

FAQ Article 17: Schools Telephone Replacement

What is the reason for and the amount of the request in Warrant Article 17?

The request is for \$155,000 for the first phase of replacing telephone systems throughout school and town buildings. This project has been planned in two phases with a total cost of \$340k (phase II, \$185k) which replaces eleven systems of varying types and ages, with one centrally managed system.

Why do we need this new equipment?

Telephone systems throughout municipal and school departments are in need of replacement. These systems are of varying ages and states of challenge. During FY08, a study was done by a consulting firm to determine the best course of action. Based on this report, a plan was drafted to integrate and centralize these systems. The report also highlighted a number of concerns. A particularly important safety issue is 9-1-1 calls made from some of our largest buildings because emergency personnel are not able to determine basic location information, such as where such calls are being made. Not only do we not know from which room the calls originate, but it is not possible to even determine what building, between the Middle School or High School, or the Field School and the Case House. This is a major concern to the School, Police, and the Fire Department.



The municipal and school departments would also benefit from better communication tools that provide basic services not currently available, such as caller ID, direct inward dialing without extensions, a centrally managed voicemail system with unified messaging, and the flexibility of a Voice over IP system easing frequent moves, adds, and changing in the schools.

What buildings are involved in Phase I?

This phase addresses the pressing needs of the High School, Middle School, and Case House. Why the Case House? Two reasons. One, the current system does not meet the needs of the building, and two, the system actually resides at the Field School, and we need to prepare for this to change.

The second phase will cover all other Town and School buildings.

What is included in this upgrade project?

We will be installing a centrally managed system that is able to take advantage of converged technologies such as Voice over IP for intra-district telephone communications and unified communications for voicemail integration with e-mail. We feel we can more efficiently provide service to the Schools and Town buildings with a centrally managed telephone system that allows us

to make moves, adds, and changes without the need to call in the vendor.

Most telephone instruments will be replaced, but not all. In low use locations where we currently have standard analog phones, these can be assimilated into the new system to save costs.

What about the DPW and the Field School?

The specific telephone systems for the DPW facility and Field School are not included in this project but will be included in the construction project costs. However, the core equipment of a centralized system will be established by this Article and will thus enable greater flexibility during the construction to effectively stay connected while our Town and/or School personnel may potentially be dispersed to various locations. Without this upgrade, there will be an added cost to create a temporary communication system for these projects.

What is the result for town residents?

More reliable communications. You may have noted during back-to-school nights teachers discouraging the use of voicemail due to unreliability. You may have been forwarded to nowhere while trying to reach a teacher or town office, and if you had ever left a voicemail message and never heard any response, well, the voicemail system may have never delivered your message, or done so several days later. The current system is easily overwhelmed, is not reliable, and no longer meets the needs of the schools, town staff, or residents.

What will the impact be on the annual phone bills of the Schools and Town?

We do not expect much change to the annual costs. Although we will be greatly reducing the number of individual phone lines coming into specific buildings, we will also be adding more flexible PRI and/or SIP trunk lines that are able to feed multiple buildings and create redundancy in the system.

Why now?

We are concerned about the continual problems and limitations of the High School/Middle School and Field School/Case House systems, and we need to prepare a flexible system to deal with the potential relocation of DPW and Field School personnel.

How does this relate to other future technology needs and projects?

This project has been planned in sequence with our network infrastructure upgrades. As voice communications converge with data networks, we have anticipated and planned what is needed for these projects to co-exist and complement each other as we move forward.

