

NOTICE: This is NOT the official version of the Committee Report as APPROVED by the Board of Aldermen. While reasonable efforts have been made to assure that this is the Committee Report that was presented at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, you should check the Minutes of that meeting in order to confirm its approval, rejection or amendment. Do not rely on the accuracy of this information without first checking with the City Clerk.

October 8, 2008

**REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEES ON FINANCE
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

The Committees on Finance and Information Technology convened in Joint Session on October 8, 2008, with Chairmen Maryann Heuston and Bruce Desmond presiding and Committee Members Aldermen Walter Pero, Dennis Sullivan, John Connolly and William Roche also present and voting. Also present were Administrative Assistant Jessie Baker, Director of Information Technology Karthik Viswanathan, Dave Salmina from IT, City Clerk John Long, Purchasing Director Rositha Durham and Finance Director Ed Bean.

Mr. Viswanathan addressed the committee regarding a request for an appropriation of \$1,550,000 to procure a new Integrated Accounting and Financial Management System for all city departments. (The payroll operation is not included in the MUNIS system.) The system currently in use is poor and utilizes hardware that is 20 years old, resulting in significant downtime and productivity losses when it malfunctions. One of the systems being considered is MUNIS, a system that is used extensively in Massachusetts. The use of MUNIS would provide more leverage for the city to gain consensus among end-user groups to improve the vendor's responsiveness. It was noted that the School Department is on board with a switch to MUNIS.

Chairman Desmond requested to know how much the School Department is currently paying for their maintenance costs and Chairman Heuston requested to know the man hours that would be saved by switching to MUNIS. Mr. Viswanathan stated that savings in productivity and costs would amount to \$456,765 annually, thereby recouping the city's investment in 3.4 years.

Some of the benefits of MUNIS are:

- Allows for better decision making
- Quicker processing of abatements for seniors
- Accurate water billing and collection
- Better customer service
- Information sharing among departments
- Targeting of delinquent accounts

Mr. Viswanathan told the members that there are no maintenance costs the first year but the annual maintenance costs, thereafter, would be \$45,000 per year for the next 3 years, followed by a 1% increase every year thereafter. The maintenance cost includes recovery, which may be performed every 4 hours or nightly. Mr. Bean stated that he understood the members' concerns about floating a bond to finance this proposal in these difficult economic times and said that further discussion is warranted.

Alderman Connolly asked if each of the modules could be broken down into a cost/benefit analysis and also requested to know what the payout charges over the next 3 to 5 years would be. Chairman Desmond stated that he would like input from other city departments on the proposal and Chairman Heuston stated that a Committee of the Whole meeting would be scheduled to discuss the matter further.

No papers were acted on.

Alderman Maryann Heuston, Chairman
Committee on Finance

Alderman Bruce M. Desmond, Chairman
Committee on Information Technology

COMMITTEE REPORT

Report of the Committees on Finance and
Information Technology, meeting in Joint
Session, October 8, 2008

In Board of Aldermen

Clerk