

CITY OF BURTON
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 21, 2007, 4:30 P.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS
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The Special Meeting was called to order by Council President Gary Isham at 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Major, LaDuke, Conley, Isham and Cross.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tinnin and Wells.

OTHERS PRESENT: M. Udell, IT Director, I. Piske, Treasurer and J. Adams, Deputy City Clerk.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into a contract with Cogsdale Corporation for extraction of City of Burton's utility billing data from the Genesee County utility billing system.

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Udell apologized for the short notice, and stated they did not become aware till Monday that there was a time issue. We are already 2 months past our target date and if this doesn't go, we could be into the end of the year before we can do it. Mr. Udell said everything is explained in his memo to Council and he welcomes any questions.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Mr. LaDuke asked why this did not go to Finance so it could be looked at and fully explained. It was approved in November and why is it taking this long to get to us and what is the rush today. Is this going to make our operation more efficient, and are we going to be able to send out 18,000 water and sewer bills without additional staff. If it is going to cost additional staff, I would not be supportive of this.

Mr. Udell responded by saying we do think it will make it more efficient. Mrs. Piske can answer those questions probably better than I. It is my understanding it will not cost any additional employees. We are anticipating a savings of about \$11,000 over what we pay the County. Several things have happened since November. We looked at this late last year because the County decided to go to an entirely new billing system and software.

Mr. Udell said they had many issues with the County but mainly network-type communications. A dial-up connection between the City and the County often would go down. We also had issues of trying to get a hold of someone at the County to troubleshoot it and often times when we did get a hold of them, they said they were not aware of any problems and it must be on your end. Nine times out of ten, it turned out to be them and they had to restart a server and work with their network equipment.

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Mr. Udell indicated further this has been talked about for a long time. Rather than have our staff learn an entirely new system at the County, and then some point in the future learn yet another new system, we came to the Council November 6th and asked for the funding and it was approved. We started working with BS & A software and the County. Initially, communication from the County was pretty good. We asked for data from the old system they had, and within 10 minutes we had a disk with all the data on it. After they went to the new system, we started asking for the data as early as December, and for various reasons they were unable to give it to us. They wanted to know exactly what we needed and they had a reason why they couldn't give it to us, and this went on for months.

Mr. Udell said meetings were held and we had to do a letter of authorization, but then they had another reason why they couldn't do it. It eventually ended up with a meeting with Mrs. Piske, myself, County Drain Commissioner Jeff Wright and David Jansen, the Assistant Director at Water & Waste. Mr. Wright was very forthcoming and said go ahead and give them the data. Mr. Jansen felt the County did not have the time, resources and manpower to do it.

Mr. Udell said they agreed to give us the data but we have to go through Cogsdale, which is the company that installed the system. He didn't know till Monday what the costs would be. They told us there would be some type of contract, a letter of engagement. There is a data cost of \$165.00 an hour, which is not totally unreasonable. They estimated a week to do the first data extraction that we can send to BS & A so they can make it fit into their program. We will need at least one more day to do the final run, which is estimated at 3 to 5 hours to do that.

Mr. Major inquired regarding the \$6,600 amount.

Mr. Udell referred to the letter of agreement. They are estimating 40 hours for the first data extraction that involves going into their system to identify what belongs to the City of Burton and take all that out. Then the data is shipped to BS & A, and they will look at that to review the various fields. Once that data is in place and everything looks good, we will go back to that final extraction.

Mr. Major asked Mr. Udell if he is comfortable with the words "not to exceed \$6,600". Mr. Major said it will not go over that amount.

Mr. Udell said he does not have a problem with that, but he was told it is an estimate. It could be a little less, or a little more. The 3 to 5 hours for the final extraction, we felt could be taken care of in a normal budget.

Mr. Major asked if this would get us to a halfway point for our independent billing process. Mr. Udell responded that he would say at least the halfway point because this is the big hurdle. Once we get that first run data, we are going to plug it into our system here. Our date is August 1st.

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Mrs. Piske said the prior program had a connection fee per person and the three office staff were able to work on their computers. In November when the County went with this Great Plains that they are using, we now have one connection. 4 employees using one computer, and that computer is down one week out of the month. They are trying to do 4 employees work in 3 weeks out of the month, and taking turns with that computer. It has been very, very difficult. At first we thought one connection is fine, we are saving money and it will be temporary for just a couple of months until we get this new BS & A up and running. We are still 7 months later and I still have 4 people using one computer 3 weeks out of the month.

Mrs. Piske stated one of her staff does maintenance of the account numbers. She finds that every time billing goes out each month, a new issue arises. Last month the penalty and interest was working correctly, and then the next month it isn't. One person had their water shut off back in 1995 and all of a sudden they are getting a bill. Then the next month a person that has always gotten a bill all of a sudden are not. She worries how many out there we have not discovered.

Mr. Udell said these issues the County is aware of.

Mrs. Piske said she thinks once they get on BS & A, it is going to be time consuming, but at least everyone would be able to sit at their own computer.

Mr. LaDuke asked Mrs. Piske if she is comfortable that she is not going to need additional staff. Mrs. Piske replied once they have their own computer, she sees it being more efficient.

COUNCIL ACTION:

LaDuke moved and Conley seconded the following motion:

1. Approve and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a contract with Cogsdale Corporation, for extraction of the City of Burton utility data from the Genesee County utility billing system, with an estimated cost not to exceed \$6,600. Cost to be spread equally to 2006/2007 water and sewer contractual line items.

Motion carried 4-1, with Cross voting no.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

jra