

JACKSON



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COUNCIL VOTES TO CHANGE MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM SAVING TAXPAYERS ROUGHLY \$20,000 PER YEAR

JACKSON, MI - Jackson City Council voted Tuesday, Oct. 3, to cancel the city's annual contract with Blackboard Connect and enter into a one-year agreement with Jackson County to use CodeRed Next beginning in December, saving the city of Jackson \$19,666 general fund dollars.

Since 2013, the city of Jackson has utilized a mass communication system through Blackboard Connect to notify citizens of emergencies and provide public outreach for non-emergency related events and issues. The current annual contract costs the city \$29,616 per year. The new agreement would cost the city of Jackson \$9,950 per year.

Through an inter-governmental agreement between Jackson County and the city of Jackson, the city stands to save a considerable amount of general fund dollars by using the county's system that provides the same services to area residents, public information officer Will Forgrave said.

"For all intents and purposes, the County's mass notification system provides the same support to city staff as well as the same tools for public outreach to area residents," Forgrave said of CodeRed, primarily used by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. "The only difference is the cost, which is considerably less."

The most recent contract between the city and Blackboard Connect is set to expire Dec. 18. Under the contract, the city is required to notify the company of its intention to cancel the agreement on or before Nov. 17.

Forgrave said the city and county now have time to work toward a smooth transition, including staff training and the transfer of current contacts on Blackboard Connect to the county's CodeRed system.

"We are excited to partner with the city of Jackson on this very important project," Jackson County Sheriff Steve Rand said. "Not only does this partnership save money, but it raises efficiency. The sheriff's office has a long tradition of working with the city of Jackson whenever we can seize the opportunity."

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