



810 Union Street, Room 402
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
(757) 664-4732

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Patrick
Patricia Harrison

FROM: Pete Rodda

DATE: June 1, 2020

RE: Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan

This document is an addendum to the Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan for the Real Estate Assessor's Office. The purpose of this addendum is to explain the interrelationship between the laptops, Mobile Assessor and SpatialEst Community requests. The other requested items speak for themselves.

The REA Office works with the public at property locations throughout the city, within the office at our public counter, through emails and telephone calls, and at the Board of Review during appeals. We gather a massive amount of information on-site in the normal course of our appraisal duties. We must analyze this information repeatedly to produce annual reassessments, defend appeals, and respond to the dozens of public requests for information we receive each month. Our work is dependent upon a robust GIS environment in which appraisal information is updated in real-time. The pandemic has presented significant – but not insurmountable – challenges to our work.

Our office has been very successful in working remotely only because we insisted that our appraisers and GIS staff take their desktop computers home. Had we not done so our appeals would not be handled, new construction would not be appraised, and the city would be suffering additional revenue losses. While the desktops at home are a reasonable temporary solution, it creates gaps in our functionality because the appraisal and GIS staff can only work from home. It is impractical to lug desktops, monitors, a keyboard, and mouse back and forth. Equipping the staff with replacement laptops with docking stations, dual monitors, keyboards and mice for home and the office allows a laptop to be used from either home, office, or even in the field if internet is available through a MiFi or hotspot. For these reasons, our primary request is that we replace the desktops with laptops.

The Mobile Assessor software/hardware remote access to a significantly higher level. The vendor prefers and bids iPads as the device of choice for this option. Our request as submitted envisions the replacement of desktops with laptops AND the purchase of Mobile Assessor with iPads. Fraser Picard suggested we consider Dell notebook PCs with docking stations as an alternative to purchasing iPads for staff members that would use Mobile Assessor. We are certainly open to this idea and are willing to

replace the desktops with Dell notebooks for appraisers using Mobile Assessor - if Mobile Assessor is compatible with Dell notebooks.

Virtually all assessment offices have embraced GIS technology to intersect information from other departments or agencies with assessment records. This allows a much-expanded analysis of information that affects the marketability and value of properties. The four primary influences affecting value are physical, environmental, governmental, and social. GIS applications enhance the ability to gather this type of information to promote the analysis of these influences. If we must work remotely, the more information we have directly available to our appraisers and GIS team lessens the need to visit City Hall or track down staff members from other offices. The Community product from Spatialest is the best software solution I have found to meet these needs and more.

All of these items promote an enhanced ability to work from remote locations, spend less time on site, work more efficiently when in the field, perform better analysis whether remotely or in the office, and provide land-related information quickly regardless of the work location. With these tools we could fundamentally change the way we do business regardless of pandemics or natural disasters.