AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

1. NAME OF ITEM: Approval to Complete Upgrade of IT Telecommunications Services, UM

2. INITIATED BY: Norman L. Fournier, Chair

3. BOARD INFORMATION:  

   BOARD ACTION: X

4. BACKGROUND:

   University Services: Information Technology is requesting approval to expend up to $2,100,000 to complete the upgrade of the University of Maine Information Technologies telecommunications services.

   In 2009, the University of Maine began the implementation of the University of Maine Information Technologies Telecommunications Services Roadmap 2010 –2015. The University of Maine’s telephone system has been in continuous service since December 6, 1991. In January of 2009, the vendor went bankrupt leaving the University of Maine with an aged system and without support. The combination of technological changes, loss of manufacturer support, and the age of the hardware in service at the University of Maine necessitated updating the technology.

   As of this writing US:IT has installed 1,380 IP telephones in 42 buildings and portions of six more on the University of Maine campus. In addition, 61 VoIP telephones have been installed at the Darling Marine Center in Walpole and 58 VoIP telephones have been installed at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast.

   Approximately 1,300 digital telephones and approximately 800 analog telephone ports remain to be replaced at the University of Maine. It is recommended that this process proceed as outlined in the attached University Services: Information Technologies’ University of Maine Voice Services Roadmap 2014 – 2016 (June 2014).

   Project expenses will include the upgrade of the local area network (LAN) wiring infrastructure in some of these buildings as well as the purchase of telephones, licenses, LAN switches, and power protection to serve these remaining locations. University Services estimates that the maximum expenditure to complete the networking infrastructure upgrade and telephone system replacement will be $2,100,000.
The University of Maine has a telecommunications reserve fund containing $1,600,000 to support this project. The work will be prioritized and managed to the reserve fund amount. However we will be looking for other funding opportunities such as grants to fund the remainder of the project, as well as reduce spending from the reserve account.

TEXT OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

That the Finance, Facilities and Technology Committee forward this item to the Consent Agenda at the July 21, 2014 Board of Trustees meeting for approval of the following resolution:

That the Board of Trustees authorize the University of Maine to expend up to $2.1 million to complete the upgrade of the University of Maine Information Technologies telecommunications services subject to review and approval of final terms and conditions by the Treasurer and General Counsel.

06/20/2014
University Services: Information Technologies

University of Maine Voice Services Roadmap 2014 – 2016 Summary (June 18, 2014)

The University of Maine Information Technologies Telecommunications Services Roadmap 2010 – 2015 (Version II, December 15, 2009) presented the University with a plan to replace 900 digital telephones in thirty-five buildings with Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephones by the end of calendar year 2015. As of this writing US:IT has installed 1,380 IP telephones in 42 buildings and portions of six more on the University of Maine campus. In addition, 61 VoIP telephones have been installed at the Darling Marine Center in Walpole and 58 VoIP telephones have been installed at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast.

The replacement of most of the remaining 1,300 digital telephones with Cisco VoIP telephones will need to follow a mixed strategy of cable replacement and cable re-use along with the conversion of some digital telephones to analog telephones. The telephones to be replaced are in 58 buildings ranging from the Small Animal Facility with one telephone to Chadbourne Hall with 100 telephones. There is an average of twenty-three telephones per building.

US:IT recommends replacing communications cabling in fourteen buildings which contain fifty-five percent (719) of the remaining digital telephones to be replaced.

To date, cable re-use strategies employed in some of our smaller buildings have been successful and Cisco VoIP telephones have been supported on independent (telephone only) Category 3 data cable. There are twenty-one buildings on campus that the US:IT staff recommends for Category 3 cable re-use. These 21 buildings contain 251 digital telephones.

Cable re-use strategies may not be effective in all cases. The condition of the existing cable plant including the lengths of installed cables may prevent cable re-use. The US:IT staff carefully considered the buildings placed in this category.

There remain five VoIP-ready buildings on campus containing 82 telephones.

In any building lacking LAN infrastructure or in buildings better suited to simple analog telephones replacing digital telephones with analog telephones may be a preferred and more cost-effective strategy.

The University of Maine System wrestled with the costs versus benefits of continuing to provide analog dial tone to the student rooms in the residence halls at the University of Maine. Many institutions of higher education have elected to discontinue telephone service to the student rooms in
their residence halls. A study performed by Ball State University in 2010 determined that 99.8% of incoming first year students brought cellular telephones to campus.

A telephone usage survey conducted in the fall of 2009 showed an 18% utilization rate for University-provided telephone service in student rooms in UMaine’s residence halls. The same survey indicated that 97% of the surveyed UMaine students considered their cellular telephone their primary communications device.

Representatives of University Services met with representatives of the University of Maine’s Auxiliary Services group in February of 2014 to discuss the future of University-provided telephone service in student rooms in UMaine’s residence halls. Central to this discussion was an analysis of the options and costs associated with replacing the existing analog telephone service in student rooms. Representatives of both organizations reached an agreement to target the beginning of Fiscal Year 2016 for cessation of analog telephone service to all student rooms in the residence halls at the University of Maine.

The elimination of the need to purchase the equipment to provide approximately 2,400 analog telephone ports will substantially reduce the overall cost of the project.

Project expenses will include the upgrade of the local area network (LAN) wiring infrastructure in some of these buildings as well as the purchase of telephones, licenses, LAN switches, and power protection to serve these remaining locations. University Services estimates that the maximum expenditure to complete the networking infrastructure upgrade and telephone system replacement for the University of Maine will be $2,100,000.