SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH THE PHONE SYSTEM CONVERSION TO PACIFIC BELL CENTREX

SOURCE: Administrative Services

COMMENT: The City of Porterville currently owns and operates a PBX Telephone Switch with a 300 line capacity. This system is approximately 20 years old and is at capacity. Another feature of the existing system that requires attention is the voice mail system. This was not year 2000 (Y2K) compliant, and does suffer some date related problems as a result. The age of the system and capacity limitations have created a need to secure alternative telephone services to ensure City offices maintain adequate access. To identify the best replacement system, a detailed analysis of alternatives was conducted in 2001.

It was determined that a decision to replace the aging PBX Telephone Switch with a new one would again, at some point, present the City with capacity issues, and increasing maintenance contract costs for repairs.

Staff also investigated an alternative system offered by Pacific Bell known as the Centrex System. This system is the most common phone service utilized by larger organizations in California and the San Joaquin Valley, including Porterville Unified School District, Porterville College, Sierra View District Hospital, and the County of Tulare. This option will eliminate any capacity issues in the future, and will cost approximately 50% less than a PBX Switch upgrade with maintenance contracts.

The cost of the conversion to Centrex is approximately $55,500.00, and has been appropriated in the Equipment Replacement Fund. If approved, the conversion will take place in the month of January, and will allow the City to maintain its existing telephone numbers.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council authorize staff to proceed with the telephone system conversion to the Pacific Bell Centrex System.

Item No. 4