

Mayor Collins and Town Councilmembers,

I received the following questions about the alarm monitoring program during the November 3 Town Council Session. I wanted to answer these question via email, prior to the 11/17 session, so if there was any further clarification needed you would have time to respond. Thank you.

1. Have we done a "Quality of Life" survey of all residents to see how they value alarm monitoring as part of the feeling of well-being and safety in town?
 - a. As Mr. Burke stated on 11/3, we have not asked this specific question in our most recent survey.
2. What are the top two reasons municipalities in Texas are offering alarm service?
 - a. There were various reasons for getting in to the alarm business (five different at five municipalities)
 - i. Administration/management request to see if it would work (in 1999).
 - ii. Regular surveys show residents want a high-quality competitive alternative to private vendors.
 - iii. Highly-coveted by some residents and prior administration – history of unique ring-down service, struggling with high costs.
 - iv. Originally source of revenue to recoup cost of dispatching, but now being sun-setted because system too old and administration does not support it.
 - v. City monitoring helps maintain good relations with residents and businesses, no monthly service charge; full subsidization model.
3. Who in Texas is subsidizing alarm monitoring program?
 - a. Only one municipality stated that the program was profitable and gave financial examples.
 - b. Other municipalities did not have a clear picture of cost recovery, although one municipality provides subsidization.
4. Can we partner with someone else to share costs?
 - a. During our site visits, staff attempted to find the hybrid solution that Town Council desired. We were not successful in finding that model. Those municipalities who were in a hybrid style program stated that they had concerns about customer service from the partner. Costs with the hybrid model increased for the municipality. Additionally, municipalities were concerned about sensitive information shared and backgrounds on partner employees.
5. Are other vendors able to do a better job at handling the signals and reducing processing time?
 - a. Other vendors are able to make their business model successful by volume. We have only approximately 400 subscribers to split costs, whereas other vendors have substantially more. We also currently are not able to provide comparable infrastructure (redundancy, multiple forms of communication, multiple call takers).
6. Have Uplink subscribers been notified of issues?
 - a. Staff is uncertain that Uplink notified their customers on this issue. Staff sent a letter notifying Uplink subscribers to contact Uplink for important information regarding the continuation of their service. Uplink subscribers are in different places regarding the technology of their panel, so it is not possible to tell them exactly what they need to do.
7. What is the master timeline on this? What drives the timeline for Council to make a quick decision?
 - a. The most pressing issue is the continued delivery of Uplink services to those account holders. Deadline to transition/upgrade needs to be addressed by 12/31/16.

- b. Staff must stabilize the alarm system and provide redundancy for current subscribers. Staff budgeted \$300k for this process. Without a clear resolution, staff will need to begin replacement of key equipment in order to maintain system functionality in January 2017.
8. We had a good deal of discussion about the ASAP to PSAP solution. Staff will be presenting in detail on ASAP to PSAP during the 11/17 study session.
 9. Several issues were raised about communication of an exit strategy to the current subscribers. In general, the process would look like:
 - a. General informational letter to subscribers informing them of the decision to close the alarm monitoring program
 - i. Timeline: Directly after Council decision
 - ii. Offering: Opportunity to refund/rebate subscriber fees based on when subscriber exits program in a reverse tiered manner
 - 1. Finding another solution early in process would return more subscriber fees
 - b. Certified mail to subscribers notifying them of shutdown date
 - i. Timeline: Sixty days after initial letter informing them of service discontinuation
 - ii. Offering: notification of rebate/refund process and timeline
 - c. Final certified letter
 - i. Timeline: Forty-five days prior to shutdown date
 - d. Suggestion from Council of selling list of subscribers remaining at conclusion of program
 - i. Exploring feasibility of this idea with the town attorney.
 10. A letter was mailed to all alarm subscribers on November 8, notifying them that the Town Council would be discussing this program on 11/17 at 2:30pm. That letter also informed subscribers of the public hearing, where they could ask questions, on December 1 at 6:00pm.

Best regards,

Peter Wingert
Chief of Police
Paradise Valley Police Department
6433 E. Lincoln Dr.
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253
pwingert@paradisevalleyaz.gov
(480)948-7418
www.ParadiseValleyPD.com

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