

RE: Telephone and Network system

Minutes-Vermillion County Commissioners November 14, 2007
Special Meeting

The Vermillion County Commissioners met in the Commissioners Courtroom, Courthouse, Newport, Indiana.

President, Tim Wilson called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge to the Flag.

Roll call was taken: Present were President Tim Wilson, and Kim Hawkins. Also present were Attorney Jon Spurr, Auditor Sherrie Koma and First Deputy Amy Tolbert. Harry Crossley was absent.

Mike Phelps was present to present a proposal for a new telephone and network system for the courthouse, along with a WEB GIS system that would make property information available on line. Phelps introduced Robert Bryant of WTH Engineering, to answer questions about the WEB GIS system, which would make property descriptions and other information available online. Phelps explained that a grant was available to cover setting up the program, but that the county will have to pay the costs up front and be reimbursed through the grant. The maintenance and hosting fees, which would run \$9,600.00 per year, are not covered by the grant. Phelps said they would still be saving a lot of money compared to what we pay for Manatron. There was some discussion about charging fees for access. Wilson suggested not charging for a while, until we see how many hits it will get. Bryant mentioned that he does not know of any other county that charges for the information. He thought since they were taxpayers, they already pay for the data, so why charge them again to view it. There was some discussion as to what to make available to the public. The commissioners agreed they did not see any reason to keep anything out of the system. Attorney Malcolm Aukerman asked what kind of contract the county currently has with Manatron and what it would cost to break that contract. Phelps said he believes all of the county's contracts with Manatron are year to year and if not, based on what the county is paying Manatron, it may be cheaper to buy out the contract, and still save money. Aukerman asked if property record cards would be available on the new system and Bryant said they could be added. Aukerman suggested that Manatron may not let the county have the information but Phelps said the county owns the data, not Manatron. Someone also mentioned making the tax records available through the new system. Phelps stated that regardless of any contracts with Manatron, he believes the data in the current system is owned by the county and Manatron would not be able to prevent the county from putting it into the new system. The commissioners asked Phelps to find out the details of the Manatron contract and an additional meeting could be called to make the decision.

Phelps said he received three proposals on the phone and network system. He said that the main concern in the network, but that the phones are old enough to be in need of replacement as well. Phelps said one proposal from AT&T, was not even considered because the company was mainly interested in selling equipment and left most of the setup work to the county. Once the work was done, the cost would be well over \$200,000.00, which is much higher than the other two proposals. The two other proposals were from Digital Communications of Danville IL at a cost of \$185,840.00 and from ICS of Terre Haute at a cost of \$174,585.00. Phelps said the money to pay for the new system would come from the cumulative capital development fund. Phelps added that the contract the commissioners signed in December 2006 did not save the county a penny but the county is under that contract for two more years. The contract includes at least one line that has never worked properly and the county has been unable to get anyone to fix it. Steve Clark of ICS spoke briefly about his proposal, mentioning the lifetime warranty on the network switches and the fact that the supplier, Sysco, gives a 45% discount to government entities on equipment. On the phones, his proposal includes a five-year parts and labor warranty and a 25-year

manufacturers warranty on cabling, plus unlimited telephone support. Aukerman asked Clark if his company would pick up any costs to end any existing contracts, and Clark said he did not believe there would be any such costs, but he company would not do so. Steve Auter of Digital Communications mentioned that his company has set up networks for several courthouses, including Fountain County and some in Illinois. He said his system could save the county about \$1,400.00 per month over the current system, reducing monthly costs from \$4,150.00 to \$2,742 plus additional savings on long-distance service. Auter said his system would allow county buildings, such as the health department and jail, to be networked together and share voice mail and Internet services. He also mentioned that the 800 number for the courthouse costs about \$500.00 per month, and that long distance is now cheap enough that the number may not be needed. Through his network, the courthouse offices could have both 492 and 832 numbers, making them local anywhere in the county, so there would be no cost for residents to call county offices. Auter said most of the equipment has remote maintenance capabilities, so there would not be a need for service calls to the courthouse very often. If someone did come out, there would be a service charge. Phelps explained that his original proposal was for Sysco equipment or the equivalent. He said that the equipment offered by Digital Communications is not Sysco or equivalent. Phelps said he would rather have Sysco, that the equipment is the industry standard and has a lifetime warranty. He said his main concerns are how the network operates. He said there are no maps of the current network and that he has been mapping it as he goes. Phelps said that with either company there would be a savings of at least \$600 to \$700 per month, but he recommended going with Steve Clark because of the Sysco equipment, because he was not as familiar with the equipment offered by Auter’s company. The commissioners took both proposals under advisement and said they would make a decision at their next meeting.

Wilson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Hawkins

Adjourn

Read in full and approved by the Vermillion County Commissioners on the 4th day of December 2007.

Tim Wilson

Harry Crossley

Kim Hawkins

Attest: _____
Sherrie A. Koma, Auditor