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Sent: Friday, September 19, 2025 12:49 PM
To: Mayor's Assistant
Subject: {54742} RE: Windows 11

From: Eric Zeitz
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(All replies to this ticket are visible to the above subscribers.)

We have been reviewing the Windows 10 End-of-Support and how it will affect the City of Mackinac Island. Microsoft's push to Windows 11 has been met with hesitation and concern from many businesses and enterprises that rely on working Microsoft operating systems for core functionality. The last year or so of Microsoft patches for Windows 11 have created many disruptions for our clients. The latest this month is a breaking patch which prevents printer and file sharing from working on some systems. Windows 10 has enjoyed a much more consistent and stable environment by comparison. The Island presents a unique challenge based on our testing and evaluation of the upgrade paths.

Upgrade path 1 – The Microsoft Way

Microsoft is basically giving away Windows 11 as they continue their push into a true rolling release for the Windows operating system. The cheapest option would be to upgrade the Windows 10 operating systems to Windows 11 using the upgrade tools provided by Microsoft. This is ultimately a free upgrade.

Our testing for this process has proven this is not a perfect process and has a less than acceptable success rate. There are bugs in the upgrade that break portions of software used by the City daily. We know for sure it breaks parts of BS&A, creating issues with GL transactions coordinating services. There are also issues between Dell and Microsoft that has caused a 5% failure rate resulting in a boot looping system that requires a complete reload of the system. We believe we have compiled our own fixes to correct the bugs, but as always, operating system upgrades are fraught with unexpected issues. Something as slight as having a USB thumb drive in the system can wreak havoc. The fixes we have prepared to upgrade from windows 10 to 11 were hard-fought to make this option viable to all. The vendors were of little help for most of these issues, suggesting to factory reset the systems being the first stop of troubleshooting.

Upgrade path 2 – The Dell Way

The other possible path for getting into Windows 11 comes at additional cost to replace the hardware. We have been only suggesting this path for systems that are at (or beyond) the expected EoL of the hardware. This is a much safer route to go as it provides a route to not disrupt the current functioning systems for the City. At roughly, \$1000 replacement cost per system, this has not been a popular choice by many of our clients.

Non-Upgrade path 3 – Extended Support

Microsoft is willing to grant extended support at the rate of \$61 per device per year for Windows 10 22H2 versions. This should be considered as part of the Upgrade path for those systems that are too critical to risk upgrading or are not able to be replaced.

Our recommendation

We have recently worked out how to fix the major hurdles causing issues with path 1. Providing we have a fallback plan, we can proceed with the software upgrade from Window 10 to 11. The plan involves:

1. Performing the removal of all unnecessary Dell software. Old versions of Dell Support Assist have shown to cause BSOD and unsupported driver errors after the upgrade.
2. Performing the upgrade of all firmware and drivers before launching the upgrade to Windows 11.
3. Performing validations that Trellix is updated to a recent version. Machines not often online have been found to fail the upgrade due to Trellix blocking the upgrade process.
4. After the upgrade, BS&A applications need to be reinstalled to fix the out-of-bounds memory bug for the MSDTC. If possible, upgrade the applications to the latest versions which are supposed to fix this issue.
5. Prepare for the possibility of an unsuccessful upgrade by verifying all essential files are on the network in case the system is not useable after the upgrade. Have an on-site person familiar with re-loading operating systems available to restore the systems in the event of major issues.
6. Replace systems that are not able to upgrade as quickly as budget allows with the understanding that they will not be broken after October 15
7. Applying extended support options discussed in path 3 for critical systems that cannot be upgraded or replaced quickly.

We have a tech that will be on-site next week that we can schedule the start of the Windows 11 upgrade around. Please let me know your thoughts on how you would like to proceed.

Eric Zeitz
Empiric Solutions, Inc.

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