IT Department
312 W. Whitewater Street, P.O. Box 178
Whitewater, Wisconsin 53190

www.whitewater-wi.gov
Telephone: (262) 473-1391
Fax: (262) 473-0579

MEMORANDUM

To: John Weidl, City Manager
CC: Rachelle Blitch, Director of Finance and Administrative Services
From: Tim Neubeck, IT Administrator
Date: 10/23/23
Re: IT Staffing Level Increase

Beginning in 2024, I am requesting an IT Support Technician (see job description attached). For roughly 20 years, the City relied on a single individual to maintain the City's IT infrastructure. As technology has become more commonplace across every department, each year there are more devices the IT Department is responsible for as well as integration between them. Looking at the IT Department going into 2024 is vastly different than going into 2022 as now the City has dozens more mobile devices (laptops, tablets, cellphones) in the field, more PCs on the network, older infrastructure, a TV station, and more software applications. What does the IT Department look like going forward? For the 2024/2025 budget cycle, the City will have 2 employees (IT Administrator & IT Support Technician) and the use of a MSP, Digicorp, which will assist on projects where higher-level or rare skills are involved. By 2026/2027, the IT Department will likely have to hire another employee – likely a Network Technician – as the City is rapidly increasing the amount of IT assets and applications used.

The IT Support Technician primarily will be responsible for response to user request tickets (650 so far between 1/1/23 and 10/17/23) and low-level networking maintenance so that I can focus on larger-scope projects. At nearly $24 an hour, an internal employee can handle these requests better than paying an MSP to do so at nearly 4 times the cost. Besides this, increased headcount means tickets are responded to faster and from and individual who possesses these specific skills as IT management should be focused on larger priority projects such as equipment planning and replacement, major software and hardware upgrades, and budget planning. Please keep in mind that the IT Support Technician will not replace the use of MSPs; rather, MSP usage will be relegated to higher-level projects where specific skills are necessary rather than using them to resolve end-user requests.

Currently, the City has hard assets that includes but is not limited to the following.
- 4 data servers manufactured in 2012. The typical lifetime of one is 5-8 years.
- Over 200 PCs, laptops, and tablets with the oldest in-use devices manufactured in 2011.
- Roughly 60 cellphones
- 75 surveillance cameras
- 32 network switches
- 26 point-to-point wireless routers
- 10 full-service copier/scanner devices
- Over 12 desktop printers

Besides the above-mentioned items, IT is expected to also do the following. Please keep in mind that many of the below items are generally maintained by other departments in other municipalities such as Police, Facilities, Emergency Management, Media Services, and Public Works. Each of these are specialized and there are entire vendors who focus on these aspects.

- Maintain Police and Fire mobile digital communicators (MDCs)
- Maintain the City's phone system
- Assist with the maintenance and upkeep of the City's 911 system
- Assist with the operation of the City's tornado sirens
- Assist with the City's security systems
- Ensure all buildings have internet – even if that means it is provided by point-to-point wireless routers
- Maintain the City's fiber lines
- Create & maintain a cable TV station
- Assist in the maintenance of the City's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems

In my decade plus experience in IT, I have never met a single person who is able to maintain every item and service listed above concurrently. Generally, there is a team of individuals who do so. My predecessor built much of the current infrastructure and integrations himself over his tenure; however, much of that needs to be replaced due to age or obsolescence. Furthermore, these are generally not up to best practice as well as lacking required diagrams and documentation. As such, it is necessary to enlist the assistance of managed service providers (MSPs) as well as hire additional staff. Please keep in mind that the IT Administrator is one of the few positions within the City where it is expected to be on-call 24/7 even when sick or on vacation. The City is focusing on recruitment and retention of employees, and I cannot imagine that having a single person responsible for everything mentioned above is not permitted to have time off of work and having no backup. Months back, the City had a cybersecurity audit where the auditors focused on the lack of manpower in the City's IT Department is a significant vulnerability. Furthermore, our MSP, Digicorp, wrote a memo to City management detailing the inadequacies of having a one-person IT department. As a City employee, I cannot tell you that the City is doing anything to retain my services without giving me the tools and resources in which to do so. My prediction is that overwork will lead to more turnover leading to increased organizational inefficiencies across the City. Yet, you, the City Manager, have given me and other departments assurance that this initiative is indeed a reality rather than lip-service, and I have faith in you and the City Council to ensure we have what we need to provide core services to the City of Whitewater

What happens if another employee is not hired as well as if the City chooses to not provide an MSP? The IT Department will have to pare back services in order to provide core services to users such as networking, general hardware, and troubleshooting. Non-core functions of the IT Department such as public safety MDCs, 911 system assistance, SCADA assistance, the cable TV channel, etc. will become the responsibility of those individual departments with the IT Department completely divorcing itself from them. It is a likely scenario those departments would then have to contract out these services then. The City's infrastructure is too old and overly complex right now for a single person to do anything other than focus on that.