

Montgomery City Council
AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: December 10, 2024	Budgeted Amount: \$21,250
Department: Administration	Prepared By: Ruby Beaven

Subject

Consideration and possible action to authorize staff to enroll in the AT&T FirstNet plan and to discontinue employee telephone reimbursement.

Recommendation

Staff recommendation to enroll in the AT&T FirstNet plan, discontinue employee telephone reimbursement, and issue City cell phones to select employees.

Discussion

What is FirstNet?

FirstNet provides America's first responders with the highly secure and reliable connectivity they need, when they need it – whether in a crisis or a routine task. FirstNet users have access to all AT&T LTE commercial bands, as well as Band 14 spectrum. AT&T looks at Band 14 as public safety's VIP lane. This is the nationwide, high-quality spectrum set aside by the U.S. government specifically for public safety.

During an emergency, this band can be cleared and locked exclusively for first responders and the public safety community. That means only those on FirstNet will be able to access Band 14 spectrum, further elevating their connected experience and emergency response.

Recommended Plan and Phone:

FirstNet Unlimited \$39.99 month per line and includes unlimited talk, text, and high-speed data with 50GB hotspot data per line per month. iPhone 15 purchase at \$215.64 and broke down into installments of \$5.99 per month. The total package cost would be \$45.98 per month per line.

Montgomery Current Status:

The City currently incurs an annual liability of \$21,250 for telephone communications, with \$19,800 allocated for reimbursements to 18 staff members using their personal cell phones for City business, alongside an additional \$1,450 for three (3) city-owned cell phones on a separate plan.

Proposed City Liability and Cost Savings:

If the City has 21 phone lines at \$45.98 each, the total monthly cost will amount to \$965.58, leading to an annual cost of approximately \$11,600. This represents savings of \$9,650 compared to the previous cost of approximately \$21,250 per year, showcasing significant cost efficiency.

Personal Cell Phones Subject to Public Records Request:

Information is considered a public record if it was created or maintained by a government official or employee in connection with their official duties. This includes information stored on personal devices, such as texts, emails, notes, and pictures. By having a City issued cell phone we can control access to public records request for text messages.

SB 1893 Compliance:

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On December 7, 2022, Governor Greg Abbott required all state agencies to ban the video-sharing application TikTok from all state-owned and state-issued devices and networks over the Chinese Communist Party’s ability to use the application for surveilling Texans. Governor Abbott also directed the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) to develop a plan providing state agencies guidance on managing personal devices used to conduct state business. Following the issuance of the Governor’s directive, the 88th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1893, which prohibits the use of covered applications on governmental entity devices.

Recommendation:

Staff suggests discontinuing telephone reimbursements in favor of enrolling in the AT&T FirstNet plan, which may offer better services and reliability for communication needs. In addition, having control over prohibited applications on governmental entity devices.

Staff will need to give written notice to employees receiving a telephone reimbursement that the program is being discontinued and they will be receiving a City issued cell phone.

Please see attached quote from AT&T FirstNet for 20 phone lines and phones.

Approved By		
City Secretary & Director of Administrative Services	Ruby Beaven	Date: 12/04/2024
City Administrator		Date: