

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: David Chanski, City Administrator

RE: Software

DATE: August 1, 2023



Background

The City has historically not been one to quickly implement software and technology. But that is not uncommon for historically small cities that provide minimal services. However, while Breezy Point is still a “small city,” the City is at the point as an organization and in our provision of services where it’s time to start operating as a “professional city.”

Currently, the City uses software in a very limited capacity. The City’s current ERP (enterprise resource planning) system is called Banyon. Banyon manages the basic financial functions of the City including accounts payable, accounts receivable, and payroll. However, it is not a very robust software as its backend is just an Access database, and, therefore, it has lots of limitations. Beyond Banyon the only other software programs the City really uses are Microsoft Office, the City website, RevTrak (used to take credit card payments) and Crow Wing County GIS. This City does not have any software for personnel management, budget management/transparency, permitting, document management, and property management.

While most software is used internally and not by the public, software does have a direct impact on the delivery of services to the public. Software is also one of the most impactful way operations can be made more efficient without adding personnel. Finally, improved, more robust software helps increase transparency and public access to information.

Council Discussion

A single ERP could address a number of the identified software inefficiencies such as personnel management, permitting, document management, and property management as well as vastly improve our accounting operations. City Administrator Chanski was involved in such an integration project with the City of Brainerd in 2019-2020, and the City of Baxter is in the process of moving to the same ERP as Brainerd. Such an ERP, however, is expensive. The City can expect to spend upwards of \$150,000 to implement the software plus annual maintenance fees.

An alternative to a single-use ERP would be to implement separate but complimentary software programs over time. For example, staff is requesting that the City Council approve the implementation of budget management/transparency software in the 2024 budget. Two such proposals are attached. Such a software would save significant time

in the budget development process as well as make the City's budget significantly more accessible, transparent, and understandable to the public.

In 2024, staff would also like to continue the process of looking at further software options from a single-use ERP to operation specific software programs. Such additional software, if approved by the City Council, would be implemented in future years.