SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
WORK SESSION
October 17, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers and Via Videoconference

1.   Call to Order

Mayor Boley, present, called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present: Melissa Wilson, Ronald Russell, Marv Atkins, Leeah Shipley and Dan Ulledahl. Dan Hartman was absent.

Staff present: Cynthia Wagner, Gina Pate, Chief Lockridge, Chuck Soules, Stephen Larson, Jack Hendrix, Matt Denton and Linda Drummond.

2.   Discussion of City Website Platform

Gina Pate, Assistant City Administrator, gave a brief background on the City's website. Currently, the City has an agreement with Municipal CMS, they also go by Municipal One, for the City's website hosting. They have been hosting the City's website since 2011. This agreement was renewed through an RFP process in 2018 and added facility management software for Parks and Recreation. In 2022 Municipal CMS provided staff with a website redesign which was a big update for navigation and gave it a more modern look.

Staff also asked Municipal CMS how we could make user access better for online forms, for people to submit things, for internal tracking for Report a Concern, instead of it coming through the email process. Toni Oesterle with Municipal CMS presented staff with different modules that would fit these options. Based on the different options they offer different bundle packages. To get all of our wants for the website the cost would be over the limit of our spending authority based on the purchasing policy. This is the reason for the discussion tonight. Gina noted that we could go through an RFQ (request for qualification) process which is different from an RFP (request for proposal) because qualifications are evaluated and the price would be sealed. There would be an interview process with the top proposals received. We would then be able to make more specific adjustments and the sole decision would not be based on the cost. We would be able to look at the product based on the scope of services and decide what would be the best fit for the City.

Gina explained that based on our review and the FY2024 budget, which is for consideration this evening, there is an additional $10,000 included in the proposed budget to enhance the website. Based on Board feedback and staff review we have a list of the scope of services that we would include. Staff is also looking to the Board for any feedback if anything is missing, if there are certain things that work well with the website that they would like to see continue, if the Board would like to proceed with an RFQ process or just go with the modules that Municipal CMS offers.

Gina noted that after review of the current website, items included in the scope of services would include the following:
  • Website hosting
  • Internal customer service for website support and training for staff
  • Agenda management software for Boards and Commissions
  • Content migration from current website, and timeline of migration
  • Internal workflows for citizen report system

- Online forms and workflows
- Timing of website upgrades
- Automation of scheduling content / design
- Internal tracking of website updates
- Website analytics
- ADA Accessibility
- Mobile-friendly website
- Facility management
- Maintain Parks and Recreation software

Gina touched on some of the more important features that would be including: internal customer service for website support and training. Agenda management software for boards and commissions. Currently agenda items are created in a Word document and then converted to a PDF. Agenda management software would allow us to build agenda packets online. Content migration ensures it would be a seamless transition to the new website and internal workflow for the citizen reporting system. She explained the way our report a concern works now is citizens or visitors can put in a report of concern for various reasons, (pothole, policy question, etc.) and they enter their contact information. That information is emailed to certain staff that are listed on the internal facing side. Staff has no way of knowing who is responding to the concern or a way to track the response. Currently staff is working to get out the business license renewal letters, if we had the capability of an online form, we would be able to push out business license renewal so it could be completed online instead of mailing. It would make the process a little more seamless.

Gina explained that with the current website we change home page banner from a winter picture to a spring picture some providers offer the ability to schedule it, so it is one less task to keep track of. Internal tracking of website updates, now it is hard to keep track of every page and when the last time it was updated. If we had internal tracking we would be able to see when it was last updated. Website analytics would give us the ability to be able to see what pages are being viewed and how often. The website would need to be ADA accessibility and mobile-friendly and offer the facility management for Parks and Recreation.

Gina asked the Board for feedback, if anything was missing from this list they would like to add, if they would want to move forward with an RFQ process and what kind of timeline they are looking for. Gina noted that with the timing of the website upgrade we do not want to lose track of the automation of scheduling content and design.

Mayor Boley said he would like to add to the list CRM(Custom Relationship Management), search functionality, Communications Management and AI Assistant. He noted that these are all pretty basic. He said that the current website looks nice, but the functionality is not there. We are basically where we were five or six years ago, and he has not seen drastic improvements. He noted that he works in this industry and has seen what the industry has done, and we are not there.

Alderman Russell agreed with Mayor Boley. He noted that he would like to see feedback from outside users. He said that a lot of calls he receives are from residents who tell them they understand information is on the website, but they cannot find it. He said that the agenda and meeting information is easy to find but other information is difficult to navigate.

Mayor Boley noted that Clay County is using the agenda management software and it is a big improvement for them. Mayor Boley appointed Alderman Russell to the RFQ Review Committee as Board of Alderman Representative. He noted that he would like staff to reach out to the community for feedback, possibly by email, and do a 10-question survey. Mayor Boley noted that he appreciated all the work that Municipal CMS has done and appreciates that they are local, but we need a more functional website.

Alderman Wilson agreed with the Mayor and Alderman Russell. She added that for a citizen trying to navigate the current website it is challenging. She said that the City just added a new page to the website for the Comprehensive Plan Dashboard and unless you are told where to locate it you really cannot. She would like to see one that is more user friendly.

Mayor Boley said that the Relationship Management is a must, because if someone has contacted the City ten times we should have a way to track that. Staff should also be able to have mobile access to make changes to the website.

Alderman Wilson said that she would like staff to move forward with an RFQ so we would be able to see what is out there and what kind of response we get.

Mayor Boley asked that Board if they were all on board to move forward with an RFQ.

The Board all agreed.

Mayor Boley noted he would like to see the possibility of web-based access instead of VPN access for staff to make updates when staff is off-site.

Gina asked the Board for what timeline they were thinking.

Mayor Boley directed staff to draft the RFQ and get it out.

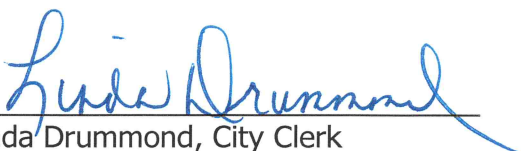Gina reiterated that Alderman Russell would be the Alderman representative.

Mayor Boley asked if someone from the Development Department should be on the committee.

Cynthia said that staff would review the list and see if changes would need to be made.

3. **Adjourn**
Alderman Ulledahl moved to adjourn. Alderman Atkins seconded the motion.

Ayes – 5, Noes – 0, motion carries. Mayor Boley declared the Work Session adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

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Linda Drummond, City Clerk   Damien Boley, Mayor