



Finance & Personnel Committee
Meeting Agenda
Thursday, March 28, 2024 | 6:00 PM

Stanwood-Camano School District
Administration Building Board Room
26920 Pioneer Highway, Stanwood, WA 98292

Agenda

1. Strategic Plan
2. Public Records Request Management Software



**CITY OF STANWOOD
Finance Committee
STAFF REPORT**

ITEM NUMBER:

DATE: March 28, 2024

SUBJECT: Strategic Plan

CONTACT PERSON: David A. Hammond, Finance Director

ATTACHMENTS: A – Finance Department Strategies

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to brief Committee members on the Finance section of the Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND

The finance department has updated strategies in line with city Vision, Mission and Values.

ANALYSIS

Developing specific strategies in line with city vision, mission and values helps to ensure staff pursue goals and objectives in agreement with city council and citizen priorities.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends discussing proposed strategies and offering staff feedback.

Stanwood Strategic Plan Finance Department Elements



Mission, Vision and Values



Our Mission

The Mission of the City of Stanwood is to create and maintain a community where people can live, work and play in an environment that is safe, vibrant and aesthetically pleasing. Stanwood: is inclusive of everyone, includes the community in its decision-making process; enables a thriving local economy, provides transparent government, and is responsive to the needs of the community.

Our Vision

Promote historic downtown Stanwood as the commercial and cultural heart of the Greater Stanwood/Camano region while strategically planning for future growth and economic development opportunities of the entire City.

Values



The following core values represent the desires of the community provides a common basis for developing and implementing the City's Strategic Plan:

- **Sense of Community**: Retain the City's strong sense of community by fostering a family friendly culture that protects the area's natural beauty, celebrates its rural roots, promotes local businesses, encourages community events, and provides spaces for people to work and play.
- **Livability**: Continue to make Stanwood a desirable place to live by investing in the historic downtown, new uptown commercial areas and residential neighborhoods to create an esthetically pleasing community.
- **Mobility**: Stanwood should provide for all forms of multi-modal transportation, including includes trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit and private vehicles.

Values



- **Growth**: Apply adaptive in-fill growth management strategies to meet population and employment targets by providing a range of housing types and business opportunities that fosters a healthy community while conserving our adjacent rural lands.
- **Economic Development**: Focus on retaining the city's role as the center of the Greater Stanwood area by pursuing new endeavors that support the downtown and leverage Stanwood's location as an urban center surrounded by world class agricultural land.
- **Environment**: Protect the environment while promoting access and tourism to local natural features.
- **Parks**: Develop a parks system that provides public spaces for all age ranges that bring people together to create a more vibrant, healthy and equitable community.

GOAL: Financial Stability, Efficiency and Accountability



Strategy: Evaluate, develop and maintain financial policies and procedures to provide clear guidance and ensure compliance.

Strategy: Simplify manual processes to drive efficiency and effectiveness, and for preparation for transition to digitalization

Strategy: Develop dynamic and forward-looking financial information to proactively support capital and operational planning.

GOAL: Financial Stability, Efficiency and Accountability



Strategy: Define a reporting structure to ensure timely review of information and identification of issues requiring action.

Strategy: Support continual learning through staff development plans, training and certification opportunities.

Strategy: Identify and leverage the benefits of different work modes to implement a flexible work structure that is fair, equitable, agile and effective.



**CITY OF STANWOOD
Finance Committee
STAFF REPORT**

ITEM NUMBER: 2
DATE: March 28, 2024
SUBJECT: Public Records Request Management Software
CONTACT PERSON: David A. Hammond, Finance Director
ATTACHMENTS: A – NextRequest Brochure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is to brief Committee members on selection of a Public Records Request Management Software.

BACKGROUND

The city council authorized staff to implement public records request automation in the 2023-2024 budget. Staff had proposed developing this within the Laserfiche software acquired in 2022. However, this proved more difficult than anticipated, and staff now proposes the use of “off-the-shelf” software.

ANALYSIS

After conceding that developing a request portal and work automation using Laserfiche was too expensive, other options were evaluated, including the option to continue to process and document records requests manually. Given the complexity of the process, the inefficiency of working manually, and the significant costs of non-compliance, staff discarded this option.

Staff then inquired of colleagues and found three primary players in this market. Nearly all of our peer cities utilize one of the three. Two firms stood out and staff requested demonstrations from the two leading providers. Staff found them similar, although NextRequest stood out as it appeared more straightforward, and also the city received a significant discount because the firm is owned by Civic Plus, the provider of our website and our social media archiving firm.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends purchasing the NextRequest software.

<p>Fiscal Impact This item is included in the 2024 budget as \$4,000. However, the proposed cost is \$8,691 in year one, \$9,588 in year two, with annual increases at 3% each of the following three years.</p>

The CivicPlus® NextRequest Records Request Portal Solution

Increase efficiency, elevate compliance, mitigate risk, improve public trust, ensure security, and streamline end-to-end records request management with an all-in-one, centralized solution.





“Before implementing NextRequest, [records requests] took either the full 10 days or we had to ask for extensions.”

– Deputy City Clerk, Fairfield, CA

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Why Choose CivicPlus

CivicPlus is a trusted technology company dedicated to empowering government staff and powering exceptional digital experiences for residents. With a comprehensive suite of solutions that combine to form THE Modern Civic Experience Platform, we strive to create one-stop, frictionless interactions that delight residents and help staff collaborate and work efficiently. As a result, government administrations that choose CivicPlus realize greater trust and satisfaction among their community members.

Backed by over 25 years of experience and leveraging the insights of more than 850 team members, our solutions are chosen by over 10,000 global entities and are used daily by over 340 million people in the U.S. and Canada.

Those entities and people appreciate our:

- Award-winning customer support
- Bundled discounting opportunities
- User-friendly, cloud-based software
- Modular, integrable software options
- Solutions that scale by need and budget
- Customer-driven roadmap for technology enhancements
- 99.99% uptime and AWS-secure data storage



Increase Efficiency

Optimize the entire records request management process from request to release.

Lose the paper trail and go digital. CivicPlus' NextRequest solution is a public records request management software purpose-built for government entities of all sizes to:

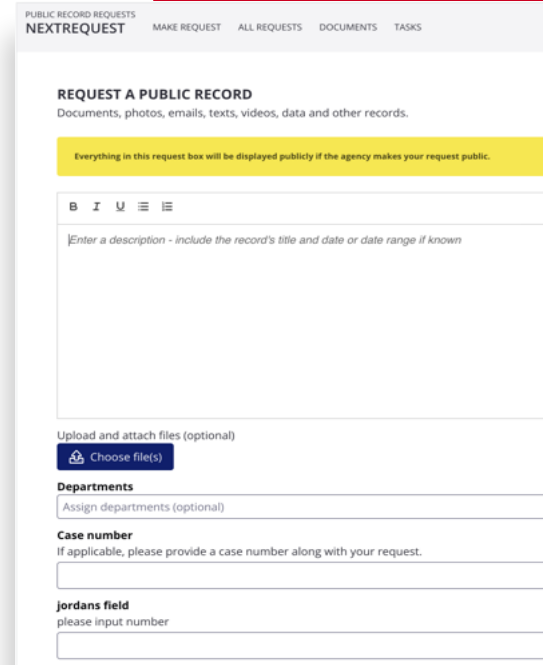
- Empower the public to self-service and pay online, submitting records requests through an easy-to-use digital portal.
- Divert requesters by publishing requests for repeat items and leveraging real-time keyword alerts on the intake page to redirect requesters to areas where information is already available (like on your CivicPlus website).
- Route requests to staff automatically, track fulfillment progress, auto-detect and redact sensitive information at the individual and batch levels, and release records to requesters or the public at large with ease.
- Fulfill public records requests in a timely manner, even as the number, frequency, and complexity of requests grow annually.
- Centralize records request management in an all-in-one solution, providing a single historical record. Instead of working from a spreadsheet to track, Adobe® to redact, a file-sharing program to collaborate or send records, email to communicate, etc., everything is done from a centralized platform.
- Customize recurring and ad-hoc reports and leverage visual dashboards to identify trends.
- **Coordinate across departments, set roles, and configure request routes with automated workflows.**

Save your team hours every week by automating your workflow with [NextRequest's RapidReview module](#). RapidReview helps you extract files, redact across documents, leave comments, automate redaction logs, and autosave work as you go – improving redaction and review efficiency by allowing for collaboration, drafting, batch redacting, and record staging.



“NextRequest has saved me time, paper, and worry about staying up to date with the status of each request.”

**– Director of Communications,
Judson Independent School
District, Live Oak, TX**





Elevate Compliance

Increase process efficiency and accuracy to reduce errors effectively and improve compliance.

Since 1967, The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has allowed the public to request records from federal agencies. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have similar laws and statutes that may include different requirements and exemptions. To ensure compliance, it's vital for local governments to understand their state's laws and statutes.

Adopting an automated, all-in-one system, like the CivicPlus NextRequest solution, helps local governments improve the efficiency and accuracy of their records request management processes, effectively reducing errors to improve compliance. The CivicPlus NextRequest solution supports this by providing agencies the ability to:

- Track records requests, communications, and document production for proof of compliance.
- Detect and redact sensitive information, such as social security numbers, emails, and phone numbers, automatically.
- Leverage batch redaction, even across hundreds of documents or emails.

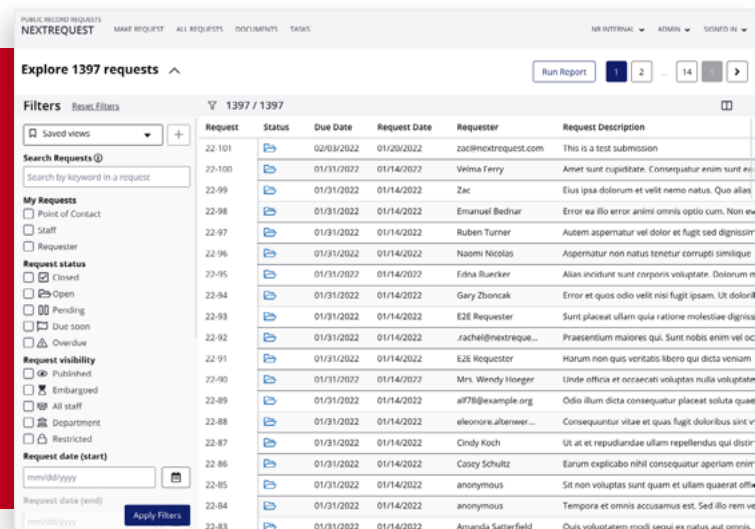
- **Maintain a clear audit trail so staff always know the status of requests.**

In the event of an accountability audit, having easy access to all public records is crucial. If public records are in a state that hinders access to freely available information, an agency may be held accountable for failing to protect public resources and could face consequences for non-compliance.



"Prior to NextRequest, we struggled with tracking, time management, and redactions."

– Municipal Clerk, The Borough of Belmar, NJ





Mitigate Risk

Safeguard against litigation, fines, job loss, negative public perception, and more.

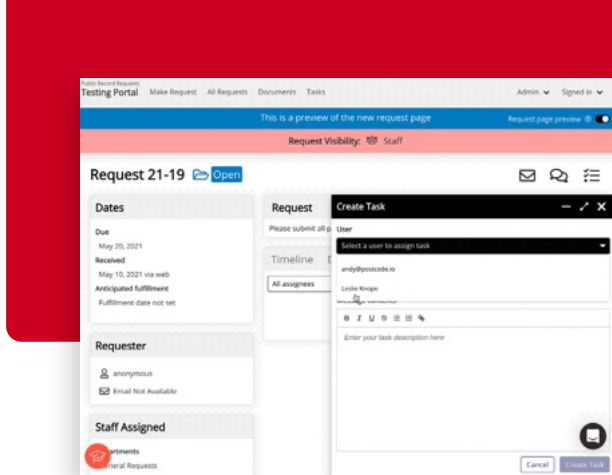
No matter what an agency's governing state public records laws are called (e.g., FOIA, APRA, Right to Know), non-compliance creates risk. This can occur in many ways, including but not limited to:

- **Missed records requests and deadlines for supplying information** – Non-response to records requests can damage your administration's reputation with residents. Even something as simple as a missed deadline can have costly consequences. In 2021, the City of Jackson, MS was fined \$170,397.50 to cover the legal fees of Gray Television after taking more than a year to fulfill a public records request. With the CivicPlus NextRequest solution, you can automate reminders to help staff stay within legal timeframes and set custom notifications to ensure nothing gets missed.
- **Inefficient payment processing** – When payment is required, inefficient payment processing can slow down the delivery of requested information, indirectly causing non-compliance. With the CivicPlus NextRequest solution, you can accept payments online, send and track invoices, and calculate staff billable hours, costs, and due dates automatically.
- **Decentralization** – Clerks and other agency staff do their best to respond to requests, but sometimes they get let down by a separate team responsible for helping to respond. This is one of the dangers of decentralized records request management. With [NextRequest's Risk module](#), you can leverage a single, all-in-one risk assessment dashboard that offers a centralized view of all documents across your portal, including their risk level, review status, and insight information, to coordinate and track reviews and handoffs across teams.
- **Failure to capture every record from social media** – Agencies must easily produce social media content if there is a public records request for it. Gaps in social content archival open agencies up to risk. In 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a \$185,000 settlement after a lawsuit alleging the LA County Sheriff's Department failed to adequately respond to a request for public records. The good news is that CivicPlus has an additional solution to cover the need to archive social content.



“When you only have a short amount of time because it's not the only important part of your job, you need the big tools to help you do it and see it more clearly.”

– eGovernment Services Coordinator, State of Iowa





Improve Public Trust

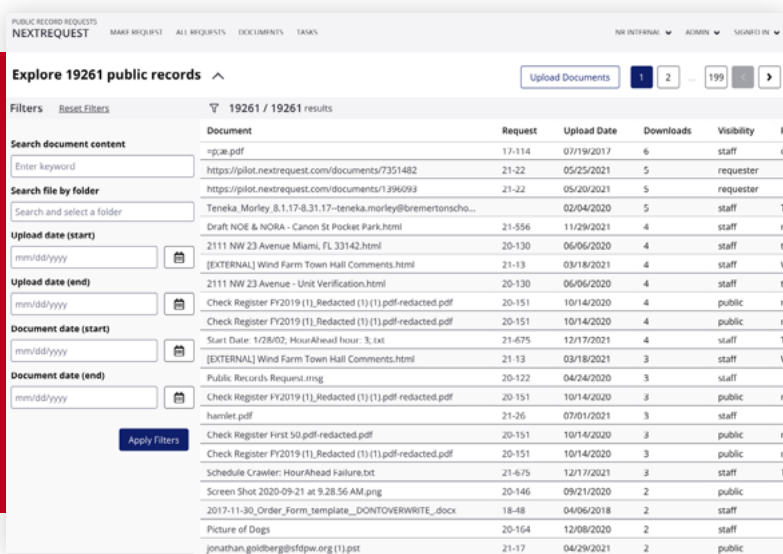
Embrace transparency to grow public trust.

Agencies must track in detail each request from start to finish. If there is a compliance issue, it is often because an individual does not feel a government agency is being transparent. Anything agencies can do to provide more information and greater transparency is important.

Preemptively publishing the public information that is most likely to be requested increases efficiency and transparency. Publishing information post-request, when appropriate, also increases transparency.

An agency's entire records request management process needs to give the public what they're looking for: information easily accessed and delivered. If an agency's software simplifies and streamlines the process of granting requests, individuals in the community will be more empowered and engaged.

At the same time, agencies that demonstrate efficiency and compliance with records requests through the use of software like the CivicPlus NextRequest solution meet public expectations for modernization in today's digital age. Demonstrating efficiency and compliance also builds credibility and trust. A CivicPlus study conducted with over 15,000 residents reveals that public trust increases with quicker response times by agencies



"NextRequest allows us to meet the mission that the City has always had, to be transparent and to be open and to provide what we can."

- Records and Cemetery Manager, City of Orlando, FL



Ensure Security

At CivicPlus, we encrypt all data at rest and in transit, map to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) security rule controls, and complete an annual Systems and Organization Controls 2 (SOC 2) audit. In addition, the NextRequest solution's online payment capabilities are PCI-compliant.

- **Encryption** – All data is encrypted at rest using AES-256 and in transit using TLS v1 .2. Documents can only be accessed through a valid token that expires. For data, we encrypt in transit using TLS 1.2 and AES-256 at rest.
- **Application and Data Storage** – The CivicPlus NextRequest solution stores and manages data in highly secure data centers operated by AWS, which implements industry-leading security measures. AWS' certifications include ISO 27001, FISMA, and SOC. All data is hosted in the United States. NextRequest uses Amazon S3 to store customer image assets and documents.
- **Backups and Redundancy** – Data is backed up daily, weekly, and monthly. We maintain redundancy to prevent single points of failure, are able to replace failed components, and utilize multiple data centers designed for resiliency. We also have a step-by-step plan in place to take precautions and minimize the effects of a disaster.
- **Updates and Patches** – NextRequest uses a software-as-a-service (SaaS) delivery model. This means customers are always using the most up-to-date version of the application and don't have to wait for new releases, including security updates. Development is conducted on a two-week cycle.
- **Single Sign On (SSO)** – NextRequest can add SSO integrations like Active Directory and OAuth to improve password security and access controls across the enterprise organization, and it supports Okta or any SAML-based SSO.



"What's not to love? The ease of use, the functionality, the updates that are provided, the efficiency!"

– Clerk/Manager, Township of Eastampton, NJ





Take the Next Step

Community members trust that their government agencies will promptly deliver the services they need while operating in their best interests. CivicPlus solutions build trust by fostering consistently positive digital experiences for community members and local government staff alike. As a result, the thousands of government agencies partnering with CivicPlus streamline operations, save money, and improve civic engagement. But don't just take our word for it.

Explore the CivicPlus NextRequest solution firsthand. After all, seeing is believing:

[Request a Demo Now](#)

Still shopping around? We get it: This [20-question checklist](#) helps ensure you consider every critical factor before signing a contract with a new software vendor.

