

SULTAN CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

ITEM NO: A-1

DATE: July 9, 2009

SUBJECT: Comcast Phone and Internet Service Proposal

CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Knight, City Administrator

ISSUE:

The issue before the City Council is to authorize an agreement with Comcast to change service providers from Verizon to Comcast for phone and Internet service. Comcast phone service would be provided via cable (digital voice).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement (Attachment A) with Comcast for phone and Internet service.

SUMMARY:

On May 28, 2009 the City Council discussed a proposal to change from standard phone service through Verizon to digital voice service through Comcast. The Council directed staff to return with an agreement for approval.

Staff presented an agreement for Council approval on June 25, 2009. The City Council had technical questions regarding the Comcast digital voice service including how voice-mail would be provided and emergency phone service for the elevator and fire alarm. Under the proposed service agreement, incoming calls would be routed through the city's existing phone hardware and software systems. This includes the city's voice-mail services. The fire alarm and elevator alarm would retain the hardwire phone service through Verizon.

The key change is that main in-coming lines ("hunt group") to the city's phone hardware and software would be transferred to Comcast digital voice. Out-going calls, with the exception of elevator and fire alarm systems, would be routed through the city's hardware and software systems and travel through Comcast's cable system. Because Comcast doesn't provide voice-mail at this time, incoming calls to the City's direct dial numbers would come into the City's hardware system and voice mail via Verizon. Outgoing calls would be routed through the hardware and software to Comcast cable.

The saving to the City comes from the unlimited long-distance provided by Comcast. The majority of the City's phone expenses is the .17 per minute charge for Verizon long-distance. Because of Sultan's location, the majority of calls are long-distance calls. The benefit of having both Verizon and Comcast is the redundancy. The downside of Comcast is that service is dependent on electricity. When the power "fails" there is no phone service. Under the staff proposal, the city would retain service even during a power outage through the Verizon direct dial connections.

Comcast technical representatives will be at the meeting on July 9, 2009 to answer additional questions regarding the proposal to switch to digital voice.

BACKGROUND:

Comcast is offering business phone and Internet service. The Comcast representatives provided a quote (Attachment B) for phone and Internet service to City Hall for a flat rate of \$548.65 per month including both unlimited local and long distance calls. Similar service would need to be negotiated for the public works shop, waste water treatment plant and water treatment plant.

Verizon is the City's current phone and Internet service provider. An analysis of the phone and Internet invoices shows the City could save approximately \$600.00 per month by switching to Comcast. The primary savings would be the elimination of long-distance calls. Currently the City pays .17 per minute for long-distance during peak periods.

Under a contract with Comcast, the City would continue to use its existing phone hardware and software. There may some ancillary costs associated with changing providers. Verizon may continue to provide service for the fire alarm, elevator and direct dial in-coming calls. These costs would be identified during final negotiations with Comcast.

City staff are seeking Council direction and interest in continuing negotiations with Comcast.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City pays approximately \$1,200 per month for Verizon basic local and long distance phone and Internet service for City Hall. There are separate phone and Internet service lines to the public works shop, waste water treatment plant and water treatment plant which are approximately \$500.00 per month.

The City has the opportunity to negotiate with Comcast and potentially reduce the City's phone and Internet service costs by approximately 50%.

DISCUSSION:

There are pros and cons with switching phone and Internet service providers. Perhaps the biggest issue is cost versus reliability. While Comcast offers a better price with unlimited long-distance calls at no charge, some users have reported problems with reliability. The Comcast phone service has been on the market since 2006 so some of the major issues have been resolved. An August 2006 article titled "Comcast Digital Voice vs. Verizon Phone Service" (Attachment B) offers an analysis of the problems and benefits of both companies. An Internet search of Comcast versus Verizon for this agenda cover indicates Comcast service is still an issue for some users.

The main benefit is the cost break offered by Comcast. City staff would seek to negotiate a long-term contract with parameters, such as the consumer price index, for any proposed price increases during the life of the agreement.

The Comcast proposal could save the City up to \$12,000 per year. The question is whether the short-term difficulties with changing providers and any long-term difficulties with service and reliability are worth the cost savings.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with Comcast for phone and Internet service.
2. Do not authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with Comcast and direct staff to areas of concern.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with Comcast for phone and Internet service.

ATTACHMENTS

- A – Comcast Business Class Service Order
- B - Comcast Digital Voice Vs. Verizon Phone Service



BUSINESS CLASS SERVICE ORDER AGREEMENT

Account Name: City of Sultan

ID#: 2200224

CUSTOMER INFORMATION (Service Location)

Address 1 319 MAIN ST City Sultan
 Address 2 Main Building State WA
 Primary Contact Name Deborah Knight ZIP Code 98294
 Business Phone (360) 793-2231 County _____
 Cell Phone _____ Email Address deborah.knight@ci.sultan.wa.us
 Pager Number _____ Primary Fax Number (360) 793-3344

Technical Contact Name _____ Tech Contact On-Site? No
 Technical Contact Business Phone _____ Technical Contact Email _____
 Property Manager Contact Name _____ Property Mgr. Phone _____

COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS SERVICES

	Selection (X)
Business Class Voice	X
Business Class Internet	X
Business Class TV	

Service Term (Months)	36
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COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS SERVICE DETAILS

Business Class Voice*

VOICE SELECTIONS	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Full Feature Voice Lines	8	\$39.95	\$319.60
Adtl. F.F. Voice Lines w/ pkg.			
4+ Lines	0	\$24.95	\$0.00
Basic Lines	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fax Lines	0	\$24.95	\$0.00
Toll Free Number			
Voice - eMTA Equipment Fee	1	N/A	\$5.00
VOICE OPTIONS	Selection(X)	Total Cost	
VoiceMail	0	\$0.00	
Directory Listing Suppression Fee			
Auto-Attendant			

*Voice offers & options not available in all markets.

Business Class Internet*

INTERNET SELECTIONS	Selection(X)	Total Cost
Starter		
Preferred		
Other: Deluxe	X	\$189.95
Internet Equipment Fee		
INTERNET OPTIONS	Selection(X)	Total Cost
Microsoft Outlook Office Email	X	Included
Web Hosting - Starter	X	Included
Web Hosting - Business		
Web Hosting - Commerce		
Web Hosting - Professional		
Static IP - 1		
Static IP - 5	X	\$9.95
Static IP - 13		

*Internet selections & options not available in all markets.

Business Class Packages

Package Name: _____

PACKAGE DESCRIPTION

Business Class TV*

TV SELECTIONS	Selection(X)	Package Upgrade	Total Cost
Basic			
Information & Entertainment			
Standard			
Preferred			
Music Choice Standalone			
TV OPTIONS	Selection(X)	Total Cost	
Sports Pack**			
Music Choice W/Business Class TV			
Canales Selecto			
Other Programming			
Other Programming			
Other Programming			
TV OUTLETS	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Additional Outlets			
HD TV Box Charges			

*Not available in home offices or public view establishments. TV selections & options not available in all markets.

**Available for Information & Entertainment, Standard & Preferred TV offers only.

COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS TOTAL SERVICE CHARGES

Business Class Installation	Selection(X)	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Installation Fee	X	\$250.00	\$250.00
Voice Activation Fee*	X	\$0.00 /Line*	\$0.00
Auto-Attendant Setup Fee			
Voice Jack Fee			
Toll Free Activation Fee			

*Per line activation fee, up to four (4) line maximum charge.

Total Installation Charges:* **\$250.00**

* Does not include Custom Installation Fees Referenced Below.

Total Monthly Services Charge	\$524.50
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Promotional Code (if applicable) _____
 Less Discount (if applicable) \$0.00

Total Recurring Monthly Bill:* **\$524.50**

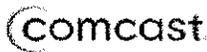
*Applicable federal, state, and local taxes and fees may apply.

CUSTOM INSTALLATION AND CONSTRUCTION ADDENDUM*

As set forth in Section 2.6 of the Comcast Business Class General Terms and Conditions, Comcast has determined that Custom Installation is necessary for the service Location described above as follows:

Total Custom Installation Fees:	<u>\$0.00</u>
Less Fees Paid by Comcast*:	<u>\$0.00</u>
Fees Due Comcast:	<u>\$0.00</u>

*Any Custom Installation Fee amount absorbed by Comcast must be immediately paid by you to Comcast if the applicable Sales Order is terminated prior to the end of the Service Term. Please sign below to agree to these Terms and Conditions.



BUSINESS CLASS SERVICE ORDER AGREEMENT

Account Name: City of Sultan

ID#: 2200224

COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS INTERNET CONFIGURATION DETAILS

Microsoft Office Communication Services

Microsoft Office Outlook E-mail Included with Internet Service		Equipment Selection	D3.0 IP Gateway
Business Class Internet: Starter	2 Full Access	Business Class Webhosting	No
Business Class Internet: Preferred	4 Full Access	Transfer Existing Comcast.net Email	No
Other: Deluxe	8 Full Access	Number of Static IP's*	

*If 5 or 13 Static IP's are requested a static IP justification form is required.

COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS TV CONFIGURATION DETAIL

Outlet Details	Location	Outlet Type	Additional Comments:
Outlet 1 - Primary			<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div>
Outlet 2 - Additional			
Outlet 3 - Additional			
Outlet 4 - Additional			
Outlet 5 - Additional			
Outlet 6 - Additional			
Outlet 7 - Additional			
Outlet 8 - Additional			

OUTLETS 9 & UP	QUANTITY
Analog	
Digital	
HDTV	

COMCAST BUSINESS CLASS VOICE CONFIGURATION DETAILS

Phone #	Type	Voicemail
3607932231	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607932232	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607931706	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607931721	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607933277	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607931262	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607930304	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No
3607931168	Full Featured, Unltd LD Voice Line	No

Customer Equipment

Phone System Type (Key System, PBX, Other)

Phone System Manufacturer

Fax Machine Manufacturer

Alarm System Vendor

Point of Sale Device

Telco Closet Location

Toll Free #	Calling Origination Area	Associated TN

Hunt Group Configuration Details

Hunt Group Features Requested (Yes/No)

Hunt Group Configuration Type

Hunt Group Pilot Number

Directory Listing Details

Directory Listing (Published, Non-Published, Unlisted)	Published
Directory Listing Phone Number	3607932231
Directory Listing Display Name	City of Sultan
DA/DL Header Text Information	Publicity Service
DA/DL Header Code Information	00536800
Standard Industry Code Information	

Additional Voice Details

Caller ID (Yes/No)	Yes
Caller ID Display Name (max 15 characters)	City of Sultan
Call Blocking (Yes/No)	No
Auto-Attendant (Yes/No)	No

GENERAL SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

This paperwork goes with WB# 2200834

CUSTOMER BILLING INFORMATION

Billing Account Name	<u>City of Sultan</u>	City	<u>Sultan</u>
Billing Name (3rd Party Accounts)	_____	State	<u>WA</u>
Address 1	<u>319 Main Street</u>	ZIP Code	<u>98294</u>
Address 2	<u>Suite 200</u>	Billing Contact Email	<u>carolyn.eslick@ci.sultan.wa.us</u>
Billing Contact Name	<u>Carolyn Eslick</u>	Billing Contact Phone	<u>(360) 793-2231</u>
Tax Exempt?*	<u>No</u>	Billing Fax Number	<u>(360) 793-3344</u>

If yes, please provide and attach tax exemption certificate.*AGREEMENT**

1. Agreement. This Comcast Business Class Service Order Agreement sets forth the terms and conditions under which Comcast Cable Communications Management, LLC and its operating affiliates ("Comcast") will provide the Services to Customer. This Comcast Business Class Service Order Agreement consists of this document ("SOA"), the standard Comcast Business Class Terms and Conditions ("Terms and Conditions"), and any jointly executed amendments ("Amendments"), collectively referred to as the "Agreement". In the event of inconsistency among these documents, precedence will be as follows: (1) Amendments, (2) Terms and Conditions, and (3) this SOA. This agreement shall commence and become a legally binding agreement upon Customer's execution of the SOA. The agreement shall terminate as set forth in the Terms and Conditions (<http://business.comcast.com/terms-conditions/index.aspx>). All capitalized terms not defined in this SOA shall reflect the definitions given to them in the Terms and Conditions. Use of the Services is also subject to the then current High-Speed Internet for Business Acceptable Use Policy located at <http://business.comcast.com/terms-conditions/index.aspx> (or any successor URL), and the then current High-Speed Internet for Business Privacy Policy located at <http://business.comcast.com/terms-conditions/index.aspx> (or any successor URL), both of which Comcast may update from time to time.

2. Each Comcast Business Class Service ("Service") carries a 30 day money back guarantee. If within the first thirty days following Service activation Customer is not completely satisfied, Customer may cancel Service and Comcast will issue a refund for Service charges actually paid by Customer, custom installation, voice usage charges and optional service fees excluded. In order to be eligible for the refund, Customer must cancel Service within thirty days of activation and return any Comcast-provided equipment in good working order. In no event shall the refund exceed \$500.00.

3. IF CUSTOMER IS SUBSCRIBING TO COMCAST'S BUSINESS CLASS VOICE SERVICE, I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE E911 NOTICE :

E911 NOTICE

Comcast business class voice service ("Voice") may have the E911 limitations specified below:

* In order for 911 calls to be properly directed to emergency services using Voice, Comcast must have the correct service address for the Voice Customer. If Voice is moved to a different location without Comcast's approval, 911 calls may be directed to the wrong emergency authority, may transmit the wrong address, and/or Voice (including 911) may fail altogether.

* Voice uses electrical power in the Customer's premises. If there is an electrical power outage, 911 calling may be interrupted if the battery back-up in the associated multimedia terminal adapter is not installed, fails, or is exhausted after several hours.

* Voice calls, including calls to 911, may not be completed if there is a problem with network facilities, including network congestion, network/equipment/power failure, or another technical problem.

* Comcast will need several business days to update a Customer service address in the E911 system. All change requests and questions should be directed to 1-800-COMCAST. USE OF VOICE AFTER DELIVERY OF THIS DOCUMENT CONSTITUTES CUSTOMER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE E911 NOTICE ABOVE.

4. To Complete a Voice order, Customer must execute a Comcast Letter or Authorization ("LOA") and submit it to Comcast, or Comcast's third party order entry integrator, as directed by Comcast.

5. New Telephone numbers are subject to change prior to the install. Customers should not print their new number on stationery or cards until after the install is complete.

6. Modifications: All modifications to the Agreement, if any, must be captured in a written Amendment, executed by an authorized Comcast Senior Vice President and the customer. All other attempts to modify the Agreement shall be void and non-binding on Comcast. Customer by signing below, agrees and accepts the Terms and Conditions of this agreement.

CUSTOMER SIGNATURE	
By signing below, customer agrees and accepts the Terms and Conditions of this Agreement. General Terms and Conditions can be found at http://business.comcast.com/terms-conditions/index.aspx .	
Signature:	_____
Print:	_____
Title:	_____
Date:	_____

FOR COMCAST USE ONLY	
Sales Representative:	<u>Mark Wright</u>
Sales Representative Code:	<u>4077</u>
Sales Manager/Director Name:	<u>Ricardo Pruneda</u>
Sales Manager/Director Approval:	_____
Division:	<u>West</u>
Lead ID:	<u>2200224</u>

Account Name: City of SultanID#: 2200224**LETTER OF AGENCY**Please print or type the following information. **All blank spaces must be completed.**Billing Name ("Company"): City of SultanBilling Address: 319 Main Street Suite 200City: Sultan State: WA Zip: 98294

If Company is switching its current phone number(s) to Comcast, please print the telephone number(s) and the name(s) of Company's current local and long distance phone service providers in the spaces below.

Area code(s) and telephone number(s) Company wants switched to Comcast (you may also insert a number range, e.g., 215-555-0000 thru 215-555-9999):

Telephone Number	Current Local Provider
3607932231	Verizon
3607932232	Verizon
3607931706	Verizon
3607931721	Verizon
3607933277	Verizon
3607931262	Verizon
3607930304	Verizon
3607931168	Verizon

Please read the following information:

The undersigned is an authorized representative of the Company. Company chooses Comcast for all its landline calling needs across town, across the country and worldwide for the telephone number(s) listed above (if applicable). Company understands that Comcast will take the place of its current landline phone service provider(s) for local, local toll, and long distance services. Company understands that, for each of these services, it may designate only one provider per service for any one telephone number. Company also understands that the service provided by Comcast includes all distances, which means that Company may only designate one provider for all of its calling needs for any one telephone number.

The undersigned signature on this form authorizes Comcast to act as Company's agent in making the changes from Company's current service provider(s), and to switch Company's telephone number(s), listed above (if applicable), to Comcast. Company understands that its current service provider(s) may charge a fee to switch its service to Comcast and that Company may consult that provider as to whether a fee will apply.

Please sign here:

Authorized Representative's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Authorized Representative's Name (Print): _____

Authorized Representative's Title (Print): _____

Account Name: City of Sultan

Workbench # 2200224



	Telephone Number	Ported or Native	Current Provider	Voice or Data Line	Publis hed Y/N	Directory Listing Display	Hunt Y/N	Hunt Sequence	Rolls to this line if Busy	# of Rings Before VM	Call Waiting* Y/N	Call Forwarding* Y/N	Block Internatio nal Y/N	Block Caller ID Y/N	Private Numbering Plan (is last 4 digits of phone #)
Line 1	(360) 793-2231	Ported	Verizon	Voice	y		y	1	2	n	y	n	n		
Line 2	(360) 793-2232	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		y	2	3	n	n	n	y		
Line 3	(360) 793-1706	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		y	3	4	n	n	n	y		
Line 4	(360) 793-1721	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		y	4	5	n	n	n	y		
Line 5	(360) 793-3277	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		y	5		n	n	n	y		
Line 6	(360) 793-1262	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		N	x	x	n	n	n	n		
Line 7	(360) 793-0304	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		N	x	x	n	n	n	n		
Line 8	(360) 793-1168	Ported	Verizon	Voice	n		N	x	x	n	n	n	n		

Special Instructions

Customer will be responsible for contacting current Vendor to disconnect old services after comcast installs new Service

Customer Signature
By signing below, the customer agrees and accepts that the information on this phone configuration addendum is accurate. And that they authorize that the Comcast Business Class Digital Voice phone service will be set per the above configuration.
Signature:
Name:
Title:
Date:

Business Rules to Remember:
* Telephone Number's with Hunting can not have Call Waiting and Call Forwarding
Only Primary Telephone Number is listed in Yellow Pages
All Telephone Number's will display the same Caller ID information
Fax/ Data Lines have no features except Caller ID
Caller ID will match Directory Listing listing up to 15 Characters
Private Numbering Plan
<i>Extension Dialing within Hunt Group- Use # and last 4 digits of phone number</i>

Phone Vendor or IT Contact Name:	
Phone vendor or IT Contact Number:	
Current phone system, brand, etc:	
Fire Alarm - vendor if applicable:	
Security Alarm - vendor if applicable:	
Location of phone closet:	

Comcast Digital Voice Vs. Verizon Phone Service

Comparing a Fairly New Broadband Phone Service with the Old Reliable Classic Telephone Company (August 30, 2006)

By Sean Watts

Takeaways

- ☞ Comcast Digital Voice is slightly cheaper than Verizon
- ☞ Verizon has much better overall quality, but with worse customer service
- ☞ Comcast Digital Voice was a relatively new service, there is much room for improvement

Verizon is, for lack of a better term, “your father’s Oldsmobile.” Around for decades in various incarnations and identities, Verizon is the good old reliable standby. The traditional service, simply plug a phone into the nearest jack and voila: we have contact.

Comcast Digital Voice, on the other hand, is part of the new school. Using next generation technology, Comcast Digital Voice allows the customer to bypass many of the usual aspects of phone service, including toll calling and other fees. Due to the fact that the service is administered through the Internet, it potentially allows Comcast to offer more features for less.

The keyword is potentially. Unfortunately, Comcast Digital Voice is not nearly the price break it should be, especially when you considered that Comcast offers their own high-speed Internet service product. Unlike some of their broadband phone competition, they can keep everything “in house,” which would theoretically allow for some discounts. To be fair, Comcast does offer some introductory specials for Comcast Digital Voice, but they always come with a time limit, at which point the service then jumps back up to its usual \$39.95, which is the same price that Verizon charges for their free long distance phone service. Granted, Comcast Digital Voice has more features than Verizon offers at that same price, but Verizon has an edge in service that more than makes up for any additional cost.

As far as the product was concerned, Verizon was always fairly reliable. One would always know what to expect. By contrast, Comcast Digital Voice was discouragingly inconsistent. Often, calls were either dropped or flat out missed completely. And at times when the connection actually help up, sometimes we had to deal with a loud crackling sound, as if you could hear something being electrocuted. A particularly frustrating experience was often exacerbated by the inferior service Comcast offered.

Now, to be fair, at the time Comcast Digital Voice was a new service for both them and us. More than a few times I was asked to be patient as they continued to try working out whatever issues and problems popped up. The first couple times, I was willing to be nice. However, when the same issue keeps coming up and coming up repeatedly within the span of a few months, patience can easily be exhausted. What made matters worse is that any tech they sent out seemed either unsure of the issue or would provide simply a band-aid solution for that particular problem, which never really resolved anything. Of course, it was only a matter of time before whatever issue I had contacted them about would rear its ugly head again.

Of course, none of the above issues actually deals with the one dilemma when using a broadband Internet phone service. Namely, if you lose your Internet connection in any way, whether via power outage, a modem problem, or any type of issue that causes you to lose service, you will unfortunately lose your phone service as well. Now, this is not an issue that is

unique in any way to Comcast Digital Voice. Indeed, each broadband phone service provider I have had has dealt with that issue. However, when you combine that fact with the various issues listed above, one can easily say that Verizon offers better value for slightly more cost.

The only issues I have had with Verizon is in dealing with their customer service representatives. Sometimes, I get lucky and get someone knowledgeable, fast and effective. But at other times, I get someone who is chomping at the bit to get off the phone for whatever reason, whether that is lunch or break or end of day, whatever. I have worked in customer service before, so I do have some sympathy, but that only stretches so much. It was one of the reasons I am constantly looking to upgrade my phone service. I would be willing to say that Comcast Digital Voice service representatives were more service-oriented than Verizon's, yet the effectiveness of the Comcast Digital Voice reps was limited by their lack of knowledge of their product.

All that being said, I would still prefer Verizon's phone service to Comcast Digital Voice. When Comcast's only advantage is Verizon's relatively poor customer service, well, that is not enough to make up the difference in quality. I would much rather deal with bad customer service with reliable phone service then constantly need to speak with friendly representatives on a cell phone because the Digital Voice service is hiccupping again. Sometimes, the old way is the best way.