

STAFF REPORT

To: Asheville City Council Public Safety Committee Date: August 26, 2014
Via: Gary Jackson, City Manager
From: Scott Burnette, Fire Chief
Subject: Agreement and Ordinance to use a third party reporting system for fire protection systems data.

Summary Statement: The Asheville Fire Department relies on third party monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, and annual inspection reporting from third party agencies to ensure all fire suppression, fire detection and other life safety systems installed in commercial establishments are up to date and functioning correctly. The reliability of all systems proves essential for proper life safety needs and property conservation requirements, which in essence assists with maintaining a healthy tax base. The proper operation of all fire related systems also helps cut down on false alarms and the need for costly “fire watch” conditions in businesses. Unfortunately, due to the state mandated inspection frequencies, the Fire Marshal’s division may only visit a facility once every three years (or at most, annually) to review and confirm requirements are being met. History proves that many businesses fail to comply with third party inspection mandates and only comply after a fire inspection notes the deficiency.

Review: Brycer, LLC and their proprietary “Compliance Engine” software desires to provide a service to all commercial occupancies in the City of Asheville to collect, organize and store all code-required third party inspection and testing records. Their automated service would give the City of Asheville Fire Department the ability to receive automatic notification when requirements are delinquent and need attention. This item and the attached amendment to the City’s Ordinance are being proposed to authorize the use of third party proprietary software in this process.

Pros:

- The Compliance Engine automates the delivery of third party inspection and testing reports for fire and life safety systems.
- The City can access the database anytime to review and respond to inspection requirements.
- It provides the City a more comprehensive and accurate reporting system.
- Other municipalities in North Carolina are using the same system.
- This is a proprietary solution, similar to using the Knox Company for our premise key control system, provided at no cost to the city.
- The inspected premise will not be billed nor are they responsible for submitting the reports via the Compliance Engine; their inspecting contractors will submit the required documents and pay the fees.

Cons:

- There will be a charge from the vendor to the affected inspection service of \$10.00 annually per each fire system reported on; however, monthly, quarterly and semi-annual reporting within the same service year will not incur additional fees.

Fiscal Impact: There is no negative budget impact for the City.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Asheville City Council Public Safety Committee recommend approval of an ordinance which authorizes the Fire Department to utilize third party proprietary software to track and manage commercial fire system inspection, maintenance and testing requirements.

Attachments: Ordinance
TCE Agreement