VITAL RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

-MINUTES-

Wednesday
November 22, 2000

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

**Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee
Meeting**

November 22, 2000

Health and Welfare Building
Conference Room 212
6 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

      William Armstrong, IT Manager, DITM Appointment
      William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
      Jane Ireland, Town Clerk Member
      Tom Janosz, Funeral Director Appointment
      David Krueger, Public Member Appointment
      Patricia Little, City Clerk Member

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

      Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Physician Appointment
      Sharon Dery, Concord City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment
      Debra Eastman, Town Clerk Appointment
      Frank Mevers, State Archivist Appointment
      Pat Seskes, Health Information Specialist Appointment

STAFF PRESENT:

      Mark Andrew, Administrator, Division of Epidemiology and Vital Statistics, OCPH
      Rick Bailey, Office of Information Systems, DHHS
      Don Gerow, Office of Information Systems
      John O'Neal, Office of Information Systems
      Melanie A. Orman, Program Specialist, DEVS
      Stephen M. Wurtz, Supervisor, Bureau of Vital Records

Approved Minutes

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

1. **Approval of Minutes:**

    The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by the chair, Ms. Little. The minutes from the September 21, 2000 meeting were discussed. Mr. Kruger made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Ireland seconded. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

2. **DHHS OIS update:**

    Mr. Gerow distributed the Vital Records Implementation Support report to the committee. The first item on his agenda was:

    Vitts Status:

    Mr. Gerow reported that IS had made no progress on the Keene firewall issue. The state has paid for two days of contractor support, worked with other states using Raptor and invested many state and city hours to no avail. The state also uses Raptor but on an NT machine, Keene uses a Sun machine. They instead decided to focus on the Manchester and Nashua sites and within a week, they were going through firewall with no problem. Keene has been having problems with their firewall other than just with our software for some time and is currently looking into a new firewall setup.

    Ms. Little confirmed that they are indeed working on appropriating money from the city council to get a Cisco firewall system. It may take up to a month for the money to be freed up. The state is also moving to a Cisco firewall system. IS had hoped it would be up and running by now, but because of other system/equipment failures and repairs, it has been placed temporarily, on the backburner. Ms. Little asked about a timeline for having it up and running. Mr. Bailey said it is already in place but is running prototype (couldn't make out second word), and he is not sure when they will cut over. IS is hoping for the first of the year. The changeover is expected to be seamless. To help ensure this IS plans to do tests with each of the cities before switching over. IS is moving away from Raptor because its not scaleable.

    At a meeting in August, Vitts was asked if they collected data they could share with the state regarding usage and availability. They offered to put routers on their lines to gather and track the data requested. However, they put one of the routers on the wrong line, so we have only received reports for Concord and Rochester at this point. The Manchester/Nashua data is expected Monday 11/27/00. Ms. Little inquired about the numbers Mr. Gerow reported last week and asked if they included Manchester and Nashua. Mr. Gerow explained that the Concord information reflected all the incoming on the T1, which would include Manchester and Nashua, but we won't have any information focusing specifically on the Manchester/Nashua usage until early next week.

    Mr. Bailey added that when the figures from Manchester and Nashua are reported, there are no surprises expected. The T1 (Concord) numbers combine all the incoming information, to give an aggregate total. If the volume from Manchester and Nashua had been significantly higher, the T1 would have shown it. Don wants to see the Nashua report, as it has the smallest pipe (144). Judging by the current volume, the 144 appears to be sufficient.

Approved Minutes

Mr. Gerow explained that Keene showed them the firewall issue was much more difficult that previously thought. Vitts has asked how we set up our firewall. Furthermore, the firewall vendor has asked how we do our setup, so that when they go in to a customer's site, they can use this configuration as an example.

As mentioned previously, router utilization is now being tracked. The following is a sample of the information IS has received from Vitts:

- For November 17, Concord availability was 100%. "In" utilization at 0.40% and Out at 0.89%

- For November 16, Rochester availability was 88.5%, In utilization at 0.36% and Out at 0.15%

Mr. Gerow advised the committee to keep in mind those figures only reflect the line availability and did not take into account any problems we may have encountered with our database.

Ms. Little asked if we have to go back to the Executive Council about the Vitts Contract and what is the timeline. Mr. Bailey mentioned that the paperwork is at Vitts awaiting a signature for the second time. Apparently there was a mix up the first time the package went there. When it goes to Governor and Council it must be filled out accurately. Ms. Little asked about the discount period. Mr. Bailey pointed out the pilot is running through Dec. 31 and the option will run through June 30, at the same discounted rate.

To competitively acquire a comparable service, we will do a RFP. ISDN works well, but the Verizon standard tariff is expensive. Frame relay is also very expensive, DSL (Vitts) works very well when it is up and running. They each have slightly different bandwidth offerings. What we will probably do is say "We want a bandwidth capacity of 100K, which is slightly less than the 128 configuration of ISDN, and slightly less than the 144 configuration of DSL. He doesn't think it would be in our best interest to pick, if we want a solution that gives us 128, we don't want to just throw DSL out, when either one will work. Mr. Bolton's crew has put together their list of the current towns and those in the next wave.

We will not be able to require our vendor to install DSL at every town office in the state. It would be much too expensive, and DSL is not available everywhere yet. We will probably have several levels, some mandatory, like those offices that are already automated. Followed by the list of the sites we have scheduled for the next phase of the roll out. And finally, ask the vendor to inform us where their service is available and how much it would cost the state to include offices in those areas.

Mr. Bailey suggested the biggest question is whether or not this is just a DHHS initiative or is it a state initiative. John feels it will be a state initiative because there are currently three (DMV, EDU, and DHHS) agencies going out to municipalities. John feels we could have a draft of the RFP by March. Mark Andrew asked when the RFP process should begin if we anticipate July 1 as the date we will have the funds for web enablement. Mr. Bailey stated that the RFP can be worked on after the new version is released. Mr. Armstrong added that if the indications are very positive that the funding will be there, we should know by the beginning of June. Until the budget bills are passed we cannot sign a contract. Ms. Little asked where the web enablement is right now. It has not gone through DITM yet. A request for funding has been submitted. The

capital budget program is run through the Dept of Transportation. Our request is # 4 on the department list. Our program is looked upon favorably by the governor. A gentleman on Governor Shaheen's IT task force supports our program and stated that it is a program that deserves support. Ms. Little asked if we should be lobbying for it. Mr. Armstrong suggested Linda Hodgkins at the governor's office. Mr. Bailey mentioned that right now, may not be the best time as they realigning committees.

Mr. Bolton asked who will coordinate it if it becomes a statewide initiative? Mr. Armstrong informed him that Mark and Tim Pack will administer the funds. It was agreed they would have to get together with Bill, Don and all the other interested parties. Mr. Armstrong wanted to elaborate on his earlier statement about RFP's. He added both RFP's should have drafts ready for spring. In his opinion, the one for telecommunications needs to go out no later than the first of May, maybe even the end of March. He feels there should at least, be a draft for the other at that time. It will be competitive, not a contract amendment. So if ManTech wins it they get it, if not, so be it. He then asked if there was a chance ManTech would give us a discount for helping them with the R & D on web enabling this product. Mr. Bailey said that is not something we would be interested in.

Help Desk:

Mr. Gerow indicated that half of the help desk calls for October can be attributed to the user's modems (connectivity problem) database firewall modems may have been down, or their user ID or password is missing from their dial up and they didn't type it back in correctly. Additionally, the users may have installed some other software that overwrote necessary settings and configuration files.

Ms. Little suggested preparing a handout or some other tool to help users decide when it is necessary for them to call for help, use manuals, regional experts, or to visit the web site. Mr. Bolton explained that a letter had been sent to all users, outlining their responsibility. The letter advised users about all the options available to them.

Ms. Little questioned whether it would be helpful to share these reports with users, hoping that seeing how many repeats there are might make them take a little more initiative to fix the problem themselves. Mr. Gerow explained that a knowledge base is being built with our Help Desk provider. He also explained that when there is a major outage a message will play for the user, informing them of the outage. Mr. Bailey added that the Call Center is under the impression that the clerk has already been through the knowledge base and are still experiencing problems. Mr. Bolton asked if knowledge base is available to the general public. Mr. Bailey replied that no, it is internal only.

Mr. Kruger suggested we have someone do a presentation to try and curb the number of unnecessary calls to Seneca. Mr. Janosz asked how he can help lower the number of Funeral Directors appearing on the Help Desk report. Funeral Directors will be meeting next Wednesday from 3-5 p.m. As a Funeral Director member of the Advisory Committee, he feels the issue needs to be addressed. Mr. Gerow gave an example of one user who didn't reference any of the help material before calling for help. Steve Wurtz, Don Gerow or Bill Bolton will attend the Funeral Directors' meeting.

Furthermore, Mr. Janosz offered that email notifications would be beneficial when the system is expected to be down. Mr. Wurtz mentioned that Vital Records faxes the information when there

is going to be an outage and Mr. Janosz feels it would be much quicker to send an email and has been discussing it with Mr. Bolton. Funeral Directors are doing license renewals in December and the application requires a current email address. Ms Little asked if the clerks need to be notified by email as well. The consensus was that "planned outages" did not generally affect clerks' offices. The Funeral Directors work off-hours and are generally affected by these outages.

VRV2000 Users Meeting:

At the recent VRV2000 Users' Meeting, Mr. Gerow discussed the new VRV2000 installation CD-ROM. He also demonstrated it and took the users though the enhancements and installation. He explained that the CD is self-executable and he described some things to be aware of with the new installation, such as: The new local database, table lock-downs, and making adoptions available in the clerk area. He also went over some old issues.

VRV2000 New Build:

OIS has received and begun testing the new version of VRV2000 software. There are 275 functions on the new version. Because there are multiple configurations of Windows machines out in the field (95, 98, Millenium, NT), multiple versions of Office (97, 2000) and multiple versions of ODBC drivers (3.5 and 4.0) there is much testing to do to assure compatibility. IS has to check all the configurations to ensure the software will work in all offices and on all platforms.

IS is finding some data integrity problems with the new version. Affidavits of Paternity are not going in with the record. It asks the question if you want to do one but then doesn't take you to make one. The new software will run with Windows 2000, but needs Oracle 8 to work. Oracle 8 will not be released until the new VRV software is released. The new version also uses version check to ensure the user is using the most up to date version of the software. If they are not, it instructs them to log in after they have loaded the latest version. The only problem is it is being checked in the Access database, which is not what was asked for, so that is being corrected.

Although the software has already shown that it is compatible with Office 2000, Mr. Gerow has already found 130 errors and still has over 100 functions to test. He also found that ManTech created a new database and variable that we do not want. He wants to avoid the problem we encountered two years ago when we had to convert to a new database and users had a hard time doing this.

Ms. Little is concerned that her office is switching over to Office 2000. She has tried to hold them off, but doesn't think she will be able to hold off until the New VRV version is in. Mr. Gerow explained that the entire state is Office 2000, except Vital Records. Because we do not use Office 2000, we get no technical desktop support

Mr. Gerow advised Ms. Little to hold off installing Office 2000 until the new software is released. Her staff has told her that it would not be a problem. That all IS would have to do is come and adjust the drivers. Mr. Gerow informed her, the problem is within the application and there is nothing that IS could do. Trying to make sure it is ready to go when it is released.

ManTech is working on the errors and OIS is hoping to be able to bring the new version to users to check out in December, and then roll it out in January. It is important to let the users test it,

then correct the errors the users find, prepare the software to load, burn CD's, and package and ship them. OIS will have to arrange for the Database Administrator to actually bring down the old database (in use now), export all the data, go out and create a new oracle 8.15 database and import all the data back in and that is a big job.

Mr. Armstrong asked why we don't require all users to use the same software packages to run VRV2000. Mr. Bolton pointed out that we had established a policy of letting the user load whatever he/she felt was necessary as long as it did not interfere with the VRV software. Mr. Gerow added that they all have different hardware and software requirements (i.e. prayer card software for the funeral homes). Mr. Janosz explained that with software such as prayer cards, upgrades are available. Mr. Gerow pointed out that we can direct them to do whatever we want, but that does not ensure compliance. This is generally not a problem with clerks as we have provided their hardware and software. Mr. Armstrong feels we may encourage incompatibility by not requiring specific software be used. If we were to require the same software be run, the users would be more uniform and certainly cut down on problems.

Mr. Armstrong asked if our becoming web enabled would eliminate most of the problems. The answer is "Yes", but that is a year or two away at this point. It will have multiple ODBC driver capabilities, so we will not be tied to just one. Microsoft is now making its updates more compatible. When we do become web enabled, we will only have to worry about the browser software and the printer.

Data conversion:

The state file number application that was all set to go into production, has now fallen back a step because we upgraded to the new Oracle 8 format and had to reload the information into the database. OIS still has plans to do some data collection transfer, but a strategic plan for harvesting needs to be established. OIS has migrated a test database from the old AVRIS data and gotten it into an Access database, so we are certain that the transfer program can handle this source of data.

3. **New Expenditures:**

For the consideration of the Committee, Mr. Bolton presented a list of new expenditures that will be debited from the Vital Record Improvement Fund account in order to provide support for the equipment out in the field. Ten HP printers, 10 internal zip drives, 5 hard drives and 200 WinInstall licenses will be purchased. The printers, hard drives and zip drives will be for replacement for mal-functioning city and town clerk equipment. The 200 "WinInstall" licenses will be needed to continue to rollout Phase I of VRV2000. Ultimately 234 cities and towns will be added. The "Windows Millennium" license is needed to evaluate the ability of the most recent version of VRV2000 to operate in this newer Windows environment.

Ms. Little asked if we have funds in the budget for this equipment or if there needed to be a vote. Mr. Bolton informed the committee that his presentation was for informational purposes only, that there is money in the budget for this expenditure.

4. **Divorce Data Overview:**

There are 2 data sets that do not receive extraordinary scrutiny in the Vital Records office and they are marriage and divorce. The Bureau does not provide that information to federal reporting

agencies, so there is less of a need to query it as often or as completely as our birth and death data. Vital Records has not had a divorce clerk for several years. Mr. Bolton mentioned that there are around 1000 data queries a year and the Bureau has fallen greatly behind in correcting this data for errors. In a random quality audit, staff found a tremendous number of errors and missing information. Furthermore, a city clerk does not complete the divorce paperwork, and there is a lack of uniformity and quality control. The clerk of the court, lawyers, or even pro se fills out the divorce forms with the information they have, which may not be complete.

The Bureau is targeting the years 1999 and 2000, with 1999 taking priority. Melanie Orman will aid in the reconciling of these records by travelling to courthouses around the state, pulling these records and filling in the blanks. Ms. Orman will also represent Vital Records to the courts, seeking to establish a positive relationship. The courts have avoided getting too familiar with the Bureau in the past because they are unsure about ownership of the information and they do not have the VRV automated software. Many of them are now more automated. We are looking at possibly 25 courts that will be visited. Mr. Bolton mentioned that rolling out VRV2000 software to the District and Superior court clerks was part of the original five-year plan.

5. **New Chairperson:**

Mr. Bolton stated that the election of a new Chair of the VRIFAC was in order. He further described the bylaws that were laid-out last year that set the term of a chair for 1 year, and that there were no "term limits" for this position – as long as a person was a member of the committee. Ms. Ireland made a motion to maintain Ms. Little as chair. Mr. Kruger seconded and there was unanimous approval.

6. **Other Business:**

The next meeting will be January 18, 2001. Mr. Kruger stated that he will not be able to attend the January meeting.

Seeing no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by William Bolton.

Approved Minutes

vrifac November 22, 2000 min.doc