M E M O

January 10, 2023

To: City Council

From: Marlin Eckhoff, Building Official

Subject   Software Upgrade for Community Development Department

---

Background

The Community Development Department has been using a software called PIC (Permits, Inspections, Contractors) for almost 30 years. This software is currently housed and utilized through a virtual box, meaning it is no longer compatible with Windows Vista or newer. The virtual box allows PIC to be accessed because Windows XP is available through it. The information housed inside of PIC includes all permits, inspections, and contractor data back to 1975 which is hundreds of thousands of files. Due to the age of PIC, there is not an ability to attach digital files to the data. Paper copies of the data and any additional forms such as email correspondence, letters, plans, etc. are stored either in the upstairs of City Hall or the vault depending on age and size of the documents. PIC does not allow for any planning and zoning information to be stored within it, therefore all documentation for the entirety of our planning and zoning is paper files.

Due to the limitations and issues with PIC, new software options have been explored for the last year. Multiple demonstrations have been completed to evaluate options. Five companies were evaluated: Cascade, Caselle, CityTech, Brightly/Dude Solutions, and iWorQ.

CityTech & iWorQ

CityTech & iWorQ both provided adequate services, but due to high annual fees were ruled out as the additional cost could not be justified.

Caselle

The Finance Department currently utilizes Caselle as their primary software and it was brought to our attention that there is a Community Development module. While completing a Zoom demo for Caselle, we were told that an online portal was not available, We have had increased request from contractors and home owners to apply for permits, licensing, inspections, and records requests on-line. Due to the increased ease, efficiency, and transparency an online portal has been included in what the department would like to see going forward. In order to have an

online portal with Caselle, we would need to find another company that is compatible with Caselle that offers just an online portal. Adding another company would not increase work productivity or ease of use. It would cause more room for error and increase the need for reconciliation.

Although PIC is an old program, it allows for a large range of reports to be pulled which is extremely helpful in many instances. Often, we have home owners that need assistance finding contractors for specific jobs, PIC allows us to pull reports on specific contractor classes. Caselle does not have this capability. Realtors and insurance companies ask quite frequently what permits a property has ever had. PIC allows reports to be pulled on permits from today back to 1975. Our rep for Caselle did not think we would be able to search or report any information on permits that had been converted from PIC, which would hinder records request.

A large negative about Caselle would be the conversion cost. If the data from PIC cannot be input into the Caselle Conversion Tables it would be $2 per existing file. We reached out to Caselle multiple times with sample data and never received a response. If these tables could not be utilized the implementation cost would be over $100,000.

Due to the reasons discussed above and other reasons such as, lack of GIS information, contractor letters cannot be generated, limited licenses, etc. while marginally cheaper, Caselle does not meet the requirements for our RFP.

Recommendation from Community Development

With all things considered, our preferred options came down to Cascade and Brightly. Brightly has been around much longer and our Road and Bridge Department is currently utilizing their fleet management software. Cascade was started as a solution for Northern Colorado's small to medium towns to outsource building, planning and inspections and recently branched into software for municipalities. Although, Cascade was recently purchased by SafeBuilt, who generally does not allow their clients to use their software without their building services (plan review, inspections, etc.).

I have included proposals for both Cascade and Brightly, along with a comparison chart for all 5 companies. The chart outlines what the first-year implementation cost would be for each company, along with projected overall cost in 5, 10, and 20 years. We included a 3% annual increase for fees, however, this could vary as none of the companies guaranteed any minimum or maximum annual increases past 5 years, except for iWorq who stated that the annual fee never increases once you have a contract with them.

Cascade is approximately 12% cheaper than Brightly, the first-year implementation cost for Cascade is $41,775, while Dude Solutions is $47,479.40. Cascade and Brightly both seem to be competent companies that would work for us. However, we believe that the functionality of Brightly is enough of a benefit to justify the additional cost.

Ultimately, we are requesting to contract with Brightly for the following reasons:
1. The online portal is more user friendly for applying for permits, contractor renewals, and records requests.
2. They are compatible with our current payment methods, such as Express Bill Pay and Caselle.
3. The reports that can be pulled from their system are more thorough, and the process is less time consuming.
4. Their Planning and Zoning software is included, without the need for a separate module.
5. They are an established company that allows for more stability in the long term.

Brightly software should decrease staff time spent on records requests and reconciliation while increasing efficiency and making the Community Development Department more digitalized and customer friendly for both building and planning & zoning.

Request

The Community Development Department is requesting approval to Contract with Brightly Software Inc in the amount of $47,479.40. This amount will be for the first-year implementation cost of a five-year contract.
Note: The approved 2023 budget for this item was $58,000.

County Portion

We proposed that the county pay $12,000 (about 25%) of the first-year implementation cost of the software. This is due to the fact that a large portion of the implementation cost is converting the existing files, which are mostly City files since they date back to 1975. We will only be including county files that date back to February 2017.

However, the future annual subscription fees will be split 50/50 between the City and the County.