CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
CITY OF FAIR OAKS RANCH, TEXAS
March 2, 2023

AGENDA TOPIC: Migration for City water meter reads to Sensus cloud services

DATE: March 2, 2023

DEPARTMENT: Information Technology

PRESENTED BY: Brian LeJeune, IT Manager

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

The City currently utilizes Sensus technology for its Automated Meter Reading (AMR) services. The City's existing servers are running a much older version of the Sensus software (RNI v3), which is no longer supported officially by Sensus. This means that Sensus has not trained new technicians to support our environment since June 2021. When the City contacts Sensus for support, it is beginning to take longer to find necessary personnel who have the knowledge to support the software version we are running. This will become more of a knowledge or support issue as time passes with personnel changing departments or leaving Sensus altogether.

On top of the support issue is the hardware aspect of the infrastructure that our Sensus software runs on. The City has warranties for the hardware; however, there is no guarantee that all parts would be available should something need to be replaced. Another area of the concern is backing up the system. The City regularly backs up the servers used to support water meter reads; however, it is unlikely that backups will be able to restore our environment if the servers need to be replaced due to a disaster. Restoring a backup in the event of a disaster would be difficult because it would be difficult to obtain the exact hardware the City currently runs, which is 9 years old already. Without the same hardware, there is a chance that a backup restoration either would not boot or function due to incompatibility between the software and hardware. Lastly, the 15-year-old operating systems pose a massive cybersecurity risk as the software manufacturers for each operating system have not provided security updates for several years because the systems are past their end of life dates.

After much consideration, Staff has selected Aqua Metric, an affiliate of Thirkettle Corporation, to assist the City of Fair Oaks Ranch with migrating our data to the Sensus Cloud. As a part of this migration to the Sensus Cloud, the City will migrate all historical data so they may be available for staff should the need arise. An enhancement to the services provided to our customers will be the ability to handle hourly meter reads with AquaHawk. We currently only send read information four times a day to AquaHawk. Finally, a software configuration will need to be implemented within our Tyler Technologies enterprise software to work with the Sensus Analytics Cloud environment.

POLICY ANALYSIS/BENEFIT(S) TO CITIZENS:

- This item specifically addresses Project 5.5.11 to Virtualize Aqua Metric (Sensus) as well as other strategies with Priority 5.5 to Evaluate and Update IT Infrastructure, Software, and Security.
- The City must maintain a supported and secure AMR system to ensure continuity of its water and wastewater utility services.
- An enhancement to AquaHawk will provide more timely water consumption information for customers.
- The City would shift the responsibility to Sensus for maintaining the software and hardware our data resides on as well as handling backups of our data.

LONG-TERM FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Staff anticipates the first-year impact of $85,884.34 would be identified through projected savings in the Utility Fund. There are anticipated increases in the amount incurred for the annual costs year over year as with any cloud service.

Sensus Cloud Setup / Data Migration	$45,459.93
Sensus Cloud Hosting Fees (Annual)	$33,264.41
Tyler Technologies Programming/Licensing Purchase	$4,410.00
Tyler Technologies Licensing Fee (Annual)	$750.00
AquaHawk Initial Setup	$500.00
AquaHawk Processing Increase over existing charges (Annual)	$1,500.00
	$85,884.34

LEGAL ANALYSIS:

None needed at this time.

RECOMMENDATION/PROPOSED MOTION:

Staff intends to present an agenda item for consideration at the March 16th Regular Council Meeting based on Council feedback.