated around a traditional PBX paradigm that we are very familiar with. Through our involvement with the Municipal Information Systems Association of California group (MISAC) we learned of Com-Strat and their expertise in assessing UCS, especially in the municipal sector. They came highly recommended among our peer IT organizations who indicated very successful PBX infrastructure needs assessments and UCS migrations and implementations. Subsequent exploratory calls with Com-Strat gave us the confidence to recommend moving forward with them. They recently completed an engagement with the City of Fontana who operated the same Avaya CS1000 phone system as the City and are currently managing the City network equipment replacement RFP project.

A detailed list of Requirements Documentation and Vendor Evaluation & Selection Tasks are outlined in the attached agreement. A list of Com-Strat municipal clients is also attached.

About Com-Strat:

Communication Strategies is a premier technology consulting company specializing in enterprise technology and infrastructure. Established in 1987, we have become a recognized leader serving clients' domestic and global requirements. Because we are independent consultants, our clients receive value from wide industry experience, objective expertise, unbiased recommendations and cost-effective solutions. Our consultants have an *average of 25 years' experience* in IT/IS line of business, management, and/or consulting. Communication Strategies has experience managing projects throughout the United States and abroad.

COORDINATION

Information Technology staff worked directly with Com-Strat to structure the Agreement. The City Attorney's office reviewed and approved the Agreement as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY20-21 cost of \$55,750.00 for the telecommunications consulting services will be paid from the FY20-21 IT Department Internal Service Fund and is included in the IT Department FY20-21 core annual operating budget.

The IT FY19-20 Equipment Replacement Program, approved in FY19-20 Budget, included

replacement of the City's Avaya (Nortel) enterprise phone system. Funding was carried over to FY20-21. The City's current phone system reached end-of-sale in April, 2018 and end of software development in April, 2019. We have third party support through October, 2021.

~\$23,000 was previously expended on the requirements documentation and RFP development. We would incur this expense again if we move forward with a different vendor.

Funding		Expenditures	
\$55,750.00	IT Internal Service Fund	\$ 2,975.00	Requirements Documentation and RFP
		18,725.00	Evaluation and Selection
		31,850.00	Implementation Support
		2,200.00	Travel and Expenses
\$55,750.00		\$55,750.00	Not to Exceed Total

APPROVED BY:

Joe Hoefgen, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

Agreement for Consulting Services - Com-Strat, LLC
Avaya CS1000 End of Sale Notice
Municipal Clients Reference Sheet
Certificate of Insurance