

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND SECURITY WITHIN A MUNICIPAL TECHNOLOGY BUDGET



CHALLENGE: AGING SYSTEM AND DISCONNECTED STRUCTURE WERE ULTIMATELY IMPACTING SERVICE QUALITY FOR CITY RESIDENTS

When a local city approached Micro Visions, Inc., they were dealing with a slew of different IT issues. They had dated and insecure servers, three city worksites all operating on different networks, and numerous computer software systems that weren't connected to each other. Multiple IT providers were on-call for different systems, but would not work together to solve the ongoing municipal technology problems.

The Assistant to the City Manager was in charge of relaying information between city workers and IT support staff. Support ticket wait times were upwards of one week and frustrations were rising. The Assistant to the City Manager knew the City needed a comprehensive IT solution: the disconnected structure slowed day-to-day operations, reducing efficiency and productivity, and ultimately impacting service quality for City residents.

THE SOLUTION: A PROPOSAL THAT WORKED FOR A MUNICIPAL TECHNOLOGY BUDGET

The City reviewed a variety of IT providers' proposals and had narrowed their search for a solution down to two companies. Micro Visions sealed the deal with their unique approach to the City's problems and the ability to meet the city's budget limitations. "Micro Visions came to present to us an amazing deal, a solution which solved all of our problems," The Assistant to the City Manager recalls. "They were organized, efficient, eager, and they talked to us like we were normal human beings . . . They really blew our minds. They thought of something that was completely out of the box that we hadn't even considered and made it affordable for our limited municipal budget."

Micro Visions drew up a three-phase approach that would provide a complete solution to all of the City's IT problems:

Step One: Managed Services

In the first step, managed services were put in place. Technicians installed user agents, antivirus software, and backup software on all machines. This allowed Micro Visions to remotely monitor and maintain all workstations, laptops, and server infrastructure at the city's three locations: City Hall, The Department of Public Works (DPW), and the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Micro Visions also trained city workers how to create support tickets, so they would feel comfortable contacting IT themselves rather than going through the Assistant.

Step Two: Servers, Software and Training

With managed services in place, the next step was uplifting the server infrastructure and migrating to Microsoft Office 365. Micro Visions installed all new physical hardware and virtual servers. Before

the change, City Hall staff backed up the servers manually at frequencies ranging from once a day to once a week. Micro Visions installed fully-automated backup software that runs every 4 hours and doesn't need staff monitoring. Technicians also migrated the city's email and various dated versions of the Microsoft Suite to Microsoft Office 365. The Micro Visions team then trained city workers on how to use the new software. The Assistant felt that Micro Visions was easy to work with throughout the process, noting that "The techs were all kind and receptive . . . they were always present both in person and over the phone. We got to know them enough to say 'Hey, I'm having this problem. Can you walk me through?' That really went a long way toward helping people feel comfortable as we migrated to this new system. Now that they're all working in the same software versions, it's just awesome."

Step Three: Networking and Remote Site Integration

In the final step, Micro Visions updated the City's networking and firewall infrastructure. This step was critical to integrating the systems at the City's three offices into one whole, functioning network. It was also one of the most challenging aspects of the process, as Micro Visions' technician recounts. "They had a very old network-based phone system that was also doing the main firewall and routing functions at the remote sites. The system was end of life and no longer supported. During the entire network upgrade process, each of the two remote sites was down for approximately fifteen minutes. So we were able to work around the complications with their current network infrastructure and still provide the security and the performance that they needed."

RESULTS: A HOLISTIC SOLUTION AND PARTNER FOR THE FUTURE

The entire three-phase process took just six weeks, and tackled every IT issue that the City had experienced. Not only did Micro Visions solve the city's problems, but they implemented a level of security and prevention the city had never seen before. This, combined with ongoing support for future challenges, left city staff in a much better workspace.

"We are all working more efficiently. Information is accessible wherever and whenever we need it. Our staff in the field have instant access," the Assistant to the City Manager says. "Overall for everybody, systems are working better. Not just the computers and workstations, but everybody has access to all the same information. And now that our offices are connected, we can share information much easier, reduce the volume of paper, and reduce the amount of time it takes to find something because we all know where it is . . . We're in a virtual environment now which I didn't think was possible for several years down the road. They made it possible and they made it painless."

"Micro Visions is an excellent company," concludes the Assistant to the City Manager. They have not only taken on and solved a lot of our problems, but they are walking alongside us like a partner. We have a vision of where we want to go and having them with us provides a certain amount of trust and confidence that we'll be able to get there because they are as excited about the City as we are."