

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by chairman Brian McCarthy. Present in addition to Brian were members Dustin Liukkonen, John Sauter, Jamie McaFarland and Anthony Richardson. Also present were Chuck Miller, the committee's liaison to the Town, and Pat Murphy, Welfare Administrator for the Town of Merrimack. Member Curt Conrad was absent.

The committee had previously reviewed the proposal that Merrimack participate in the New Hampshire General Assistance Program, GAP, an update to the MAPS program. The committee had asked several questions and raised some concerns. Some of our concerns had been addressed by other reviewers, notably the Town's lawyer and Primex, who handles the Town's liability insurance, but not all of our questions had been answered.

We discussed our concern about the language in the contract which permits Seacoast to charge an unlimited annual rate under certain conditions. Seacoast appears to be unwilling to provide any sort of cap on their rate. Pat assured us that, if Seacoast did raise the rate to an unreasonable amount, she would simply abandon GAP and restart her database from scratch, as she did when she started using MAPS. This would be a drastic step, but it means we are not locked in if Seacoast becomes unreasonable.

We have received no additional information from Seacoast as to how the Town's data is protected, and it does not seem likely that we will receive any. Considering the Town's obligation under New Hampshire law to protect this information, John moved and Anthony seconded this motion:

“The Technology Committee recommends to the Town Council that the Town not sign the agreement with Seacoast unless Seacoast takes responsibility for the privacy of the Town's data while it is moving from the Client provided by Seacoast to Seacoast's servers, while it resides in Seacoast's servers, and while it is moving from Seacoast's servers back to the Client provided by Seacoast.”

The motion passed 4-1-0, with Brian voting against. It was noted that “takes responsibility” would have to be turned into a proper legal term by the Town's lawyers—it might mean indemnification, for example. It was also noted that properly securing data sent across the Internet can be done using available encryption software—it is not commercially unreasonable. Only Seacoast can be sure that the encryption is properly implemented, since the data is moving between two of their programs.

On the issue of the Town having a license to run the client software, we have learned that the client can be downloaded from the Internet, but that does not mean we have a license to run it. Even free software comes with a license. John moved and Anthony seconded this motion:

“The Technology Committee recommends to the Town Council that the Town not sign the agreement with Seacoast unless Seacoast provides to the Town a license for the Client provided by Seacoast, or, if it is not possible to provide such a license, if Seacoast will take responsibility for any copyright or patent lawsuit against the Town based on the Town running the Client provided by Seacoast.”

The motion passed, 5-0-0. It was noted that Seacoast provides NHLWAA a license to run their application, which can be interpreted as including a license to run their Client. However, that license is to NHLWAA, not to the Town, and the language granting the license specifies that it is nontransferable.

At Brian's request, John will e-mail Brian the text of the motions, and he will pass them on to the Town

Council.

We had an informal discussion with Pat about the costs associated with the Town's welfare program. She said that we average about 10 cases a month, with the number ranging from about 2 to 25. There is a peak when the winter shutoff rules expire. The Town provides about \$34,000 in welfare per year in total. We have tight controls on the money: food relief excludes tobacco and alcohol, and is in the form of a voucher to a grocery store, usually Market Basket. Sometimes Pat can refer someone to the Food Pantry rather than providing a voucher. Referrals are sometimes also possible to avoid power shutoffs. When the Town pays a bill, the money goes directly from the Town to the vendor—we do not hand out cash.

Following the discussion Jamie moved and Dustin seconded the motion that we we adjourn. The motion passed, 4-0-1, with Anthony abstaining. Brian adjourned the meeting at about 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Sauter, secretary, technology committee