MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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October 16, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Craig A. Moe, Mayor
Brencis D. Smith, Council President
City Council Members
VIA: Joanne H. Barr, Deputy City Administrator JHB
FROM: James A. Cornwell-Shiel, Director, Department of Information Technology
SUBJ: **RECOMMENDATION TO TRANSITION CELLULAR SERVICES TO T-MOBILE FOR GOVERNMENT**

In an ongoing effort to improve cellular connectivity and reliability, the Department of Information Technology has been investigating alternatives to AT&T FirstNet, our current "public safety prioritized" cellular service carrier.

Carriers: Verizon, T-Mobile, and AT&T all provide public safety prioritized networks. Each of them has similar capabilities: a disaster-resilient network, no roaming limitations, and preferential network access which gives connection priority over consumer devices during emergencies, ensuring that first responder communications stay up during critical times. These plans come with unlimited calling, text, and data. Data connectivity is particularly critical for our police vehicles, which use cellular data to maintain dispatch software and dashcam connectivity.

Reliability: In our ongoing 2-month field test of T-Mobile's network across 20 police vehicles and 2 civilian phones/laptops, we found that devices using T-Mobile experienced far fewer disconnects within the City than devices on AT&T, and were impacted by fewer dead zones.

Speeds: Our field tests show that throughout the City, identical 4G LTE-capable devices experienced 20% faster upload and download speeds on T-Mobile than on AT&T, and 5G-capable devices experience transfer speeds over 10 times faster on T-Mobile than on AT&T.

Hot Spot: T-Mobile's wireless hot spot functionality is included in the phone plans, compared to $5 per month per device on AT&T. This feature is currently used by detectives and other staff who need to connect laptops and other non-cellular wireless devices to the internet and City VPN while in the field.

Transition Timeline: If approved, the transition of police devices will be completed during the months of November and December alongside an existing vehicle upgrade project. Transition of plans/devices for government users will be spread over the course over the remainder of FY2024, as each user will have to be manually transitioned to a new device.

Cost: For the same plans, transitioning to T-Mobile will reduce the City's annual cellular costs by 18.2% as compared to the nearest competitor, and allow room for expansion of services as needs arise at no additional cost to the City. There will be no additional costs incurred to cancel our current service, and the new agreement can be cancelled at any time without penalty. All necessary new equipment for the transition is included in the subscription cost.

FUNDING:

The total annual cost of this agreement will be $67,042.08. The Contract Vehicle is NASPO ValuePoint Wireless, Data, Voice and Accessories Master Agreement No. MA176.

Funding for this agreement is provided in the Adopted FY2024 General Operating Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of the Department of Information Technology that the Council approve engaging in a 1-year agreement with T-Mobile for Government, Bellevue, WA, for the NASPO purchasing price of $67,042.08.

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please contact me at extension 2240.

Approved by:

S. Michele Saylor, Director — 10/16/2023
Department of Budget and Personnel Services — Date

cc: Sara A. Green, CMC, Clerk to the City Council
Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator
S. Michele Saylor, Director, Budget & Personnel Services