



Meeting Name: Town Council Meeting
Meeting Date: September 13, 2023
Prepared By: David Dyess, Town Manager
Item Title: Discussion on Polco's Survey Services

This item would apply to council's goal: Enhance communication with residents and other stakeholders.

DISCUSSION:

During council comments, Councilmember Halpern requested a discussion on Polco survey tool, which was agreed upon by council. This service has previously been considered by the council; however, the company now has a small cities pilot program. The rate for the new program is \$3,900 for two years. I was contacted on August 8th and informed that the \$3,900 rate will be increasing to \$6,500 for two years on September 30th.

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Traditional resident engagement methods neglect the majority of voices

Town halls and social media for community input are unreliable. Alone, they can bias and misinform decision-making. Without a trustworthy resident engagement platform to help:



You need more data to support your decisions



You don't hear from everyone in your community



Residents lose more trust in government



Long-term planning and budgeting are more challenging



In-house surveys often ask residents the wrong questions



You struggle to increase civic participation

The use of surveys can assist with public engagement and feedback. From national benchmarking surveys to local issue questions, a survey tool can gather feedback without concern of social media or in person ridiculing of those with opposing views. One should also understand that surveys should not replace leadership. Councils are elected to represent the people and voting based on survey results may not be what is best for the town.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss surveys in general and more specifically the use of Polco as a survey tool if the council wishes to start conducting surveys.

Provide staff direction.