



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
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Submitted By: Shane Pevehouse, Building Official

Council Meeting Date: 15 November, 2022

Agenda Item Wording: **Discuss and consider approval of the contract between Brightly and the City of Dripping Springs to provide software solutions for permitting, planning, and code enforcement.**

Agenda Item Sponsor: Mayor Foulds

Summary/Background: The Deputy Public Works Director sought out, researched, and contracted with Brightly to provide a software solution for the maintenance and utilities departments. I sat in on the demonstration and asked if they provided Code Enforcement and Permitting software. After confirming they did, I coordinated a demonstration with Brightly and the Building Department. This occurred prior to Sarah's departure, but after budgets were submitted for the new FY. After the demonstration, she was very excited with the prospect, but had given her two week notice and left the decision with me. As the new Building Official, I planned to budget for Brightly in FY '24. However, Brightly reached out and offered the City a \$7,000 discount (see budget amendment for details).

As a department, our biggest frustration with My Permit Now (MPN) is that the interface and workflow are confusing and antiquated. This is especially true on the customer side. We have the MPN Customer Portal instruction manual posted on the department website, but even after pointing customers to the manual, we still receive 2-4 calls per day asking for assistance with logging in, navigating the multiple tabs and fields, and uploading documents. Brightly has a streamlined customer portal that displays all fields on one page and provides an intuitive workflow that should greatly reduce or eliminate the volume of "assist" calls that we receive.

Customers also complain about losing information or having to upload documents multiple times because there is no autosave feature with MPN. Building Department employees share the same frustration. Brightly autosaves as you move through the application and permit process eliminating the chance that information will be lost.

Brightly will integrate into the Building Department website and has hot keys that immediately draw the customers attention to the actions that they can take. MPN does not offer this.

The Building Department has several issues with MPN, most notably being the responsiveness to support requests. If we want to change our workflow template, we have to send an email to the MPN support team requesting the change and then work with their tech support to finalize the new workflow; this can take days to weeks depending on their responsiveness. Brightly's workflows are fully customizable by the user.

Brightly comes with 150 user customizable reports, MPN comes with 4 standard reports. Additional reports in MPN require very detailed communication with their tech support and can take multiple weeks to generate.

Brightly users have full control of their calendar and can schedule off time so contactors can't request inspections when they are out of the office. MPN does not offer this at the user level.

Brightly communicates with our finance software, MPN does not.

MPN has a progressive pricing structure that increases costs based on number of users and number of permits issued. Brightly has unlimited users, unlimited permits and the price is fixed with a 3% uplift subscription fee for the first 6 years. After the 6th year, the uplift fee can fluctuate from 0-6%.

When our Code Enforcement Inspector searches an address through the Brightly app in the field, he can immediately see information pulled from Hays CAD, prior code enforcement actions, and billing contact form with owner phone number and email address on one easy to read page. While in the app, he can take and attach photos, write a notice of violation, have the owner digitally sign the notice and immediately send it to them via email. MPN doesn't provide this time saving process or any useful functionality for code enforcement. Without Brightly, code enforcement cases are tracked on an excel spreadsheet and require carrying a printer and laptop in the vehicle or return trips to city hall to generate documents. What Brightly can accomplish in 10 minutes requires hours of additional work and resources with MPN.

A significant advantage that Brightly will provide is cross department communication. Building department personnel in the field can generate Public Works maintenance requests for potholes, tree branches encroaching in travel lanes, broken two-way cleanout caps, etc. Conversely, other departments can start a code enforcement case when encountering ordinance violations. The planning department will use Brightly in the same capacity as MPN at no additional cost.

Brightly is a dynamic and modern software solution that will provide significant improvements for City Staff and our customers, reduce customer and staff frustration, decrease wait times, and increase productivity across multiple departments.

**Commission
Recommendations:**

**Recommended
Council Actions:** Recommend Approval

Attachments: Power Point presentation

Next Steps/Schedule: Send to City Secretary for execution