

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Commission on Information Technology

Approved April 9, 2025 IT Commission Meeting Minutes
7:00 – 8:30 PM

In attendance: Ricardo Alfaro, Sara Crifasi, Steve Davidson, Stephen Morris (virtual), Timothy Casey (virtual), Heather Barrows, Emily Dillard, Rhonda Syler, Brandon Mosoriak, Tom VanAntwerp

City IT Staff: Vanetta Pledger, Stacey Campbell, Yemisrach Demeke

Public/Other: Daniel Rodriguez, Francisco Ortiz Hernandez, Chris Freire, Samuel Nixon Jr.

1. Call to Order

2. Minutes

(a) Approval of the March 19, 2025 meeting minutes

- Minutes approved unanimously.
- We have two new members who will count for quorum beginning in May: Daniel Rodriguez and Francisco Ortiz Hernandez.

3. Closed Session (as needed)

- Closed session was not needed this month.

4. Public Session (as needed)

- No questions from the public.

5. City Information Technology Services Updates (Vanetta Pledger)

- City Council will finalize/adopt the budget on April 30.
- There is a possible franchise agreement coming, more info to come soon.
- Steve Chozick and Gregg Useem will present in May re: data and GIS portal.

6. Policy Discussion

(a) Presentation by Chris Freire, CivicSpend.ai, an AI-powered platform

- Samuel Nixon: Will this be available to Alexandria residents soon? CF: It is currently available, it is unaffiliated with the city.
- TC: How easy was it to get the data? CF: Arlington, TX was very easy, Alexandria's website was harder.
- RA: Did you scrape the city's website to get the documents or look specifically for them? CF: We looked specifically for them.

- RA: Was there any collaboration with the city regarding the data? CF: There were a couple of emails early on, but it was easier for the first pass to download the documents directly off the site.
- VP: Is it noted that the challenges on the site are samples/examples? CF: They were pushed to the site for the meeting; they will be unpublished.
- SD: What are the use cases for this site? CF: Publish challenges, expand the pool of qualified vendors for projects. It makes the process of working with the city more accessible. TC: Makes opportunities more accessible (some vendors are very small), makes the city a good data steward.
- SM: A use case could be a search bar on the city's website. CF: Correct, make it a widget for the city's site.
- TV: What are you doing to try and prevent 'hallucination'? CF: Cite a source for everything, you may never be able to get hallucinations down to zero.
- VP: Ethics around AI? CF: It is built on OpenAI's API, which has robust protection. It won't provide answers to anything it isn't trained on.
- ED: Is login necessary in order to interact with the site? Are there options to flag usage if there may be a threat? CF: Dashboards can be built that can flag possibly dangerous items/usage.
- DR: If the City has flagging and data tagging can the tool detect this? Will using MFA stop user impersonation? CF: MFA is a good idea. Flags would be useful to spot possible public safety issues.

7. Outreach

- Ryon Saenz and Steve Davidson are looking at topics/ideas.

8. Schedule

Proposed meeting schedule (tentative)

- Wednesday, April 9
- Wednesday, May 21

Steven Morris is leaving the Commission in May. He was thanked by the Commission for all his contributions over the years.

9. Adjournment at 8:05 pm. The next meeting is May 21.