

**CITY OF BUENA VISTA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2020
(VIRTUAL)**

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for a Regular (Virtual) Council meeting on Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Council Members Present:
Melvin Henson
Stanley Coffey
Tyson Cooper

Mayor Bill Fitzgerald
Cheryl Hickman

Members Absent: Vice-Mayor Lisa Clark, Councilman Danny Staton

ADG #1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER:

Councilman Coffey delivered the opening prayer.

ADG #2 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion was made by Councilman Coffey to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilman Cooper, carried by Council.

ADG #3 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING (VIRTUAL) HELD ON NOVEMBER 19, 2020: THE EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD ON DECEMBER 12, 2020: THE SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING (VIRTUAL) HELD ON DECEMBER 14, 2020:

Motion was made by Councilman Coffey to approve the above-mentioned minutes, seconded by Councilman Henson, carried by Council.

ADG #4 RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS:

Citizens who desire to speak on matters not listed on the agenda below will be heard at this time. Citizens who desire to speak on a specific item listed on the agenda, open for public comment, will be heard when that item is considered.

No one spoke.

ADG #5 REPORTS:

- 1.) **Mayor:**
None.

2.) City Manager:

Mr. Scudder started his report by thanking Public Works for the jobs they have done this week: The refuse collectors, the streets crew and to the water crew for fixing a huge water leak today. He then mentioned a memo he had put in the drop box for Council concerning RADSS asking all three localities to assist and support them in their quest to find a new facility. Mr. Scudder opined that Council indicate the desire to work with our regional partners of Lexington and Rockbridge County, as well as RADSS, to consider possible means by which our combined local governments can effectively assist in locating, constructing, or financing a new facility.

3.) City Attorney:

None.

4.) Council Committee/Representative:

Councilman Henson started his report by thanking Public Works for repairing the potholes at Glen Maury Park in time for Christmas in the Park. He opined that Christmas in the Park was a good event. He advised that the Parks/Rec Committee had a good meeting on Tuesday, December 15 and a lot of new ideas was discussed. He also mentioned that he had heard complaints about the line being too long at the drive-thru window in the Treasurer's Office. He then asked Mr. Scudder if there is anything, we can do about the old Bontex building that the roof has caved in on.

Mr. Scudder said he would try to get in touch with Mr. Hu's attorney on Friday.

Councilman Henson opined that the Bontex building looks worse than the 5 houses on the left coming into town. He also mentioned that Public Works had trouble with some of the trucks during the snow event on Wednesday.

ADG #6 CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES:

THE ROCKBRIDGE AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD:
MS. JANET JOLLY'S TERM WILL EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2020. THIS IS A 2 YEAR TERM AND THE THIRD TIME IT HAS APPEARED ON THE AGENDA. MS. JOLLY IS NOT WILLING TO SERVE AGAIN. ADVERTISED OCTOBER 21, 2020 THE NEWS GAZETTE: WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 OCTOBER 14, 2020 – NO APPLICANTS

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

THE ROCKBRIDGE DISABILITY SERVICES BOARD:

MS. PAM ROBEY'S TERM WILL EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2020. THIS IS A 4 YEAR TERM AND THE THIRD TIME IT HAS APPEARED ON THE AGENDA. MS. ROBEY IS NOT WILLING TO SERVE AGAIN. ADVERTISED OCTOBER 21, 2020 THE NEWS GAZETTE: WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 OCTOBER 14, 2020 – NO APPLICANTS

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

MR. PRES MANUAL'S TERM WILL EXPIRE ON DECEMBER 31, 2020. THIS IS A 4 YEAR TERM AND THE THIRD TIME IT HAS APPEARED ON THE AGENDA. MR. MANUAL IS NOT WILLING TO SERVE AGAIN. ADVERTISED OCTOBER 21, 2020 THE NEWS GAZETTE: WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 OCTOBER 14, 2020 – NO APPLICANTS

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

THE BUENA VISTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

MR. LEON BARKER HAS RESIGNED FROM THE BUENA VISTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD. THIS IS A 4 YEAR TERM AND THE SECOND TIME IT HAS APPEARED ON THE AGENDA. ADVERTISED NOVEMBER 18, 2020 THE NEWS GAZETTE: WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 NOVEMBER 12, 2020- NO APPLICANTS

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

NONE.

NEW BUSINESS:

NB #1 APPROVE PURCHASE OF NEW MUNICIPAL SOFTWARE:

Mr. Scudder said there have been technical issues that Tom has dealt with such as phones, internet, software issues, etc. and that he wanted to commend Tom for the leadership role he has played in this area.

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council
FROM: Tom Roberts
DATE: 12/17/2020
SUBJ: New Municipal Software

Background

The municipal software serving almost all core City functions is a custom-built solution from 2006. At this point, the software is critically fragile because of age and poor compatibility with Windows 10. Additionally, it is not secure from unauthorized access or cyber-attacks. Most importantly, it does not support many customer self-service functions, or staff remote work ability, which are essential in the Covid-19 environment.

Because of the need to improve health and safety for staff and the public, the City is moving forward with new software procurement using CARES Act funds. Use of these funds will allow the City to purchase software that otherwise would be very difficult for the City to afford.

Process

In the fall staff began an exhaustive review of new software systems to replace the existing, aging program used by multiple departments. Because the range of services was so broad and the City has not done a similar search in many years, the nature of the procurement was unclear at the outset. The team of representatives across departments reviewed and participated in demonstrations of over a dozen different programs and spoke with staff in other localities about their recommendations. Selection was based on the features and capability of the software; reviews and recommendations from other Virginia localities about usability, technical support, and implementation; and price of the product. Procurement is on an emergency basis because we must move as quickly as possible to address Covid-19 concerns and because the funding expires on December 30th

Selected Software

The current software is a single solution that handles multiple functions, though it is much simpler and basic than any product on the market today. While we looked carefully at several comprehensive municipal software systems which would similarly have done multiple functions, we did not feel they were the best. As such, the following combination software products were selected:

- *PC! MyRevenue* for the tax management and cashiering functions
- *iWorQ* for zoning & building permits and code enforcement
- *CemSites* for cemetery management
- Utility billing — yet to be selected***

*Because of initial focus on comprehensive software systems, we did not begin vetting separate standalone utility billing systems until last week. By tomorrow (12/18) we will have 3 demonstrations and by early next week we expect to have 4 quotes.

Overall Benefits of Selected Software

- Public web portal for all bill payments (tax, utility, etc.) including ability to pay with e-Check or debit/credit card. Portal serves both individuals and businesses.
- Public portal for zoning & building permit submission, and permit status lookup.
- Public portal for cemetery record look-up, including aerial imagery mapping of cemetery to assist finding a grave.
- Public portal for utility billing history, usage history, etc. with ability for text or robo-call reminders and notices
- Stability and security of programs and data, with staff users' roles determining access levels. Ability to securely work remotely for certain functions.
- In all functional areas (tax, cashiering, permitting, etc.) the ability for staff to capture and see much more data than currently. Staff can track and report back information not possible now.
- Improved integration with external data sources, such as DMV and CAMA (real estate appraisal), for more current and accurate information for billing and taxation.
- In all functional areas, less manual data entry.

Implementation

Implementing these new software systems will take 18 months to 2 years. This may seem like a long time; but they are complex, customized, and they must work properly when they go live. The basic implementation process will be as follows, though these steps overlap:

1. Business process review so company fully understands "how it works" in Buena Vista.

2. Data conversion and cleanup — They will import existing and archived versions of our database, de-duplicate and clean up, and put into the new system.
3. Creation of test/development version of our new system, and training of staff.
4. Switch over to new live, production system.

We hope that the smaller software packaged (iWorQ and CemSites) can be implemented faster, possibly in the 3-6 months range. PCI MyRevenue is expected to take the longest. There is no question we will run into delays and challenges with some aspect of the implementation, and part of the selection process was listening to implementation horror stories from other localities.

Price

The current software was developed by a City employee 14 years ago and has been maintained primarily by our former IT managed services provider Danny Morgan. Thus, the City has enjoyed software basically for free for over a decade—at the cost of functionality and security.

Each of the new systems will require a one-time software license/configuration/data conversion fee, and then an annual license/maintenance fee. The one-time cost and the first year of licensing/maintenance can be covered by the CARES Act this year, but future annual fees will need to be incorporated into the annual budget.

The estimates for a utility billing software are a best guess based on my sense of pricing across the industry and actual cost could be higher or lower.

Software	Year 1 (Implementation)	Ongoing Annual
PCI myRevenue System	\$154,000.00	\$26,000.00
iWorQ	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
CemSites	\$24,150.00	\$1,980.00
Utility billing software ESTIMATE	\$25,000.00	\$10,000.00
	\$203,150.00	\$43,980.00

Conclusion

This software replacement is not optional as current systems are on the verge of failure. We feel that this is the best combination of software to serve our citizens and staff.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know if the above includes the golf course and camping.

Mr. Roberts said the program has online portals whereas we now use ACUPOS for registration at GMP and Vista Links. With the new program, we will be able to access online payments for both places.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know if there will be charges for online payments.

Mr. Roberts stated that we will be passing on convenience fees to the customers or we will have to absorb the fees. A lot will depend on the payment process we select.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know if we can select a program that will not have charges associated with it.

Mr. Roberts said each platform will have a portal where you can pay. The fee structure will vary. He said we will look at it later. The up-front costs will not be very much.

Mary Lee Huffman, Treasurer, was the next to speak. She advised that the fees are usually based on percentage up to 3 per cent. Very few customers have used credit cards. She opined the City cannot absorb the associated fees.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know if there will be charges for the customers that pay their bills online every month.

Ms. Huffman said there will be charges.

Councilman Coffey wanted to know if the new company would have technical support.

Mr. Roberts advised that they all offer technical support, and that Karen and Tom should have a system selected by next week.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know if technical support was included in the \$44,000.00. She also wanted to know if we have other costs that we will have to pay yearly.

Mr. Scudder said we will pay every year since we are switching to newer technology.

Council Member Hickman said we were supposed to have \$35,000.00 in IT savings this year. VTS will save the City \$3,000.00 per month. IT costs will be more than the past because of the upgrades that are being made.

Mr. Roberts said the new phone system in 2021 will be upgraded and will cost thousands of dollars.

Councilman Coffey wanted to know if the \$44,000.00 includes training in the future.

Mr. Scudder said it does include training and we will always have access to tech people.

Motion was made by Councilman Cooper to approve the purchase of municipal software, seconded by Council Member Hickman, carried by Council.

Mr. Roberts said the WWTP has new wireless connection. The signal is sent from Camden Field to the WWTP. Internet at all locations is VTS at this point.

Councilman Henson wanted to know if WIFI will be upgraded at the park.

Mr. Roberts said the internet will be replaced at the park office but the WIFI will stay the same for campers.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Dawn M. Wheeler
Clerk of Council

William H. Fitzgerald
Mayor