City of Waukesha Fire Department – 2014 Capital Improvement Request for

Replacement of Teleconferencing System

Project background

Over the past 20 years the City of Waukesha Fire Department (WFD) has used a teleconferencing system to enhance the communication throughout the department on a daily basis, minimize the impact that Shift-wide training has on our response times, and provide training/meeting opportunities from other entities with teleconferencing capabilities. The purpose of this CIP request is to replace the current system because:
- It has reached the end of its service life (according to the manufacturer Polycom)
- The manufacturer no longer supports the system
- Replacement parts (in some cases re-conditioned parts) must be purchased by 3rd Party vendors.

The current Polycom system was purchased in 2005 utilizing a FireAct grant. The overall cost was $33,000 and the City's portion was $9,900. The WFD uses this system on a daily basis for our morning teleconference shift meeting, training, and special events. By using this system we're able to leave engine and ambulance companies together in their stations/response areas and minimize the impact training has our response times. During a recent breakdown of the system, required training sessions were performed twice for each shift so that one piece of apparatus from each of the stations could come to Station #1 for the presentation while the other remained in quarters (to provide coverage in that response area). This caused decreased productivity and increased vehicle costs.

While the WFD will be the primary benefactor in replacing the system this teleconferencing system, the system will be available to other City departments to utilize and communicate with other entities and counterparts with teleconferencing capabilities.

In developing the initial scope of this project we identified problems in the system's functions and partnered with members in the Information Technology (IT) department (Chris Pofahl, Greg Vaness, Ted Krueger) and assembled a workgroup together. The group re-assessed the organizations teleconferencing needs, researched potential solutions and vendors, had product demonstrations, and gathered initial cost estimates to prepare budget estimates. The group concluded that when funded an RFP would be developed, and a vendor would be selected (utilizing any State or Federal purchasing contracts available). Once purchased a project plan would be developed in partnership with the IT department and they would manage the project with close cooperation with WFD staff (AC Howard, DC Johnson, Lt Haakenson). Implementation of the installation plan and subsequent training on the new system would be performed for WFD members.

Much of the work has been completed by the project team in doing the research, and the bulk of the installation will be performed by the vendor. Estimates for the remainder of the project hours to complete the project are between 40-80 hours.

It is the goal of this CIP project request that the new system will allow the WFD to:
- Have even greater collaboration within the department
- Facilitate the recording of presentations/meetings that occur on the system
- Allow for an outside trainer to enter our system using current communication systems/devices (similar to FaceTime) giving us greater access to diverse "real-time" instruction
- Have greater reliability since the new system will be less dependent on hardware controls and more on software controls
- Benefit from improved picture quality as a result of the digital foundation of the system
- Maximize the usable life of this new system

Estimates in the initial cost of the system are $93,000 with an annual maintenance fee of $5,000