

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TECHNOLOGY STUDY GROUP MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2011, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 115, TOWN
HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Committee Chairman Steve Carroll; Committee Members Patti Flynn-Harris, Tony Perugini, Peter Talbot; Staff Members Ramona Burkey, Scott Detrick, Dr. Greg Florio, Vincent Masciana, Arnett Talbot and Town Manager Michael A. Milone.

Absent: James Jaskot

Others Present: Council members David Schrumm and James Sima.

1. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The members of the committee introduced themselves.

Steve Carroll – I.T. Director with 30+ years experience in applications development and data base; manages the I.T. infrastructure for his company.

Ramona Burkey – Library Director; has learned technology in her position; has a Masters Degree in Library and Information Science.

Peter Talbot – Associated with Cox Cable with 25+ years in the telecommunications industry; enjoys using technology and has a working knowledge of technology.

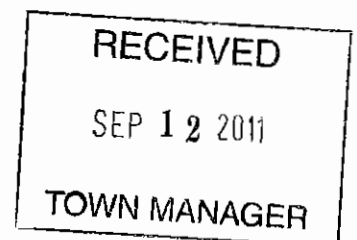
Tony Perugini – has 20+ years in the I.T. industry, and is an executive for the last 10 years in the industry.

Arnett Talbot – executive assistant to the Town Manager; is PIO for Cheshire, web site manager, and in the last year redesigned and redeveloped the town's web site.

Patti Flynn-Harris – Operations Manager for a telecommunications company, and works with I.T. in her position.

Vincent Masciana – Director of Management Services, Department of Education, responsible for finance, budget and human resources; oversees the DOE technology; has 30+ years of management experience.

Scott Detrick – Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Department of Education; has 30+ years experience in education, with an interest in technology and its relevance for students in the improvement of their learning.



Town Manager Milone reviewed his memo to the Council members regarding formation of the Technology Study Group, and the key issues to be discussed and addressed.

- Since the mid 1990's the Town has not had a comprehensive, integrated technology study.
- The development of the FY 11-12 Capital Expenditure Plan has \$1.5 million appropriated over the next 4 years - \$350,000 for FY 11-12; \$650,000 for FY 12-13; \$250,000 for the next two years of the CEP.

Mr. Milone stated that this study must be done in a comprehensive and integrated fashion. To spend this money wisely he wanted to make sure there was benefit of a policy direction from the Town Council and Board of Education. The study group would include staff with significant policy roles, Town Council and Board of Education members with I.T. knowledge and experience.

- A serious i-worm infection compromised the I.T. system, and illustrated the vulnerability of our operation and the critical need for the development of an enhanced and strategic model and plan.

In March 2011 the I.T. system was infected with an i-worm that compromised the system for over one month, paralyzed the BOE's operation, and many resources were re-directed to this situation. Mr. Milone said there was a waste of people's time and money to take care of the problem. It was realized that with the right configuration, people in the right places and software, if this cannot be avoided in the future, it can at least be preempted from becoming a larger ordeal.

- The limited capability of our existing infrastructure to efficiently and effectively support current software, and planned software upgrades throughout all departments, both Town and Board of Education.

The Town is installing a Computer Assisted Dispatch System in the Police and Fire Departments, at a \$425,000 investment. It is also a reporting system. When the software was purchased it was discovered that there was not hardware to support this system. The software vendor noted that Cheshire is five generations behind in hardware. There will be implementation of the GIS at \$330,000 for the Assessor, Police, Fire, Planning and Building Departments, and the hardware was inadequate to support this system. The Town has spent \$230,000 on a phone system, \$625,000 on the accounting system, \$425,000 on the CAD, and \$325,000 on the GIS. It was realized that the Town was spending a lot of money without benefit of a sophisticated, integrated, comprehensive approach in marrying all the hardware to make everything more efficient. We must look at the long term strategic plan so as we invest going forward, it is done with this plan in mind, and not a reaction to a problem.

Specific issues related to technology – Mr. Masciana presented an overview of where the Town stands with technology and what must be looked at.

- 1) There are large blocks of infrastructure serving the entire Town.

The Town has 25+ buildings and facilities, DSL, TI's, wireless and fiber optic connections; everything originates out of Town Hall; 2,000 pc's, 40 servers, 6,100 users (5,000 are students).

There are shared services, resources, infrastructure, with a wide range of user requirements such as emergency service, schools, library, Town Hall, and many departments.

- 2) Network infrastructure – built in 1998 with minimum upgrades, running on Windows 2003 Active Directory, and Exchange 2003; 44% of devices are between 5 & 8 years old, 77% of devices in the schools are +8 years old. The router and switches are the original installed equipment, and the replacement cycle has been a failure. Many phone systems are also aged, +15 years old.

- 3) Limited Staffing – User and technology teams have out-spaced resources; there are 2 people to service the entire Town and BOE; the demand has grown, and we have the same staffing now as in 1998. Most of the staff time is spend on trouble shooting and is reactive, and more time should be spent on being proactive and strategic.

Technology improvements have outgrown the staff skill sets, with no investment in staff training and certifications. The Police Department has a dispatcher that has been retrained in technology. The Assessor takes the lead on the GIS. Ms. Talbot handled the web site upgrade without helpful technology resources, and this project took one year. The Library has one person with technology knowledge and experience. The BOE has one full time I.T. resource person for technology support and Smart Boards, a certified math teacher who administers Power School.

The I.T. industry staffing standard is one person for every 100 pc's.

- 4) Too thrifty spending approach – this hurts keeping the infrastructure running; and the recommendation is to change this approach.

- 5) Technology restrictions have been applied globally – there is a one size fits all approach, and this does not work.

Mr. Milone commented on the fact that the one size fits all is suffocating the growth of employees, there is a limit on what they can do with the equipment they have, and services provided to the people in the community are limited.

- 6) Limited resources –we tend to do everything in house, and out-sourcing would help; the exchange mail server is due for an upgrade and this should be outsourced; it would cost money but would free up our resources; user satisfaction levels are not measured or managed; user expectations are low; users are not asking for much, are not being creative; and we want an environment which embraces and gives people the

technology they need for a secure infrastructure in order for them to do the things they have to do.

Potential Exposures Overview

Mr. Masciana stated there are risks and security vulnerabilities out there, and an expert is needed to know what they are and to help with this issue.

In the last 12 months there was a denial of service attack on Power School with someone hitting the server constantly. Apex Technology was called on an emergency basis, and in a few weeks they resolved the problems. An i-worm affected the school and town p.c.'s, and Apex was called in again to assist with the problem, along with the top level team at Viper. Mr. Masciana noted that it is thought that both of these attacks were preventable if the right expertise was in-house. There must be a centralized approach and upgrade management with disciplines in place. The technology infrastructure is weak, and resources are limited.

Physical Security of P.C.'s – the network jacks in public buildings do not have security in place, but this can be fixed with money and network engineer.

- There is no real disaster recovery plan in place. If there was a wide scale equipment or application failure it will have a large impact.
- There is a lack of consistent data back up and e-mail archiving.
- There is no 24/7 network or critical system monitoring in place now.
- There is no town wide I.T. strategy or I.T. project management disciplines in place.
- Department projects are generally initiated and managed locally, but use the same limited I.T. resources.
- There are major initiatives in progress or nearly completed. These include CAD, GIS, CHS wireless, web site upgrade, fiber optics at 5 schools, Police and Fire Departments, and BOE has switched from AT&T to Cox.
- Nothing is managed centrally by the I.T. staff.
- We are not well positioned for someone to take advantage of technology advancements which are out there; this would improve efficiencies and reduce costs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were cited by Mr. Masciana.

Engage with Apex Technology (out of Cranston RI) to provide management services for one (1) to provide high level I.T. leadership.

Apex would provide the following services: setting and managing I.T. project priorities; provision of management guides including purchasing oversight of new or used equipment and software/hardware; development of disaster recovery documents and process; development of short and long term I.T. strategies.

Apex would provide network management and monitoring; on 24/7 basis the firm would monitor servers, e-mail, troubleshoot and make adjustments, remote monitoring of server logs, unlimited help desk and service during business hours, answer calls, remote control and repair, tracking and reporting. Apex could serve as back up for the two resource I.T. staff.

Discussion

Mr. Carroll commented on the background of Apex Technology, which has served as an outside resource for the Town and BOE for many years. Apex and its services will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

For the last year the total fees for Apex have been \$18,000 for design work and were project bases. Mr. Masciana advised that Apex was used with tie i-work problem, and fees for emergencies was \$20,000. Apex will be engaged with the CAD project.

Regarding a "help desk" Mr. Perugini asked about Apex having a hands on role to fix problems.

Mr. Masciana said all services are provided with a fee.

The group was informed by Town Manager Milone that sometimes problems are beyond the expertise of staff. With Apex directing things they can advise staff and problems can be solved.

Mr. Masciana said the idea is to put things into the hands of a professional firm for one year and see what we have.

There are many different issues and Mr. Carroll, with some being strategic, operational, critical and not so critical. He is okay with using 2003 software package. Having a server go down and not be recovered is a serious issue. He wants to set out the hot issues, have a strategic plan, have an inventory of all the equipment along with the dollar value for replacement. He informed the group that his company bids on a five year cycle with 20% of equipment replaced each year. From a budget standpoint it is hard to get a feel on what the Town is facing because budgets are spread out over departments.

Ms. Flynn-Harris commented on the problem with remote monitoring and this being the next level. We do not have an inventory, and you cannot have remote maintenance if

you do not have the switches out there. We need an inventory, network for a grid, know what we have to do, and know where everything is for future growth.

According to Mr. Masciana, Apex has some network design diagrams, and they will be brought to the study group. Regarding Exchange 2003, we need a new server. The question is whether it should be replaced. On the school side there may be a movement to google mail, which is free. Internal staff does not have the expertise to inform on the advantages or disadvantages of making this move.

Mr. Carroll expressed his concerns with switches, security, back up recover, vulnerability, and said these should be taken care of first. He understands the Apex proposal citing the need for more people on deck. The question is whether this is the right time for this.

With the proposal Mr. Perugini said the sense is that it is a hands on help. It is implied that the first thing is I.T. risk assessment. We want to get a deliverable within 90 days, and the time frame to tackle other issues which could be potential problems.

There was an RFP issued for the technology study, and Mr. Masciana said two proposals were received. One was from Blum-Shapiro at \$59,000. He said some things are so basic, and we know our needs. The Town can bring in Apex on a monthly basis on the needs assessment to address some of the issues. This is why Apex was recommended as the vendor of choice.

Mr. Carroll commented on there being a long list of potential issues, finding out where the biggest vulnerabilities are, the cost to fix them, and this will set the priorities for addressing them. Subsequently, here can be a discussion on the long term I.T. strategies.

Mr. Milone said there are current needs and we are operating on parallel tracks. We want to continue to advance the town's short term needs. We have the CAD system moving forward, GIS, recreation track system for on-line registration, and we want to make progress on basis needs which must be moved along on a short term level. Apex has stated that the town may not need 3 new servers, and may need only 1 server.

It was stated by Mr. Carroll that the town can engage Apex in any type of service we want, and right now we might choose it to be on a monthly basis. This can be considered for a short or long term.

With regard to the inventory and value, Mr. Carroll said that Apex had looked at the network a few years ago, and made its recommendations. He asked about engagement with Apex on a short term assessment with Apex doing the network assessment over a number of weeks. This would be a deliverable from them in a short period of time, along with development of the inventory list. There are major initiatives for the Town and BOE, and priorities are needed.

Mr. Talbot asked about the cost savings to have Apex re-work the proposal and include backup and recovery issues, such as a year contract to include the things the Town needs to do.

At this point, we are on the right road talking about Apex as the two person staff is insufficient to manage the system today. There will be some complement of both Apex and staff. One word is "insurance" for the I.T. system with Apex, and Mr. Carroll said that Apex would be handling problems and failures within 24 hours.

Mr. Milone commented on the key things...risk management, an assessment done for a better sense of vulnerability in priority ranking, complete evaluation of all the I.T. equipment, totality of the I.T. budget.

Mr. Carroll stated that we could have been under-funding technology over the years and now it could have caught up with us.

In the Apex proposal, Mr. Masciana noted it states they would provide a list of recommendations, and this goes hand in hand on what they would come in and do, under this proposal. Apex recognizes that the town system has some weaknesses, but does not know all of them, but they understand our needs. The firm has not engaged in meetings with users at the department head level on what is needed at this level.

The long term objective should be department heads and managers defining where things should be, and Mr. Carroll said they can tell what is lacking, where we are going in the future, and future targets. Apex could provide the support to get us to meet these objectives.

Mr. Perugini said that town staff is needed to handle strategic things.

Ms. Flynn-Harris stated that managers knowing what is going on in their department is important as it relates to technology and equipment.

The group discussed engaging Apex, and Mr. Carroll said it should be done quickly to do the risk assessment. The firm has the resources which the town needs.

Some of the things identified by the study group are in the Apex proposal, but Mr. Milone stated that some are more critical and should be segregated and identified.

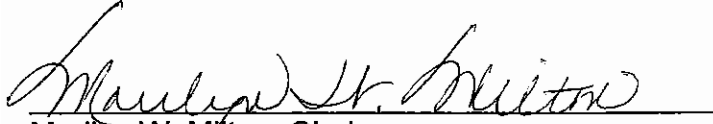
5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Flynn-Harris; seconded by Mr. Carroll.

MOVED to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:


Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk