

**Technology Advisory Committee  
of the City of Onalaska**

Thursday, March 23, 2017

1

1 The meeting of the Technology Advisory Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order  
2 at 6:31 p.m. on Thursday, March 23, 2017. It was noted that the meeting had been announced  
3 and a notice posted at City Hall.

4

5 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Ald. Jim Binash, Scott Wied, Rick  
6 Vogel, Diane Oldani Wulf

7

8 Also Present: IT Support Specialist Mike DeLine

9

10 Excused Absence: Tim Bena

11

12 Absent: Pam Goldbeck

13

14 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

15

16 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Rick, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as  
17 printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

18

19 On voice vote, motion carried.

20

21 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**

22

23 Diane called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that portion of the  
24 meeting.

25

26 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

27

28 **Item 4 – Update on new helpdesk software**

29

30 Mike referred to a copy of the February Zendesk helpdesk software report he had distributed to  
31 committee members, and he noted that the data from March is very similar. The report includes  
32 data on the number of incoming tickets, and Mike noted that approximately between 50 and 66  
33 percent of the tickets are being addressed within one hour. Mike said many of the technical  
34 difficulties can be corrected quickly; however, there also are issues that require more time and  
35 attention.

36

37 Diane inquired about Paige Plaza, who is listed under “Top Agents.”

38

39 Mike said Paige has been serving as his intern for nearly a year, noting that she has set up several  
40 new personal computers for city staff. Mike also noted that he has the help of a recently hired  
41 assistant. However, Mike also said he is encountering difficulties because he must be involved

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42 with 75 percent of the tickets. Mike said the assistant's position is split between Information  
43 Technology and Human Resources, adding that the individual who was hired is serving more of  
44 an administrative role and has no IT experience. Mike said he is teaching the assistant basic  
45 skills such as remote access, resetting passwords, and local admin credentials. The assistant also  
46 is in charge of processing purchasing paperwork. Mike said his goal is to "take a step back"  
47 when he is ill, as was the case recently, or on vacation and only address technical difficulties that  
48 need immediate attention.

49  
50 Diane inquired about the city's current contract with Adoni Networks.

51  
52 Mike said Adoni Networks will address technical difficulties for the city; however, Adoni  
53 currently does not have a helpdesk position. Mike said Adoni has on-call technicians that the  
54 city may utilize. However, Mike also said he tends to utilize Adoni for his projects as well as  
55 when he either is ill or out of the office. Mike noted that Adoni is a small business that has been  
56 "right on the edge" of being able to hire a full-time helpdesk employee, and he said that perhaps  
57 Adoni could perform full-time helpdesk duties if the city restructures its contract with Adoni.

58  
59 Diane said it is essential for city employees to stay home and recover if they are ill.

60  
61 Mike said he is providing the assistant with Adoni's contact information so that the city is better  
62 prepared to address situations if he is out of the office. Mike noted that the Police Department is  
63 frequently disconnected from La Crosse County's server – a technical difficulty that can be fixed  
64 within minutes – and said the Police Department faces challenges if he cannot be reached.

65  
66 Diane asked Mike if he is preparing a manual that the assistant may reference if there are  
67 technical difficulties.

68  
69 Mike said yes, adding he hopes the assistant will be able to create a majority of the  
70 documentation.

71  
72 **Item 5 – Review and possible action of fiber connections for City Hall, Public Works**  
73 **Facility, and Omni Center**

74  
75 Mike said this is a selection of data and internet services included in bills from both Charter  
76 Spectrum and CenturyLink. Mike said initially the primary focus was to examine the  
77 connections between the buildings and the internet connections, and also to examine the  
78 reliability of fiber and increase the speed of the connections between buildings. Mike said the  
79 city likely will achieve a cost savings if it switches its voice connections from CenturyLink to  
80 Charter. However, Mike added he did not have complete information regarding the city's  
81 detailed long-distance usage throughout 2016, and he said he hopes to prepare a more complete  
82 proposal regarding voice connections for the April 27 Technology Committee meeting.

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83  
84 Mike referred to a handout listing current charges he had distributed to committee members, and  
85 he noted that the city currently pays a little less than \$1,000 a month (\$914) for the connection  
86 between City Hall and the City Shop. The city currently pays \$2,342.07 for its monthly services  
87 from CenturyLink and Charter, and Mike said the proposed new monthly charges would be  
88 \$2,922.18. Mike estimated that the city would save approximately \$200 by switching voice  
89 connections. Therefore, the net increase would be approximately \$400. Mike said this is going  
90 under the assumption the city would utilize the 50-by-50 megabit connection between buildings,  
91 and a 100-by-100 megabit connection for the primary internet uplink.

92  
93 Mike noted there previously was an internet connection in every building, connections between  
94 the buildings, and failover connections through the internet connections. Mike described these  
95 connections as “somewhat unreliable,” and he said, “We were relying on our systems to be able  
96 to jump back and forth between whichever connection was best. It works OK, but if we move to  
97 fiber we go from a ‘best effort’ internet service where we’re paying for a certain amount a  
98 month. If it goes down and they’re not able to bring it up right away, they’re going to do their  
99 best to do it, but we don’t have any real teeth in the contract. We would have an SLA agreement  
100 with them with this, and I think they promise 99.97 percent up time, which equates to a  
101 maximum of about one full day’s worth of down time in a year, or about one hour in a month.  
102 It’s kind of an extreme change for us in the reliability of the connection. It also gives us a lot  
103 more capability with upload, which is going to help our broadcast of [meetings] from the  
104 [Common] Council Chambers.”

105  
106 Mike noted he had spoken earlier Thursday with Assistant Police Chief Troy Miller, who told  
107 him that the Police Department has a shared folder with the District Attorney’s office. This  
108 folder is located on La Crosse County’s servers, and the two departments frequently attempt to  
109 pass information regarding active cases back and forth. Mike said a slow connection prevents  
110 videos from being uploaded, and this requires the Police Department to utilize a flash drive for  
111 video if the District Attorney’s office requests it. Mike also noted that much of the software the  
112 Police Department utilizes relies on databases at La Crosse County, and he said “they’re not very  
113 robust,” meaning the Police Department loses access to software when there are disruptions with  
114 the connection.

115  
116 Rick said it is his understanding that a 100-by-100 megabit connection would be installed at City  
117 Hall as part of the new proposal.

118  
119 Mike said it would be the internet connection for City Hall, the City Shop and the Omni Center.  
120 Mike said the city would utilize Charter Communications’ fiber from City Hall to the City Shop,  
121 and the city would lay its own fiber between the City Shop and the Omni Center because the  
122 distance between the two is only about 100 yards. Mike said the current proposal connects two  
123 of the three buildings, and the city’s own fiber project will connect the third building. Mike

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124 noted he had spoken with representatives from Five Star Telecom about that project, and he said  
125 if the city purchases and lays the conduit Five Star Telecom will terminate both ends and test it,  
126 thereby saving the city costs on the project. Mike said an alternate option is for the city to  
127 purchase the tools and an Adoni Networks technician will perform the work. However, Mike  
128 said he believes the city's best option is to utilize Five Star Telecom's services, adding he hopes  
129 to have information regarding the cost of these services ready to share at the April 27  
130 Technology Committee meeting.

131

132 Ald. Binash asked Mike if the cost to switching to Charter would be \$2,922.18.

133

134 Mike said the \$2,922.18 total "is a little bit deceiving" because it is "an apples-to-apples  
135 comparison of a subset of [the city's] Charter and CenturyLink bills." Mike also said, "This is  
136 mostly the part that's affecting our data service. What it would essentially be is this would be a  
137 net increase looking at what we're doing here from \$2,342.07 to \$2,922.18 a month. When we  
138 look at the way the costs were split up, the [City] Shop probably wasn't paying as much as they  
139 should have been paying for their share of the connection. They're the ones who have a lot more  
140 freedom in their budget. We adjusted the percentages so they're paying a little more of the lion's  
141 share of that connection between the buildings. So it actually ends up being a net ... The  
142 General Fund is not impacted by this at all."

143

144 Rick asked Mike if perhaps Charter would offer a better rate with the ISDN primary customer  
145 contract. CenturyLink currently charges the city \$500 a month.

146

147 Mike said yes, noting that this is the \$345 line item on the handout. Mike said the only piece that  
148 is missing is the city's long-distance usage, noting that the new ISDN primary customer contract  
149 with Charter comes bundled with 5,000 minutes of long distance. Mike said he does not have  
150 detailed information regarding the rates, adding that Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred  
151 Buehler was concerned because CenturyLink has the state contract. Mike said Fred wants to be  
152 sure the city will see cost savings under Charter.

153

154 Rick asked Scott if PRI is necessary if the city is utilizing VOIP.

155

156 Scott said yes, noting it provides a dial tone out.

157

158 Mike said this would be done transparently, noting that Five Star Telecom would work with both  
159 Charter and CenturyLink and test everything ahead of time.

160

161 Scott asked if Charter had any other options besides the 5,000 minutes of long distance.

162

163 Mike said he believes this is the basic bundled amount and anything above it would be billed per  
164 minute. Mike said he believes this amount was included because there was the potential to save

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165 costs, adding he had received the rest of the information earlier this week.

166

167 Scott asked if the city would exceed 5,000 minutes of long distance.

168

169 Mike said that while he does not have that information, he expects the city to enjoy significant  
170 cost savings. Mike said he believes the current amount is actually showing less of a savings than  
171 what the city actually will achieve. However, Mike added he first needs to examine the “raw  
172 numbers.”

173

174 Rick inquired about the lead time.

175

176 Mike said he has been told 90 days, but he also noted that fiber from Charter is coming into the  
177 building at both locations. Mike said a Five Star Telecom representative estimated it would be  
178 two months, adding, “I was hoping to get this through and approved to go forward with this so  
179 that we can start that clock ticking and hopefully have both our fiber project and this fiber project  
180 done within the next two to three months to be able to switch everything over.”

181

182 Scott asked Mike if he had talked to Five Star Telecom about purchasing the fiber to be placed  
183 between the City Shop and the Omni Center.

184

185 Mike said Five Star Telecom would tell the city which type of fiber cable to utilize. The city  
186 would purchase and install the fiber, and Five Star Telecom would terminate the ends. Mike said  
187 he views this project as a pilot program for the idea of laying fiber elsewhere in the city, adding,  
188 “If we have a relationship with a vendor who is going to be willing to come in and we only have  
189 to pay for the expertise that we need ... I think this is going to be something that we can show to  
190 be a viable thing. And as we’re doing road projects in the future we can really push to say, ‘This  
191 is part of a path that gets us from one building to another, or it helps us get to another entity,’ that  
192 could show per-potential value.”

193

194 Ald. Binash said Mike is seeking improved reliability and speed, both of which the city is  
195 currently lacking.

196

197 Mike told Ald. Binash he is correct, noting that he has received multiple proposals and said he  
198 had brought Five Star Telecom’s proposal before the committee due to its lower price. Mike  
199 said Wisnet’s proposal was similar and included fiber through Charter. However, Mike also said  
200 Wisnet’s business model was “a little different,” noting that the city is only seeking internet.

201

202 Ald. Binash asked if the only other cost would be to lay the fiber and the labor involved with  
203 doing so.

204

205 Mike said yes.

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206  
207 Ald. Binash asked if it had been included in the budget.

208  
209 Mike said that while it is not, he noted that the fiber would be installed between the City Shop  
210 and the Omni Center, both of which are Enterprise Funds. Mike said, “It really doesn’t affect the  
211 General Fund, and between the two of them I’m hoping they’re going to come up with the lion’s  
212 share of the project amount. And anything else, we have our sinking fund that I thought this  
213 would be an appropriate place to use some of those funds to jumpstart this project.”

214  
215 Ald. Binash asked if this project would be completed within the next three months.

216  
217 Mike said it is his hope that the project is completed within that time, adding the city is  
218 attempting to complete the Street Department’s portion this spring. Mike noted that Riders Club  
219 Road is slated for reconstruction in 2018 and said it would be an ideal time to extend the fiber  
220 from the Omni Center to the Aquatic Center.

221  
222 Ald. Binash asked Mike if he is seeking a motion this evening from the committee.

223  
224 Mike said he is seeking a motion stating that the committee supports the fiber proposal for the  
225 connection between City Hall and the City Shop, and also an internet connection to both  
226 buildings. Mike said he was considering the 50-by-50 megabit and the 100-by-100 megabit  
227 options, and he told committee members the city has the option to upgrade anytime during the  
228 terms of the contract with the original terms and dates. Mike suggested perhaps starting at 50-  
229 by-50 megabits both for the land and internet connections, and increasing to 100-by-100  
230 megabits only if it is necessary to do so. Mike said he is asking for the committee to approve the  
231 100-by-100 megabit level so if the 50-by-50 megabit level is not sufficient it will not be  
232 necessary to wait a month and obtain approval from three committees (Technology Committee,  
233 Finance and Personnel Committee, Common Council) so the speed can be upgraded. The cost of  
234 50-by-50 megabit service from Charter is \$599 a month, and the cost of 100-by-100 megabit  
235 service from Charter is \$899 a month.

236  
237 Scott inquired about internet congestion.

238  
239 Mike said the city currently is at 100 megabits download at City Hall, the City Shop and the  
240 Omni Center, “and going to 50 total between the three, I don’t know what our internet, radio and  
241 some of the other usage would be. ... The other issue we have with this is we’re looking at the  
242 Omni Center upgrading the Wi-Fi infrastructure, offering tiered Wi-Fi service so we have a basic  
243 level for free and we offer premium upgraded that we actually get paid for as an opportunity to  
244 make back some money on what we’re paying for that. But in order to set that up I want to make  
245 sure we have the proper infrastructure I want to be able to support some of the larger events there  
246 on evenings and weekends. Again, this is speed for uploading police videos to the D.A. drive.

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247 My gut feeling is we're probably going to go to the 100-by-100, but I don't know if it's worth  
248 trying to start at that lower level and seeing if it's sufficient for us before we sign a five-year or a  
249 three-year term on something that's more than we need."

250

251 Rick said he would choose the 100-by-100 if the city has a chance to save money.

252

253 Scott asked Mike if he is choosing a three-year or a five-year term.

254

255 Mike said there was no specification as to whether there is a cost difference between the two.

256 Mike said he had indicated he would like to look at an initial three-year term and he asked for  
257 committee members' input as to whether the city should pursue a shorter term initially and then  
258 pursue a longer-term agreement if the city is satisfied.

259

260 Scott asked Mike, "Do you have reservations on ... just from the standpoint of you're not sure if  
261 you'll like it or not?"

262

263 Mike noted the city entered into a five-year term with CenturyLink on its current connection and  
264 he said that he regretted it within one year. Mike said the connection was slow and the rates  
265 were expensive, and he also said he had not previously examined the current fiber options. Mike  
266 said, "If this is something that was available at a similar price point three years ago, then that's  
267 something that ... That contract expires either this April or it expired last April. Up until  
268 recently we were held by our contract terms from looking at these other options."

269

270 Scott suggested asking if there is a price difference between a three-year and a five-year term.

271

272 Diane asked if perhaps the committee could hold off until the April 27 meeting, at which time  
273 Mike will have more information.

274

275 Mike said he would like to tell Charter, "let's go and let's start the project on getting the fiber  
276 connections in." Mike noted the 90-day clock begins after this item receives approval from the  
277 Technology Committee, the Finance and Personnel Committee, and the Common Council.

278

279 Scott asked if the legal review will take some time.

280

281 Mike said he is not sure, adding, "As long as we don't see anything that looks concerning ... If  
282 we see something that would be concerning we would bring it back before the committee next  
283 month rather than taking action on it. We'll be revisiting this next month to look at the pricing  
284 for the phone services." Mike also noted that the proposal before the committee does not show  
285 cost savings through bundling.

286

287 Diane said the Common Council must be given as much information as possible.

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288  
289 Mike said more details such as exact financial figures and contract terms must be obtained prior  
290 to the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting on April 5.

291  
292 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Scott, to proceed with fiber optics through Charter Spectrum,  
293 which would provide 100-by-100 megabit Ethernet service, and also to continue proceeding with  
294 completing this action for the City of Onalaska.

295  
296 On voice vote, motion carried.

297  
298 **Item 6 – Discussion and possible action on IT Infrastructure Standards and Strategic IT**  
299 **Plan**

300  
301 Mike said he is teaching his assistant about the city's infrastructure and she will be assisting him  
302 with the creation of the documentation.

303  
304 Diane said she will include this item on the April 27 agenda.

305  
306 **Adjournment**

307  
308 Motion by Ald. Binash, second by Rick, to adjourn at 7:06 p.m.

309  
310 On voice vote, motion carried.

311  
312  
313 Recorded by:

314  
315 Kirk Bey