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To: Mayor and Members of Norwich City Council

Communications Budget Explanation & History

Services Included in the Communications Line Items

Telephone Service

Most telephone lines have been moved over to NPU's voice over internet protocol (VOIP) system. We will continue to pay Frontier Communications for some lines that work better over traditional copper phone lines – such as fax lines and building alarms, but the majority of lines moved from Frontier over to VOIP with the phone service being provided by WindStream.

Wireless Service

We use Verizon Wireless for all of our cell phones, smart phones, mobile Wi-Fi hot spots, and tablets under a Western States Contracting Alliance (WSCA) contract which gives us very favorable rates compared to other contracts.

Network

Fiber Connections

These are the charges by NPU to reimburse its costs for the monitoring and maintenance for switching equipment connecting the fiber optic cable loop to the City buildings.

Cameras

These are the charges by NPU to reimburse its costs for the monitoring and maintenance for switching equipment connecting the fiber optic cable loop to the Police cameras.

Radio Equipment

These are the charges by NPU to reimburse its costs for the monitoring and maintenance for switching equipment connecting the fiber optic cable loop to the public safety radio equipment.

Phones

These are the costs from Carousel Industries (fka Atrion) and Cisco for the monitoring and maintenance for Cisco Unified Communications (UC) phones and related equipment. The UC phones have added many functions that City departments never had before.

Email

These are the charges by NPU to reimburse its costs for Cisco IronPort Email Filtering and Microsoft Exchange Client Access Licenses. The City began using NPU's Microsoft Exchange system in August 2014.

Wireless Access Point Licenses

These are the charges by NPU to reimburse its costs from Carousel and Cisco for the monitoring and maintenance for a unified wireless access point system in several City buildings. City departments will have the ability to connect to WiFi using the same access code with a stronger level of security.

Internet

These are primarily the charges by NPU to reimburse its costs for the internet bandwidth purchased through FiberTech and the Nutmeg Network.

Translation Service

Departments occasionally need to call for help with language translation in order to help a customer. The City currently uses Cyracom for this service.

History of Communications Budget

FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17			FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20
Operating Costs	Transitional & One-Time	Operating Costs	Total 2016-17	Operating Costs	Operating Costs	Operating Costs
\$322,614	\$140,087	\$340,309	\$480,396	\$389,205	\$381,609	\$338,494

Starting in fiscal year 2016-17, we changed the name of the "Telephone" line item in the departments' budgets to "Communications" in recognition of the variety of communications-related items contained in these line items. It was during 2016-17 that the City moved most of its landlines off of Frontier "copper" lines to NPU's VOIP system.

In 2017-18, the support costs for the Cisco network equipment (switches, servers, voice gateways, etc.) increased because it was the first full year of Cisco equipment support costs.

In the 2018-19 budget, the Communications costs in the Police Department *increased* by \$13,000 as a result of the planned nine additional police cameras funded by CDBG. Also, there were about \$4,000 of increased costs from additional wireless access points in various city locations, a cable internet account at the McKinley Avenue Emergency Management garage, and the inclusion of language translation services in the budget. These increases were offset by \$24,000 of savings generated by:

- Identifying some Frontier landlines that can be cancelled

- Dropping one of the Comcast Cable internet contracts when it expired in December 2017. Another Comcast cable contract was repurposed for the Harbor Camera.
- Eliminating old, unused e-mail addresses

The 2019-20 budget for Communications is decreasing by \$43,000 as a result of:

- Removing support services from many of the Cisco devices in our network. We will purchase some spare devices in order to minimize downtime instead.
- Working with our Verizon customer representative to pool data plans of phones, tablets, and hotspots
- Identifying more Frontier landlines that could be cancelled.
- Negotiating a new three-year deal with Windstream.

Looking Forward

I do not believe that there is much more that the City can do to contain the Communications costs without reducing services. We will explore whether it is beneficial to pool Verizon plans with Norwich Public Schools, but this won't yield much savings.

Over the years, the City has added cameras, Wi-Fi hotspots, smartphones, tablets, and leveraged NPU's more sophisticated telephone system. Going forward, the Communications budget will increase because more services are planned to be added. *In 2020-21, this item could increase by as much as \$100,000 because of the annual fee that will be charged by the State of Connecticut for the Police Department to use its radio network and the addition of security cameras for the Viaduct lot.*