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Memo

To: Brian Hitchcock

From: Monica Lynn and Brian Hudson

Date: September 28, 2011

Re: Assessment of Public Safety Information Systems Implementation

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In 2008, Scott Emergency Communications Center (SECC) hired DELTAWRX to facilitate the selection of an information system to support consolidated dispatch operations and a multi-agency law enforcement records management system. The SECC Selection Committee selected New World Systems (NWS) to provide a multi-discipline and multi-agency computer aided dispatch (CAD) and mobile computing (Mobile) system, as well as a Law Enforcement Records Management (LERMS) and Field Reporting System.

SECC cut over to live operations in the spring of 2011. Since the cutover to live operations, SECC and SECC agencies, including Davenport and Bettendorf Police and Fire Departments, Scott County Sheriff's Office and Scott County suburban and rural police and fire agencies, have experienced frustration with the resulting product. Patrol officers are angry and have lost confidence in the software. Agencies are devoting time, energy and resources to working with NWS to fix and test broken software. The frustration level of the Davenport Police Department is so high that it is threatening to revert to its legacy software application. Bettendorf and some rural agencies have already reverted to using Mobile Cop to run NCIC queries in the car.

Recently, SECC requested DELTAWRX review of the status of the implementation and make recommendations on how to move forward. In addition to conducting interviews on-site with representatives from SECC, Davenport Police Department, Davenport IT, Bettendorf Police Department, Scott County Sheriff's Office and rural police departments, DELTAWRX has reviewed a number of documents, including, but not limited to:

- NWS Release Documentation
- NWS Regression Test Plan and Deployment Schedule
- SECC Case Tracking from NWS

- SECC Release Manifest from NWS
- Minutes from the weekly SECC CAD/RMS Resolution Group Meetings
- Contract between SECC and NWS
- NWS invoices sent to SECC

We also conducted follow-up phone interviews and exchanged follow-up emails with SECC and SECC agency employees to verify information, and spoke with Kent McIntyre and Andrew Hittle of NWS on two occasions.

By any measure, the implementation of the NWS applications has not been successful. The software does not work to the specifications proposed, end users are frustrated and angry, administration is devoting already scarce resources and time to fix something that should not be broken and accountability for problems is almost nonexistent. Multiple events contributed to the unsuccessful implementation; however dwelling on the past to place blame is not a useful exercise if SECC and SECC agencies want to move forward and create a productive environment with software that functions as promised. All agency representatives with whom DELTAWRX spoke, as well as Andrew Hittle from NWS, expressed a desire for the system to work. Some people did express doubt that it would be possible to fix the problems and others are concerned that end-users will never accept the NWS software, even if it works as intended.

After speaking with SECC and SECC agency representatives, reviewing the background information and discussing options with NWS, DELTAWRX believes that it is possible to resurrect the project and progress toward successful outcomes. The path will not be easy for SECC, SECC agencies or NWS, and it will require commitment to success from all involved parties. Although we do not advocate looking back for the purpose of finding blame for the current situation, what happened in the past to bring SECC and SECC agencies to this point in time does bear on our recommendations for moving forward. As such, we begin with a discussion of key factors leading to where SECC and SECC agencies are today, and use this information to develop practical steps that SECC, SECC agencies and NWS can take to create a successful implementation in a strong multi-agency environment.

Key Factors Contributing to Current Situation

The paragraphs in this section discuss eight key factors contributing to the current situation:

- Expedited implementation
- Unstructured functional testing
- Ineffective system build sessions
- Condensed training
- Software that does not meet contractual obligations
- Ineffective customer support from NWS
- SECC support structure

- Vague information system management structure

Expedited Implementation

Despite warnings to the contrary, SECC moved forward with a 14-month implementation schedule for systems that typically take 18-24 months to implement under the best circumstances. While it is possible to implement a system in this condensed timeframe, the margin for error is much less than in a longer implementation period. To expedite the implementation, short cuts were taken; training was compressed and systematic testing was not conducted. When the system was cut over to live operations, NWS had not yet developed key software modules and interfaces and promised functionality was missing or not working as intended.

Unstructured Functional Testing

Testing does not appear to have been conducted according to the contract. According to Task #16 of the Statement of Work (Exhibit M of the Contract), CAD, MDS, AFR, LERMS and all defined interfaces should have been tested for up to 60 days. NWS was to demonstrate software functionality, including customizations and modifications, and the customer was to document each discrepancy between the software and the agreed upon test plan. A test plan was not developed, or at least no one with whom DELTAWRX spoke was aware of the test plan.

Further, NWS and SECC did not conduct any systematic testing; agencies conducted informal testing on their own in a test environment. When agencies found problems, they reported them, and NWS did fix the problems. However, because 1) the agencies did not test every component of functionality that they would use in the live environment, 2) key functionality, including interfaces, was missing, and 3) not all law enforcement operations were represented on the project team, many problems did not surface until after the system was in a production environment and being engaged in a realistic manner.

NWS admitted that testing was not conducted according to plan and indicated that because of the tight implementation schedule, both parties agreed to take some shortcuts.

Since the cutover to live products, NWS has released over 50 fixes to address issues that SECC agencies are experiencing with the NWS software. Neither SECC nor NWS has used a methodical approach to testing the fixes. The fixes were sent to the workstations, both desktop and mobile, and users were supposed to install them upon receipt. Gloria Fitzpatrick, the SECC Technology System Coordinator, would send emails to the agencies asking them to test the updated software and inform her of any issues. Feedback was ad hoc and it is not clear how the software fixes were tracked.

For the next upgrade, SECC set up a test environment at the communications center last week and conducted the most systematic testing that has occurred to date. Agencies were asked to send people to test the software. Gloria Fitzpatrick, with the assistance of SECC dispatchers, developed workflow scenarios to test the software. In the past, software that worked in a test environment performed differently in the production environment. SECC will not sign off on the test results, which for the most part were positive, until the functionality has worked in the live environment.

Of almost 400 outstanding issues, only about 35 were addressed with the update. At this point, there is no organized documentation showing what functionality is missing or not working as intended, and NWS has not shared a logical plan for fixing all the outstanding software issues.

Ineffective System Build Sessions

Agency representatives expressed dissatisfaction with the system build sessions provided by NWS. They felt the NWS build team was disorganized and did not have one person overseeing the process who understood the software from a global perspective. The NWS trainers seemed to know only about the applications they were configuring and did not convey an understanding of the overall product workflow. The agency representatives found the build sessions for each application confusing and disconnected from each other, and never understood how information in application code tables affected the overall workflow. The representatives at the sessions were asked whether they wanted to use various features and, if so, how they wanted to set up the feature. Because they did not understand what they were doing, the representatives usually asked NWS to share how other agencies typically configure the applications. As such, it is possible that the resulting configuration does not reflect SECC agency workflows, which may be contributing to some of the frustration agencies are experiencing using the software.

SECC agencies also have some responsibility for the outcome of the build sessions. Bettendorf Police Department felt like it sent the right people to the build sessions, although it feels like this happened by luck rather than by intent since it had no direction from NWS as to who to commit and for how long. Although records personnel were involved in the build sessions, and others came and went, Scott County Sheriff's Office and Davenport Police Department each relied almost entirely on a patrol officer to make decisions for the whole agency, even for units with which they had little or no experience. Scott County had the same people involved throughout the project, but the participation team from Davenport, with the exception of the patrol officer, changed over time, further complicating Davenport's involvement in the system configuration.

Condensed Training

Although it is not clear whether train-the-trainer classes met contractual obligations, it is clear that RMS and Mobile end-users did not receive enough appropriate training and the training they did receive was rushed. Since the system was not complete (missing functionality, missing interfaces, etc.) when training occurred in the spring of 2011, NWS was not able to provide comprehensive RMS and Mobile training.

Software That Does Not Meet Contractual Obligations

The NWS software does not function as promised in the company's response to SECC's Request for Proposals or the resulting contract. First, NWS has not delivered all the functionality it said it would deliver. Undelivered items include functionality that is considered standard and part of its base system, interfaces and software modifications.

Second, software that was delivered is full of glitches that have created inefficiencies, frustrated end users and required creative alternative solutions. Third, major system components, in particular field reporting, have failed to work as expected. Reports have been lost, supplements not connected to original reports, charges dropped upon report submission, narratives removed from reports, and reports not routed to investigators from within field reports. Merge queues are backed up creating delay between report submission and entrance into the LERMS to the point where it is difficult to access a report in a timely manner, or even find the report altogether. Despite repeated promises, the NIBRS module still has not been delivered. All agencies are nervous about meeting NIBRS reporting deadlines in March, a fear compounded by the backlog of reports that need to be reviewed and coded.

Fourth, the architecture of the NWS applications has compounded the problems experienced with the application functionality. Even though SECC met network and server requirements, the software does not meet performance and reliability standards. Servers routinely crash, and the inability of NWS software to use bandwidth efficiently has caused lost reports, frozen workstations and server failures. Updates are not delivered consistently or installed automatically, causing version management issues on client computers. Reports and forms entered onto a client with an older version of the software do not save since the newer version on the server will not accept data from an older version.

Some agencies have reverted to using third party applications they used before the NWS implementation. Davenport feels it is unable to function as a police department with the NWS software and is threatening to revert to its legacy software. Other agencies have developed cumbersome alternative workflows to compensate for the ineffective technology, or are not using NWS altogether.

In addition, SECC agencies may be expecting the software to provide functionality that NWS did not contractually commit to providing. Furthermore, NWS may have an interpretation of a functional requirement that is different from what SECC agencies intended the requirement to mean. However, SECC and NWS have not conducted a systematic review of the functional requirements to set expectations of what the software should be able to accomplish, or to resolve any discrepancies in interpretations of any potentially ambiguous requirements.

Ineffective Customer Support from NWS

On one hand, NWS has provided resources to fix the software issues at SECC. NWS has devoted resources and time to develop interim fixes, respond to isolated problems and test updates. One estimate places the number of software fixes somewhere between 50 and 60. However, agencies feel that with each fix, issues are resolved only to create additional issues. All three of the larger agencies commented that they feel like they are a beta site for new NWS software.

Further, NWS requires replication before it will take a problem seriously, which is problematic since issues appear to be random to officer. Agencies feel like NWS blames the agency for software problems and when they do report a problem, they rarely receive feedback regarding whether or not NWS is working on or has fixed the problem.

DELTAWRX observed symptoms of finger pointing between NWS, County IT and the agencies. NWS blames server downtime on County IT. Because the servers were built to NWS specifications, County IT believes the servers crash because of the NWS software. Sometimes, even agencies are blamed. Last week, the mobile server was down for two hours. An agency reported the downtime to SECC, which said that CAD was working so it must be an agency problem. After other agencies reported the problem, SECC restarted the server and everything worked fine.

Most people with whom DELTAWRX spoke expected that there would be problems after cutover to live operations, as there is with any software implementation. However, they did not expect so many or the inability of NWS to handle the issues. One week after cut over to live operations, the SECC account was transferred from Kent McIntyre, the project manager, to Kim Hemphill, the Customer Service Account Manager. Shortly after cut over, Kim was unable to handle to number of problems that were surfacing and told SECC agencies to call the customer support number. Agencies reported frustration in dealing with customer support, indicating it was cumbersome, slow and impersonal. Issues were submitted to a tracking system and agencies did not hear back from NWS as to whether their problems were solved. Soon, NWS customer support was receiving calls from all the agencies and was having trouble tracking global versus individual agency issues. NWS requested that all contact with NWS go through Gloria Fitzpatrick.

Now, if an agency has a problem, it sends an email to Ms. Fitzpatrick. Ms. Fitzpatrick decides whether to notify County IT, which supports the NWS software infrastructure, or NWS. SECC is frustrated with communication from NWS. Requested and promised information is slow to come and when it does come, it is never in a consistent format. Without communication from NWS, Ms. Fitzpatrick cannot communicate progress to the agencies and agencies continue to be dissatisfied with NWS because they rarely hear back on their issues.

At the same time, people are quick to blame NWS for problems that are outside of NWS control. Some examples include the slowdown of NCIC returns (a state problem that coincided with NWS implementation), incomplete data conversion (responsibility of the agencies), unfinished interfaces (there have been challenges working with OSSI and DSI) and commercial carrier connectivity issues. However, the tendency of NWS to first blame software deficiencies on the way users operate the system, and its lack of communication back to the agencies with problem resolutions, has not helped change the overall perception that the company delivered software it should have realized would not work and that it has not been able to fix the problem.

SECC Support Staffing

All agencies and SECC expressed concern that the City and County administration never required the agencies and SECC to define a software support structure and a delineation of responsibilities for the multi-agency software implementation. Although NWS is guilty of finger pointing, so are SECC and the agencies, which is a direct result of not having a formal support agreement defining support tasks and responsibilities. Troubleshooting problems should be a shared responsibility until the source of the problem is found. At that point, SECC and the agencies should be able to refer to an agreement defining who is responsible for the problem component.

SECC and County IT appear to be responsible for providing support for the NWS applications and infrastructure. Gloria Fitzpatrick is responsible for project management, system administration, first level support, and customer and community relations, as well as holding responsibilities for other SECC functions. County IT is responsible for maintaining the NWS servers.

SECC is not staffed sufficiently to provide the levels of service and support that the NWS applications require as the agencies move into a system maintenance phase. Currently, Ms. Fitzpatrick takes care of almost everything, including setting mobile passwords. With no backup or relief, she responds to emails and telephone calls around the clock. Although agencies feel Ms. Fitzpatrick is responsive to their requests for information and submissions of software problems, they all expressed concern over having one person responsible for the whole system.

Further, responsibilities for application administration at the SECC level versus at the agency level have not been defined and agencies do not have control over local application administration. This is likely a consequence of the ineffective build sessions where these responsibilities are usually identified. Some application administration, for example defining agency permissions and local workflow configurations, needs to take place at the local level. Other application administration that affects all agencies, such as maintaining global code tables and global workflow configurations, can be managed at the SECC level. Because responsibilities have not been defined, the agencies need to rely on Ms. Fitzpatrick for tasks that should probably be handled at the agency level.

Vague Information System Management Agreement

The success of software implementation projects of the nature undertaken by SECC and SECC agencies depends in a large part on the existence of an appropriate arrangement to share responsibility for the procurement, implementation and maintenance of the systems. When multiple agencies are involved, a formal agreement specifying, at a minimum, roles, responsibilities, staffing, software support, funding mechanisms and decision making procedures is critical.

When DELTAWRX was working with SECC during the software procurement phase of this project, we raised a concern that the Intergovernmental Agreement between Scott County, Davenport, Bettendorf and MEDIC EMS did not provide sufficient detail to guide the purchase and maintenance of a multi-agency and multi-discipline software system. Other members of the SECC community raised the same concern independently. The response at the time was that Scott County, Davenport, Bettendorf and MEDIC EMS had signed an intergovernmental agreement that governed the project.

Governance of SECC and the management of a multi-agency information system have different requirements. Because SECC and SECC agencies did not agree upon the rules of engagement for procuring, implementing and maintaining the NWS before embarking on the project, the door was left open for informal leadership patterns, random or selective participation, ineffective meetings, unclear expectations and a lack of accountability. This project has suffered from a lack of leadership and accountability; DELTAWRX heard from agencies that they feel SECC is washing its hands of responsibility for fixing the software and from SECC that agencies are not taking responsibility for ensuring the proper level of participation. This project is a multi-agency project and is the responsibility of all involved participants. All entities have a stake in the outcome and have an obligation to contribute to the success of the project.

Summary

The lack of success inherent in the implementation of the NWS applications is due, in a large part, to problems with the NWS software. However, bringing the software into

conformance with contractual obligations will not be enough to create end-user satisfaction with the product, which is the ultimate measure of project success. SECC and SECC agencies will need to take active steps to reengage end-users, redefine the relationship between SECC and SECC agencies, formalize the rules of engagement and clarify expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

Recommendations to Move Forward

At this point, the project should be redefined as bringing the NWS applications into conformance with contractual obligations. NWS is committed to making its software work as promised and turning SECC into a positive client reference. To reach a successful outcome, SECC and the SECC agencies will need to make a similar commitment and accept responsibility for their role in the project outcome.

DELTAWRX designed the recommendations we present in the following paragraphs to work toward creating end-user buy-in, formalizing the rules of engagement, and clarifying expectations, roles and responsibilities. Time is of essence. Every day that end-users experience problems with the software with no resolution in sight creates a bigger hurdle to overcome before they will be satisfied with the product. We encourage SECC and SECC agencies to move forward quickly with the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Accept Responsibility for Project Outcome

The first step in reaching a successful outcome is for SECC and SECC agency leaders to agree that they are responsible and accountable for a successful product outcome. Implementation of the following recommendations requires commitment to success from the leadership in participating agencies. Commitment to success means devoting resources and energy, which we understand is difficult to request when so much time and energy has already been devoted. It also means championing the project, role-modeling engagement in the project and actively communicating goals and successes. Any withdrawal from the project at this time would be counterproductive to reaching the ultimate goal of a successful implementation in the shortest possible time.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Multi-Agency Information System Management Agreement

DELTAWRX recommends that Scott County, Bettendorf, Davenport, SECC and, potentially, MEDIC EMS, develop a formal agreement for the management of the multi-agency and multi-discipline information systems. Emphasis should be placed on developing an arrangement that defines the relationship and obligations between SECC and SECC agencies, and ensures the needs of each participant are met in a fair and equitable manner, while holding each participant accountable for its agree-upon responsibilities. It should also

address the role and status of suburban and rural agencies, which currently do not have, but should have, a formal agreement for services with SECC. At a minimum, the agreement should include staffing, roles, responsibilities, funding models and decision-making mechanisms. Other topics typically included in an agreement for the management of multi-agency information systems include:

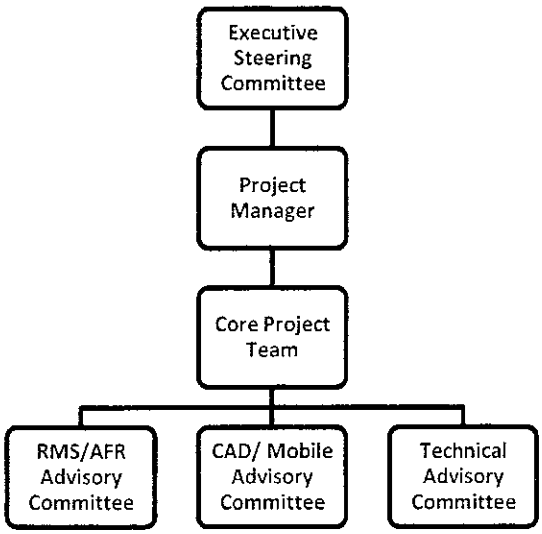
- Mission of the governing body
- Composition and structure of the governing body
- Governing body's roles and responsibilities
- Rules to ensure all agencies feel their needs are addressed in an equitable manner
- Expected contributions from each agency
- Performance expectations
- Mechanisms for the addition or withdrawal of parties from the consolidated environment
- Access to data and use of data
- Technology procurement, use and support
- Cost allocation and funding mechanisms

Recommendation 3: Create a Project Team

Creating a governance structure for information systems takes time and SECC and SECC agencies do not have the luxury of waiting until a governance agreement is negotiated before fixing the current implementation problems. DELTAWRX recommends that SECC and SECC agencies immediately create a formal project team structure that can become part of the governance structure once the entities have negotiated an agreement. Figure 1 shows a suggested project team structure.

The value of a formal Project Team is the formalization of communication and the sharing of information. Currently, misunderstandings, attributions of intentions, and communication bottlenecks characterize the SECC environment. A formal communication structure can mitigate the risk of misinformation undermining project progress. If expectations are defined appropriately, an additional benefit of a formal Project Team is involvement in remaining project tasks, which creates end-user buy-in, competency in software use and a system configured to accommodate SECC agency workflows.

Figure 1: Recommended Project Team Structure



The Executive Steering Committee, which should include Police and Fire Chiefs, the Sheriff, representatives from the suburban and rural agencies, and the MEDIC EMS Director, is responsible for overall project guidance, including championing the project in this case the use of the software, committing resources and making policy decisions regarding the use of the system. Executive Steering Committee Members are responsible for ensuring that the Core Project Team members in their agencies select subject matter experts that are able to represent the functional units of their agencies. The Executive Steering Committee should convene at regular intervals, with the SECC Director if the topics concern CAD. Although weekly meetings can be a burden, the more frequent the Executive Steering Committee can commit to meeting, the better the communication will be between the agencies.

Currently, the Project Manager is Gloria Fitzpatrick. Her responsibilities for the duration of the project should be limited to coordinating efforts of individuals, committees and other project resources, overseeing daily project activities, coordinating work with NWS and tracking project activities, deliverables, issues and resolutions. DELTAWRX will discuss system support in another section.

The Core Project Team should include one or two representatives from each SECC agency, as well as someone from the suburban and rural agencies to represent their interests. It is likely that the representatives will also participate in the Advisory committees. We recommend that the representatives come from Operations and Records units and not include IT personnel, who should participate in the Technical Advisory Committee (see below). The role of Core Project Team members is to make decisions that are better made by functional users of the system rather than IT support personnel. The Core Project Team

and the Project Manager should meet as needed, at least weekly, for the remainder of the project.

The Core Project Team will be responsible for testing the software, reviewing software configuration and communicating project progress to the rest of the agency. The Core Project Team members will also be responsible for identifying subject matter experts within their agencies to serve on the Advisory Committees and for engaging those subject matter experts (with the assistance of the Executive Steering Committee members) in project tasks. They will be need to coordinate communication between the Project Manager and the Advisory Committees, and will be expected to become "super users" of the software and capable of training other end users and acting as a source of information for other agency members having trouble using the software.

Subject matter experts comprise the Advisory Committees. The CAD/Mobile Advisory Committee should consist of dispatchers and law enforcement, fire and EMS mobile end users. The RMS/AFR Advisory Committee should consist of representatives from the patrol (likely the same individuals who are on the CAD/Mobile Advisory Committee), investigations, crime analysis, and records units of each agency, as well as any other units that use the RMS/AFR applications. It should also include a representative from the Jail and the County Attorney's office, since both entities are end-users of the information entered into the LERMS. In addition to contributing their subject matter expertise when testing the software and reviewing the software configuration, members of the Advisory Committees are expected to bring to light issues from the broader public safety community. Advisory Committee members will be expected to become "super users" of the software and capable of training other end users, acting as a source of information for other agency members having trouble using the software. They are also responsible for assisting the Core Project Team members in communicating project progress to the rest of the agency.

Comprising the IT Advisory Committee, an information technology representative from each City, the County and SECC should be available as a resource on technical issues. They should meet regularly to share information on technical issues and identify any potential risks before they rise to the level of a critical technical problem. The members of the Technical Advisory Committee should ensure that the technical environment at each agency, as well as the overall system infrastructure, supports the selected operational solution.

Recommendation 4: Define a System Support Agreement and Support Staffing Structure

DELTAWRX recommends that the Executive Steering Committee oversee the development of a system support agreement identifying support and maintenance responsibilities for all the system components, as well troubleshooting mechanisms, service levels and expectations, and response and resolution times.

Defining a system support agreement entails two elements. The first element is to identify system components and the entity responsible for supporting those components. An example of system components and the responsible entity is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: System Components and Responsible Entity

	SECC Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
Network	– Network – Network Connection Hubs – Interface Connections	– Mobile Network – Connections to SECC – Internal Network
Hardware	– RMS/AFR Servers – Backup Servers	– Mobile Hardware – Desktop Hardware
Software	– System Software – Application Software – GIS – Interfaces – Databases	– Desktop Applications – Application Software – Agency Interfaces

The second component is to determine staff required to support each component. For example, if SECC will be responsible for application administration at the global level, we would recommend a CAD application administrator and an RMS application administrator who are cross-trained to cover rotating on-call duties, vacations and sick days. If agencies are responsible for part of application administration, the system support agreement should identify their specific responsibilities and agencies will be required to have someone trained in application administration.

Once support requirements and staffing needs have been determined, SECC and SECC agencies will be able to develop an agreement to guide troubleshooting, first and second lines of system support, maintenance responsibilities, and expected service levels. Users will know to whom to turn for help, and the support staff will be accountable for responding within the pre-determined guidelines.

Recommendation 5: Conduct a Methodical Assessment of Software

NWS is committed to making its software work as promised and turning SECC into a positive client reference. According to the people with whom DELTAWRX spoke, SECC and SECC agencies would like the same outcome. Right now, it is difficult to develop a precise picture of the status of the software. It is difficult to state which requirements have been met, which have not and require development, and which have ambiguous interpretations requiring further discussion.

To help NWS prioritize its development efforts, and to provide the agencies with an accurate assessment of the software capabilities, DELTAWRX recommends that the Project

Team work with NWS to test the functionality of its latest release, Version 9, Service Pack 8, against the functional requirements in the RFP, including customizations and interfaces.

The Core Project Team and Advisory Committee members should participate in the testing. NWS should demonstrate the software and the Project Manager, assisted by Project Team members and NWS, should document whether the software meets each requirement. Project Team members can also come prepared with specific scenarios it would like NWS to demonstrate. Once NWS and the project team members have identified all software deficiencies, the Core Project Team and NWS can develop a list of requirements that have not been met, mutually agree on the importance of the requirement for normal workflow and operations, and use that information to prioritize the deficiency and develop a plan, including a deadline, for remediation.

The Project Manager, through the Core Project Team members, should keep agencies apprised of testing activities. The Project Manager should communicate the goals of the testing process and, once testing is complete, the results and specific plans for remedying software deficiencies. As NWS makes progress toward address the deficiencies, the Project Manager should communicate these successes. By communicating goals and demonstrating progress toward the goals, the Project Team can start to build end-user confidence in the software. Further, through its involvement in testing, the Project Team will gain a better understanding of the NWS applications and may start to develop a sense of shared ownership over the software.

Recommendation 6: Conduct a Gap Analysis

It is possible that SECC agency needs have changed since selecting NWS and some of the dissatisfaction with the software comes from changing expectations. DELTAWRX recommends that SECC agencies, with the assistance of NWS, conduct a gap analysis between current agency needs and functionality provided by the NWS software. If gaps are identified, NWS can determine whether any future releases will meet the needs. If future releases will not meet the needs, NWS can determine whether the functionality required to close the gap should become part of future product development plans.

The Gap Analysis is not conducted to create any obligation on the part of NWS to provide the software or on the part of SECC to fund the development or acquisition of the software. Funding of additional software purchases should be defined within the Information System Management Agreement.

Rather, the Gap Analysis is conducted to set expectations regarding current system limitations and to create a partnership between NWS and SECC agencies concerning plans for NWS software development.

Recommendation 7: Revisit Configuration Decisions

System configuration and build sessions are most effective when best practices and business process decisions are already in place. Often vendors provide customers with worksheets or suggestions ahead of time so that participants will know how to configure the software, including populating code tables and which features to use. In a multi-agency setting, decisions regarding on global standards and workflows, as well as which features differ among the agencies, need to be made and are best made prior to system configuration.

Because these decisions had not been made before the configuration sessions, agencies were making decisions under pressure and on the fly. Often the decisions hinged on what NWS told the participants that other agencies were doing because neither NWS nor the participants understood the full impact of their decisions on the overall system.

Now that the agencies have been using the software, for better or worse, for several months and have a better understanding of how the software works, both the agencies and NWS would benefit from a review of the application configuration decisions. Core Project Team members should sit through all the sessions for a global perspective on software use. However, the Core Project Team should bring in subject matter experts from the Advisory Groups and involve them in the review of decisions that affect their work areas.

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