



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Councilors

FROM: Rich Olson, City Manager
Morgan Jethro, Community Development Manager

DATE: February 20, 2014

REF: Consideration – Authorization to Submit Smart Communities Grant

BACKGROUND:

The ElectriCities membership organization provides management services to the state's two municipal power agencies - North Carolina Municipal Power Agency Number 1 and North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency, the latter of which the City of Elizabeth City is a member. Through their Economic Development Department, ElectriCities has offered a Smart Communities Grant to prepare communities for Industrial and Commercial Growth. The maximum grant award is \$4,000.00, and requires a 50/50 match.

ANALYSIS:

It has been proposed to provide a 20-block free wireless Internet system in the Downtown of Elizabeth City, which would provide free internet access for individuals and commercial entities. Providing free wireless internet access would stimulate growth and activity downtown, and provide an additional service to our citizens.

The proposed boundaries of the wireless system are East Elizabeth Street to North and South Road Streets, to West Ehringhaus Street, to North and South Water Streets. An actual site survey will need to be conducted to confirm the actual placement of radios to confirm coverage area in the requested 20-block area. Two radios will be placed on top of the building located at 405 East Main Street. It should be noted that areas inside buildings will be the hardest to cover, as wireless penetration is limited to FCC power levels and interference is created by existing wireless signals.

The total cost estimate provided by Inteliport Broadband is \$9,921.50, which will provide 10 radios, one (1) router/switch, six (6) roof mountings with hardware, and the radio installation configuration and site survey.

The maximum grant amount is \$4,000.00; therefore the remainder amount is \$5,921.50. The Wells Fargo Foundation has made a generous donation in the amount of \$4,000.00, via Elizabeth City Downtown Inc. Vector CSP has also agreed to contribute \$4,000. Therefore, there will not be any General Fund dollars required of the City for this project.

The Finance Committee discussed this matter during their meeting of February 20, 2014 and recommends approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

By motion, authorize the submission of a Smart Communities Grant request to Electricities in the amount of \$4,000.00.