

From: [Stephens, Jesse](#)
To: [Perkins, Drew](#)
Cc: [Stephens, Jesse](#)
Subject: GFI Elevate Phone System & Phone Policy Update - Item H)(1)(d)
Date: Friday, October 17, 2025 12:08:07 PM
Attachments: [Policy- Data-Voice Reimbursement - DRAFT \(Clean\).pdf](#)
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Dear Board of Trustees,

You will find a consideration item to amend our existing contract with GFI digital, to also provide the Elevate phone service. We discussed this at the last meeting.

We have continued to struggle with our phone system and it is time to transition to something that is more functional to the district. It would be beneficial to the District to be able to contract with our contracted IT provider for this service.

We currently pay Appletree Answers (3rd party answering service) approximately \$706 per month. We also pay Brightspeed approximately \$1,000 per month for all of our copper phone service lines. Approximately 1/3 of those lines could go away with this service, and the need for Appletree would go completely away. It is projected that GFI elevate would cost approximately \$595 per month.

I would project a net savings of \$400 per month by switching from our existing options to GFI Elevate.

This system also has the ability to archive information for up to 10 years, making it a good option for Sunshine law compliance. Additionally, this option will come with an application that will work on any device and keep our information from having to be device specific. Capital Railroad has this system currently installed and I received positive feedback from them on the ease of use of the system and the major upgrade this represents over traditional phone systems. They did indicate that customer service was great with either same day or same hour service.

This will lead into a November board meeting discussion of creating a 'BYOD' (Bring Your Own Device) policy for employees to be able to use their own devices to conduct company business. I've attached a copy of the Boone County BYOD policy for reference. I will be working with Angela over the next month to tweak this and tailor it to the needs of BCRSD.



Jesse Stephens, Facilities Engineering Manager

Boone County Regional Sewer District (BCRSD)

1314 N. 7th St., Columbia, MO 65201

C: 573.239.4025 | O: 573.443.2774

e: jstephens@bcrsd.com | w: www.bcrsd.com

Data-Voice Reimbursement Policy

Options for Service

For any position that has been identified as having a business need for a wireless phone or wireless data services, the County has four options for service:

1. Employee Provided Phone/Service with No Reimbursement-As a condition of employment, the employee obtains the wireless phone/data/service and makes the phone number available for calls from the County. It is understood that the employee's compensation is sufficient to cover the cost of the device and service. There is no reimbursement for business use.
2. County Provided Phone and Service- The County acquires the wireless phone and/or data service and assigns the phone to a specific individual who uses the device in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and upon termination the employee must return the device.
3. Employee Provided Phone/Service with Reimbursement for Business Use- As a condition of employment, the employee obtains the wireless phone/data/service and makes the phone number available for calls from the County. The employee can seek reimbursement for business use as described in **"Reimbursement for Use of Employee's Device for County Business"** below.
4. Employee Provided Phone with County Provided Service – As a condition of employment, the employee provides a wireless device and the County pays the service fees for the device. The employee makes the phone number available for calls from the County and the complete records for the device are provided to the County. The call logs for the device become a record subject to the Sunshine Law.

The Administrative Authority for the position identified as having a business need for wireless phone or data services determines which of the four options for service will be available for the position, subject to appropriations.

An employee who only occasionally requires a wireless device for business purposes is not eligible for a device or monthly reimbursement but may submit a record of individual expenses incurred for County business for reimbursement.

Non-Exempt employees may, when appropriate, be assigned County-owned devices for use during their workday and/or when on-call. Use of such devices for County business outside normal working hours should be reported and documented by the employee as hours worked.

Business Need for Wireless Phone/Service

The Administrative Authority is responsible for determining which positions require a cell phone and/or data service and whether the needs of the County are best served through the allocation of a county-purchased cell phone/smart phone or a monthly reimbursement. Eligible positions are generally FLSA-exempt positions or those certain FLSA non-exempt positions (hourly positions) which are not otherwise issued a County device (desktop computer / laptop / tablet / cellphone). When making the determination that a position qualifies for a monthly reimbursement, the Administrative Authority must identify the business need for a wireless phone/data service and

ensure there are sufficient appropriations in the relevant cost center. Business reasons for providing an employee a cell phone could include:

- a. The Employee performs work in multiple locations and/or does not have consistent email, computer, or device access to perform their essential job duties.
- b. The Employee travels frequently on County business, across a geographic area away from the home office, and great amounts of time are spent in a vehicle or at locations without telephone service.
- c. A need for others to communicate with the employee about County business when the employee is away from the office.
- d. A need for the employee to communicate with others regarding County business when the employee is away from the office.
- e. The Employee works on-call and is required to timely respond to phone calls, text messages, or emails.
- f. The Employee supports or is otherwise responsible for programs, services, or systems that necessitate frequent and immediate communications throughout the day or after-hours.

A cell phone or smart phone is not to be provided to attract prospective employees, promote the morale or goodwill of an employee, or as a means of providing additional compensation. The designation of a business need of a device for a position is neither permanent nor guaranteed. The County reserves the right to remove a designation from a position for business or performance reasons. Administrative Authorities shall be responsible for training FLSA non-exempt employees of their obligations to (1) use their device for county business only while scheduled to work and (2) accurately record their hours worked, including use of their device for county business outside of their normal working hours. The Administrative Authority is responsible for adjusting the employee's schedule to avoid overtime or approve and manage overtime pay pursuant to the County's personnel policies.

This policy shall be administered in a manner that meets the identified business needs while minimizing the overall cost to the County.

Personal Use of County Device

If the County provides a wireless device to an employee, the employee's business use of the device will be excluded from his/her gross income as a working condition fringe benefit (a non-taxable business expense), and any personal use will be excluded from gross income as a de minimis fringe benefit. A county-provided device is intended to be used substantially for business purposes with the expectation that personal use, if any, is minimal. Upon termination of employment with the County, the employee must return the County device in good repair.

Reimbursement for Use of Employee's Device for County Business

When the County is reimbursing for business use of a personal phone/service, the reimbursement amount must be reasonable, appropriate, and cannot exceed the cost incurred by the employee for the service.

The County uses a tiered model for maximum monthly reimbursement based on the current market rates* with the following options:

- i. Voice only - \$30 per month
- ii. Data only - \$35 per month
- iii. Voice and Data - \$45 per month

The County will not pay for the purchase of personal cell phones, activation fees, or insurance. Because in the case of reimbursement for service, the device is owned by the employee, the employee may use the phone for both business and personal purposes. The employee may, at his/her own expense, add extra services or features, as desired. If there are problems with the service, the employee is expected to work directly with the carrier for resolution.

Support from the County's IT Department is limited to connecting a personally owned device to County provided services, including email, calendar, and contacts.

*The monthly reimbursement rates are established by the County Commission upon analysis and recommendation of the Human Resources Department. The reimbursement amounts are reviewed by the Human Resources Department on an annual basis.

Oversight, Approval, and Funding

Individual Administrative Authorities are responsible for identifying employees who hold positions that include the business need for a cell phone or smart phone and requesting appropriations for such expenses in their annual budget request. The need for a device/service should be reviewed annually by the Administrative Authority, to determine if existing designations should be continued, changed, or discontinued.

To receive a reimbursement, a copy of a receipt for voice and/or data services must be submitted by the employee using the reimbursement form provided by the Auditor's Office. Device, service, and reimbursement expenses are funded by the office or department of the employee submitting the request.

Records Retention

Employees are encouraged to do County business using their County email account to more easily ensure compliance with the Sunshine Law. If any personal email accounts are used to conduct County business, then they could be subject to public records requests and should be managed accordingly.

Conducting county business via text messaging (except Emergency Services alerts), PIN messaging, or Instant Messaging is discouraged. These types of messages cannot be archived and therefore may not satisfy Sunshine Law requirements for record retention. Personal text messages are not affected by this policy.