

Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 6:30pm — Town Office, 1 Dalton Road, Brentwood NH 03833

Committee Members in Attendance

Stefanie Lewendon, Becky Dunham (joined at 6:45pm), Steve Dawson, Josh Bertoulin, Letty Bedard

Committee Members not in Attendance

Bridget Zacher, Denette Schlager

Advisory Members in Attendance

Karen Clement (Town Administrator)

Guests

Jim Hajjar, Liz McConnell, Eric Turer

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm

Administrative

- Review of meeting minutes from January 12, Letty requested one change
Letty motioned to approve, Steve seconded, motion approved the 4-0-0, approved with Letty's amendment
- Only emails received are between the committee and Facebook notifications
- Request for written summary of the year to add to the Town Annual Report due Feb 1, Stef to share via email before submitting

Review of AV Vendor Findings

- Josh reached out to 3 vendors for rough estimates, (without room dimensions)
- Various components of system for audio, video, and streaming, including ADA requirements
- Quotes ranged from \$15K to \$35K. Need more in-depth proposal for more accurate estimates
- Will present research to Selectboard at some point in the future, to see how they want to proceed
- Josh to update a the next meeting

Public Comment/Question regarding use of equipment.

Immediate Need for Communication Support + Website Review

- Per previous discussion, group continually goes back to website being the first source of information
- Immediate need to share news/updates
- Review of chart of Stef's thoughts combined with vendor info collected in the past week to figure out options for communication vehicles
 - News/Notices Feed
 - Email updates existing/new website
 - Digital newsletter - RSS feature, using another vendor, can automate an email, vendor would allow to control frequency, allow for weekly emails (example)
 - Expand Social Media
 - Alert Notification System (text alerts for emergency use)
 - Flyer
 - Printed Newsletter
 - Consider: Role/Responsibility (and the added work to Daphne/Karen); Audience/Citizen Engagement; Frequency; Costs/Time; Pros/Cons to weigh what makes sense
- Time frame, realistically 4-6 months for a new website
- Rec Dept has a separate set of asks/issues

- Stef's proposal:
 - Website has to be first source, minor improvements to current website may be possible
 - Improved User Experience for users and internally
 - Do we include Rec in the proposal or make secondary phase
 - Outreach: Implement a tool that works with the website to include town services, mtg agendas, minutes, events, legal notices and general updates.
 - On current website, expand News/Notices, streamline a bit and use that for updates
 - Cost may/not be included in monthly fee; question for permission levels for depts to use ; or have Karen post group of updates bi-weekly (timing TBD)
 - Plan to invite users to subscribe; need costs
 - Ability to print for residents for anyone who does not have access to computer

Discussion:

- Feed expanded or not
- Challenges when Karen posts
- May incur cost if scope of updating is beyond monthly fee
- Stef alarmed at how hard it is for Andy to format posts
- Steve has concerns about spending time improving current website, building email list
- Becky asked if we have contacted neighboring towns to see about their experience when moving over to new website – Karen made a point to not contact towns in this busy time
- Letty- how much historical info to bring forward to new website

- Website Vendors

Josh has spoken to 4 vendors; with Stef for 2 vendor meetings

- How fast / time is dependent on vendor package
 - Quotes range roughly from \$1900 to \$6000 annual fees
 - Town Cloud - basic site, allows management, no email notification, no bells and whistles - so our involvement would be greater; pay for users
 - Municipal One - bells and whistles at reasonable annual cost with one-time set-up fee for full consulting, upload docs, site build. See plainfieldnh.org for example and reference; unlimited users; Rec package is additional cost
 - Could add Easy Facility for less than what MunicipalOne offers
 - Concern for Andy's time and how getting him up and running would streamline his time
 - CivicPlus is likely too expensive for a town our size
 - Karen making copies and emailing MunicipalOne

- Stef - Finish Proposal Idea

- Website heavy with how do we provide news updates
- Time/Resources: Work within parameters of existing skill sets and resources is really important, town is not going to hire a comm. Person - website packages tend to be designed for 1 admin
- Costs
- Considerations: work within budgetary/governmental process

- How to move forward if we wanted to propose a budget item for this year

- Need to present by Tuesday Jan 24th, if they need to budget for this year
- Website is in an IT line item, never been a communications
- Not our decision; need to present amount to Selectboard to decide
- Could use MunicipalOne pricing as example
- Steve - would we need to do an RFP?
- Josh has a meeting scheduled to talk further

- Motion, by Steve, to propose to the Selectboard consider seriously moving to a new website, including Rec. Stef seconded the motion. Discussion?

Public Comments/Questions regarding subcommittee's tasks and procedure, suggestion for survey

Vote taken, 4-0-1, motion passed.

- Back to immediate need for communication, discussion:
 - Stef - use the News Feed on website, with prints as needed, possibly use RSS feed to create automated emails for subscribers
 - Steve - publish a bulletin either digitally or printed bulletin, with some evergreen info with updates; work with Karen and staff to see what they can handle; town has responsibility to have source of info that goes out; inexpensively as possible; problem we are trying to solve is that the town doesn't have an official mechanism of informing residents
 - Letty - example of this is the Selectboard mtg on Tuesday, putting out Warrant Article; need to sign up by April 15th.
 - Karen - preference for digital. Printing and mailing may not be feasible with staff hours and cost
 - Steve - Selectboard should be presented with 2 options for news bulletin
 - Josh - what would we be targeting as content for content? Only town depts?
 - Stef - suggest parameters for town depts
 - Karen - Printing out news and announcements, Rec Ctr, meeting dates, garbage/recycling, office hours
 - Josh - could print out calendar
 - Karen/Stef/Josh - talk thru quarterly frequency
 - Becky - Rye Quarterly Newsletter is very dry and alot to read all at once; people lose interest; town website to refer to for basic info
 - Josh/Stef - printing out static content; is there a way to target those who need a printed version
 - Becky - Time it takes for someone to catch typos
 - Josh - Quality of post/writing is up to dept
 - Steve - Could be a voluntary role to compile and/or edit
 - Becky - seems duplicate effort
 - Steve - Selectboard has a responsibility/right to oversee content
 - Letty - would be beneficial for us to get a more clear ask, in writing
 - Becky - what is the rush if we don't have clarity
 - Steve - have to decide tonight on what to present
 - Josh - does a new website fill the need for what they want? A digital newsletter duplicates efforts even of the website
 - Steve - it would be a distillation of the info on the website, which is passive, do we want an active way of making info accessible; we need options for that;
 - Josh - does it make sense to have the info on the website curated again in a bulletin
 - Karen - is it possible to take the news feed from website and export it to a pdf file?

Stefanie move to motion 3 options:

1. Expand News/Notices feed; Depts post info into the News feed, depts check in once a month, at a minimum; using existing website; print as needed

2. Digital bulletin - Post a PDF on website or \$29-70/month for up to 5000 subscribers, subscribers opt-in (in coordination with existing website)
3. Mailed bulletin - \$10,000 - \$15,000 (very rough)
WITH CONSIDERATIONS: consider the implication it will have on staff for both the digital and mailed bulletins; time and effort whether provided by staff and/or potential volunteers

Steve seconded motion

Discussion,

Becky - agree with options 1 and 2 but concerns with option 3, we don't know enough yet on how it would be handled; not sure the board knows either yet; our full committee is not in attendance

Josh - website is separate from the options we are offering; here are options you could execute, it's up to you to select what you (board) find is most beneficial, if you need us to research something, we are happy to

Becky/Letty - more detail to find more answers

Public Comments/Questions regarding the possibility of another committee to investigate a newsletter; existing Brentwood Newsletter

Steve moved to return to vote.

Vote taken, 3-1-1, motion passed.

Steve moved to consider Eric Turer's (audience member) question whether we would provide an additional option could be that the Selectboard could make a call for a volunteer group to help the town publish a town newsletter.

Letty moved to amend the motion to include an option to submit to the BNL.

Becky & Steve agreed that that this could be a possible option

Letty/Becky - we should not present any options on how it's done

Stef - Still in the immediate need

Letty/Karen - Current 'subscribe' could be turned on now for an additional fee

Josh - Suggesting a volunteer group is part of the execution after they choose direction

Karen - Volunteer groups still involve time from staff/employee

All - Need more direction, more time

Everyone agreed that at this point in time we would not be recommending how to execute.

Motion failed for lack of second

Stefanie and Josh to work on the presentation options to Selectboard.

Public Comment - Audience members asked question throughout meeting

**Motion to adjourn by Stef, seconded by Steve. Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm
Next meeting February 16th at 6:30pm at Town Office**

Respectively Submitted,

Stefanie Lewendon

Chairperson, Communications Subcommittee