

BUCKS COUNTY CONSORTIUM

Thursday, September 4, 2014

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

A meeting of the Bucks County Consortium was held at 9:00 a.m. at the Warrington Township Municipal Building, on September 4, 2014, and called to order by Consortium President Eileen M. Bradley.

Roll Call and Instructions:

The following Bucks County communities were represented at the meeting:

Eileen M. Bradley, New Britain Township
Angela P. Benner, New Britain Township
John McMenamin, Lower Southampton Township
Jamie Gwynn, Northampton Township
Bill Wert, Dublin Borough
Caroline Brinker, Doylestown Township
Bob Pellegrino, Northampton Township
Kyle Seckinger, Warwick Township
Keith Albright, North Wales Water Authority
Stephen Sechriest, Richland Township
Stephanie Mason, Doylestown Township
Sam Bryant, Doylestown Township
Linda McNeill, Tinticum Township
Barry Luber, Warrington Township
Tim Tieperman, Warrington Township
Vivian Bell, Warrington Township
Andrea Coaxum, Perkasie Borough
Joe Berardi, Perkasie Borough
Darrell Card, Chalfont Borough
Sandra Zadell, Chalfont Borough
Carolyn McCreary, Plumstead Township
Dana Cozza, Buckingham Township
Lisa Berkis, Middletown Township
Tom Scott, Bristol Township
Tim Hagey, Warminster Municipal Authority
Ann Alker, Upper Southampton Township
Herb Schoell, Upper Southampton Municipal Authority

Sponsors:

Chris Englebert, Beirne Wealth
Brian Jeter, Comcast
Ted Dorand, PECO
Rick Lee, DVIT
Jim Gray, RBCCM
Jay Sklarow, All Covered
Dave Jones, Boucher and James, Inc

Approval of Minutes – June 5, 2014:

Upon motion by Stephanie Mason, seconded by Bob Pellegrino, the Minutes of June 5, 2014 were approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report and Payment of Bills:

Ms. Bradley reviewed the details of the Treasurer's Reports. Upon motion by Stephanie Mason, seconded by Caroline Brinker, the Treasurer's Report for June 2014, July 2014, and August 2014 were approved as presented.

Presentation:

IT Security - Don George, NWN Corporation: Ms. Bradley introduced Don George with NWN Corporation, who helps clients solve their business challenges with technology and offers product solutions from Cisco, HP, NetApp, VMWare, CommVault, and others. Mr. George went over the different ways that municipalities could be hacked. He stated that threats get in through viruses, Trojan horses, and infectious malware. Email threats usually come through as spam (malware threat). The first clue to an email threat is if it went right to your spam inbox and the second clue is that there is an attachment. Email threats are also emails that come through requesting data confirmation. In regards to keeping your websites secure, you want to make sure that you have a firewall, but also have multiple levels of security and monitoring. Mr. George went over the different types of customer service threats. Those threats include voice-over IP phone systems hacked, interactive self-service portals, billing and collection portals, and tax payment portals. Mr. George stated that it is important to understand how exposures happen. He recommends that everyone have their backup sites be at an insured site at least 250 miles away from their facility; keep their software and hardware current; and stay compliant. Mr. George also recommends hiring an outside IT company instead of in-house personnel.

Mr. Pellegrino asked how often municipalities should upgrade their hardware and software. Mr. George stated that software should be continuously updated as updates become available. Hardware should be on a 5-year replacement schedule. Mr. George added that it is important that you do not skimp on software and anti-malware programs.

Cell Tower Leases - Nicolas S. Pullen, Esq. and Lawrence E. Romanowski: Ms. Bradley introduced Nicholas S. Pullen, Esq. and Lawrence E. Romanowski of Tower 1 Partners. Mr. Pullen stated that there have been many changes in cell tower regulations and the number of carriers. At one point there used to be seven carriers, currently there are only four carriers that exist; Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile, and AT & T. Verizon and AT&T are not going anywhere; however, it may be only a matter of time until Sprint and T-Mobile merge. When carriers buy one another, they go from having an antenna for each carrier, to only having one antenna, therefore effecting leases. This means that guaranteed income can rapidly change. Mr. Pullen recommends looking at your cell tower leases and see what a lump sum payment would be. In some cases, with the reduction of carriers, a municipality could benefit from a lump sum payment. A good rule of thumb is usually the lump sum payment would be 10 – 12 times the annual lease revenue.

Darrell Card stated that since Metro and T-Mobile merged, they have been notified that the new company does not want to use the old antennas. Mr. Card asked if it is better to have them take the equipment off or receive six months' revenue from them and let the equipment stay. Mr. Pullen stated if another carrier wants to come on and does not want to use existing equipment, then you would require the old company to remove their equipment.

Mr. Pullen suggested that if anyone is interested in looking to have their leases bought out with a lump sum payment that they should run a bid process to ensure they are getting the best deal, making sure that the core infrastructure is maintained. Mr. Pullen stated that there is a great hedge against future reduction, although there will still be data demands.

Bill Wert asked if technology exists to use existing antenna for data increase. Mr. Romanowski stated that there is, but the biggest challenge for carriers is data demand, and these carriers will be requiring additional locations. An example of these additional locations would be antennas on the top of utility poles. Mr. Pullen stated that it is important that municipalities control deployment of these utility poles by controlling the location and fees. Mr. Romanowski stated that carriers are also upgrading their equipment to move from 3G to 4G; therefore, leases should be open-ended if carriers want to increase their footprint of cell tower to increase revenue. If a carrier wants additional antennas in the future, they should have to pay for them.

Mr. Pullen ended with saying that municipalities should not sell themselves short in negotiating. If a carrier wants to be on a cell tower it is because they need to be there. Make sure to go through a formal process to have a company buy out a lease. Mr. Pullen stated that himself and Mr. Romanowski would be willing to help anyone with their lease agreements and would forward their contact information to Ms. Bradley to be sent out to the Consortium members.

Discussion:

Ms. Bradley stated that the October meeting is usually a budget roundtable; she suggested that the meeting concentrate on employee evaluations and how they relate to possible salary increases.

Training Opportunities:

Ms. Bradley stated that attendance at the ICMA training was down. Ms. Bradley will send an email to the members inquiring as to why they might not have attended and to find out alternative suggestions for training.

Ms. Bradley stated that Jamie Gwynn offered to hold a Google Earth training workshop and will be emailing out details to the members once the training location and day are finalized.

Community Updates:

There were no community updates at this time.

Other Business:

Jamie Gwynn reminded everyone to complete the 2014 Consortium Salary Survey information by the end September.

Jamie also announced that there is now an ICMA Mobile App available.

Ms. Bradley informed the members that the Bucks/Montco Joint Holiday Party would be on December 5 at The Bucks Club.

Adjournment:

Upon motion by Bob Pellegrino, seconded by Gail Weniger, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on October 2, 2014 at Forest Park Water Treatment Plant.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela P. Benner
Consortium Coordinator