



CITY OF WASHINGTON, ILLINOIS Public Safety Committee Agenda Communication

Meeting Date: September 13, 2021

Prepared By: Chief McCoy and Deputy Chief Stevens

Agenda Item: Code RED Renewal

Explanation: The City's supplementary emergency notification system is Code RED from OnSolve.

Code RED provides a known solution, including a federally-mandated public alerting mechanism for the Rolling Meadows North flood plain downstream of the School St. detention basin. Its alerting options are both list-based and map based, so we can draw an alert area with address-based granularity. It includes quarterly updates to its public alerting contact list which we can augment with internal lists and public sign-up. IPAWS alerting is available at \$1,000 annually, although IPAWS alerting is limited in allowed scope. For our use, for general or emergency alerts, the provided contact list is sufficient for reaching residents. The opt-in and mobile app provide an opportunity to reach guests and those frequently passing through. Adding IPAWS capability would require FEMA approval and would add a limited increase to our ability to disseminate disaster messages. It would be a completely different level of use and maintenance workload, which would include monthly testing. As Council questioned the cost of the current service last year, we do not recommend pursuing IPAWS alerts.

As to the value of emergency notification generally, elimination of the service would require an alternative flood warning system for Rolling Meadows North. That alternative would consume staff time and at least some of the \$6,300 Code RED cost. Aside from that specific example, the emergency notification capability, while unlikely to be used often, is likely to save lives or property when it must be used. The City spends more money annually to maintain outdoor warning sirens that likely have less penetration than Code RED. Code RED even without IPAWS provides the capability for notifications to residents (and others) even when they are not monitoring social or other media. The addition of IPAWS would allow for wireless emergency alerts, WEAs, which would provide emergency tones that would overcome cell phone silencing.

The Police Department recommendation is continuing Code RED service, which is currently under market price despite the \$409.50 increase for 2021-22. Our analysis last year found that the current market rate for competing services is substantially higher, while not providing a product that better suits the City's needs.

Fiscal Impact: Renewal cost for Code RED is \$6,709.50 (December, 2021 – December, 2022). This cost compares to the initial 2017 cost of \$6,000 and is lower than market rates because our cost is anchored to that initial cost (last year's renewal was \$6,300 and was the first increase since 2017).

Action Requested: Committee consideration and recommendation regarding renewal of this service as well as a recommendation as to whether to include the service in budgeting for FY 2022-23.