



TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH

AGENDA MEMORANDUM

MEETING TYPE: Town Commission Meeting

MEETING DATE *15 August 2023*

SUBMITTED BY: Jeff Remas, Building Department

SUBJECT: Intergovernmental Agreement with My Government Online

SUMMARY:

I am writing to present a compelling case for transitioning our building permit software from SmartGov (SG) to MyGovernmentOnline (MGO). This move not only addresses the shortcomings of our current software but also offers several significant advantages that will enhance our operations and customer service. Furthermore, by signing an interlocal governmental agreement with MGO, we can avoid the lengthy bidding process of acquiring new software. This report will outline the drawbacks of SG and highlight the numerous benefits of implementing MGO, including the training and rollout plan and the associated costs.

1) Shortcomings of SmartGov:

- a) **Inadequate Reporting Capabilities:** SG needs to meet our current reporting needs. The software's reporting functionality needs to be improved, making it difficult for us to generate comprehensive and customizable reports that provide meaningful insights for decision-making purposes. This inadequacy was evident during our recent financial audit.
- b) **Restricted Workflow Customization:** We have found that the workflow customization options in SG must be improved. As a result, we have had to create multiple workarounds within the software to make it usable for our specific requirements. This hampers efficiency and increases the likelihood of errors.
- c) **Outdated Customer Portal:** SG's online portal must meet the user-friendly standards expected today. It does not provide an optimal experience for our customers, potentially leading to frustration and inefficiencies in their interactions with our permit technicians.
- d) **Slow Response to Change:** SG is slow to respond to enhancement requests critical to the platform's operation. Most requests have no follow-up and are never implemented.

2) Advantages of Transitioning to MyGovernmentOnline:

- a) **Improved Workflow Efficiency:** MGO offers a more efficient workflow than SG. The software provides seamless integration with Bluebeam, eliminating the need
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for us to spend \$2,500 per year on Bluebeam Studio Prime. This integration streamlines our processes and enhances collaboration and document management capabilities.

b) **Unlimited Customizable Reports:** Unlike SG, MGO allows us to generate unlimited, fully customizable reports. This empowers us to extract and analyze data more effectively, enabling informed decision-making and enhanced transparency.

c) **Enhanced Customer Service:** MGO's customer portal includes a 1-800 number answered by MGO staff. This feature will significantly reduce the volume of phone calls our permit technicians receive, allowing them to allocate more time to helping customers and processing permits. With approximately 1,200 phone calls per week coming into the Building Department, this improvement will substantially impact our operational efficiency.

d) **Scalability and Separation:** One of the advantages of MGO is its ability to accommodate separation should the interlocal governmental agreement with Gulf Stream terminate. This flexibility allows us to manage Gulf Stream independently, which is impossible with SG.

e) **Extensive Experience and Government Expertise:** MGO is a government agency that has been providing building permit services for over 20 years and created this software 17 years ago. They deeply understand our processes and requirements, similar to our Building Department. Their steady growth in Florida and agreements with larger cities and counties attest to their competence and reliability. Additionally, the Planning and Zoning Module offered by MGO is a valuable addition not currently available in SG.

f) **Full Document Management:** MGO is a complete document management entity and can integrate with Laserfiche if needed, although unnecessary. Data management is provided at no additional cost, even if we terminate our agreement with MGO.

3) Training and Rollout Plan:

a) **Duration:** We estimate that the rollout of MGO will take approximately six months. This will allow a slow-paced, methodical buildout of the software, reducing the pressure on staff.

b) **Simultaneous Use:** We can continue using SG simultaneously with MGO during the rollout period to ensure a seamless transition. This will make it easier for those already in the SG legacy system as they can complete their permits before we transition to MGO.

c) **Data Transfer:** By June 2024, when our SG contract expires, we will have transferred all data from SG to MGO, consolidating our operations into a single software solution.

d) **Training:** The training for MGO is online and includes two in-person sessions. The training will start once the buildout on the software is complete and be incorporated into the staff's daily routine over several months.

4) Cost Analysis:

a) **Current SG Contract:** Our contract with SG is expected to renew at \$18,900 in 2024.

- b) **MGO Pricing:** The MGO subscription is billed monthly at \$1,590, totaling \$19,080 annually. This fee includes all the modules we currently pay for with SG and adds the Planning & Zoning Module, which we don't have in place with SG.
- c) **Additional Savings:** By transitioning to MGO, we can save \$2,500 per year by discontinuing our subscription to Bluebeam Studio Prime.
- d) **No Initial Fees or Setup Costs:** Unlike SG, MGO does not require any initial fees or setup costs, making the transition more cost-effective.
- e) **Training Costs:** The cost analysis should account for the training expenses for MGO, including the recommended travel fee of \$4,400 (two trips at \$2,200).
- f) **Concurrent Costs:** The Building Department has adequate unencumbered funds in the current budget to simultaneously cover the additional cost of operating two software platforms without needing a budget amendment. The concurrent costs end this fiscal year.
- g) **Separation Savings:** There is a separate fee for Gulf Stream, included in the above price, which will be removed in the event of the termination of the ILA, a cost savings to Highland Beach.

Based on the analysis above, the transition to MyGovernmentOnline presents a compelling proposition for our town. It will address our current software's shortcomings and significantly improve workflow efficiency, customer service, reporting capabilities, and scalability. Moreover, the cost analysis demonstrates that MGO offers a competitive pricing structure while providing additional savings through integration and eliminating the need for separate subscriptions.

The benefits and advantages outlined in this report, including the training and rollout plan and associated costs, indicate that MGO is the optimal choice for our building permit software needs; therefore, I recommend proceeding with the transition to MGO and signing an interlocal governmental agreement, bypassing the traditional bidding process.

Thank you for considering this recommendation. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information or clarification.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact

ATTACHMENTS:

MGO ILA

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval for the good of the community