



MEMORANDUM

Ordinance 23-38, An Emergency Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska Amending the FY23 Capital Budget by Appropriating \$35,000 from the General Fund Capital Asset Repair and Maintenance Allowance Fund (CARMA) for Emergency Repairs to the City Telephone System. City Manager.

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
Date: May 30, 2023
From: Bill Jirsa, Chief Technology Officer
Through: Rob Dumochel, City Manager

The IT team has identified several goals of “highest concern” in the area of IT infrastructure. Requests to assist with some of these items can be found in the FY24 capital and operating budgets. “Highest concern” is reserved for issues that present a serious risk to the continuity of business operations for the city. The severest of the risks we identified comes from the phone system that performs phone switching for all city work centers except at the Police Station. The FY24 capital budget includes \$35,000 to address this risk, but we feel the potential for serious impact warrants more immediate action.

Critical components of the City phone system run on extremely old hardware that exhibits increasing signs of imminent failure. The central switch board at City Hall (which runs on a single computer manufactured in 2002) has crashed at least 5 times since March, resulting in unplanned service outages for phones across all City departments except the Police Station. Failure of this system would leave City departments without land-line phone service until a new system could be installed.

The IT team has investigated using professional services to assist because the scope and complexity presents challenges that could potentially overwhelm our staff and drag out implementation.

We initiated discussions with a vendor with whom we have an existing relationship for two reasons. First, this vendor installed the phone system at the Police Station after the new building was constructed and thus we have an existing maintenance contract. Second, there is a benefit to integrating call management systems across city work centers.

The activities in the vendor’s quote would accomplish the following:

1. Install, configure and test a new telephone switching server at City Hall using the server infrastructure to provide high availability and reliability.
2. Integrate the City Hall call management system with the one operating at the police department.
3. Replace 68 of the oldest handsets in use across city work centers (all those older than 16 years old) to provide modern phone capabilities.
4. Manage the cutover from the existing phone system in a short period of time (3 days).

RECOMMENDATION: Amend the FY23 Capital Budget by appropriating \$35,000 from the General Fund Capital Asset Repair and Maintenance Allowance Fund (CARMA) for Emergency Repairs to the City Telephone System.