Ladies and gentlemen, since Larry Flowers and I made our finance software recommendation to the Finance committee, certain questions have been raised. I would like to take a moment to answer some of these questions.

First, I would like to describe the process that we went through to arrive at our decision. In March of this year, we sent out a Request for Qualifications and Information. We received 8 responses, which were opened on April 13. Larry sent his own list of questions to the responders to get more specific functional information. Over the next month, we read and scored these responses. We presented our scoring to the finance committee on May 20. The mutual decision was made to view on-site demonstrations from the top four companies.

Throughout June and July, we had discovery meetings and viewed on-site demonstrations from these four vendors. Each of four demonstrations took nearly a full eight hours to complete. After the demonstrations, we also got price proposals from the four vendors. We scored again and presented our scoring to the finance committee on August 19. At this point, we had narrowed the selection down to two vendors: Continental Utility Solutions, Inc. out of Jonesboro, proposing Intuit Fundware, and Springbrook out of Portland, Oregon. The committee once again accepted our recommendation.

The following week, both CUSI and Springbrook came back for a second demonstration. This time, we had very specific questions based on functionality we had seen in other software and questions that we didn't feel had been adequately answered the first time. At this time, the Mayor also conducted price negotiations with both companies.

On September 16, Larry and I came to the finance committee once again with our final recommendation for Springbrook software. The committee voted to send our recommendation to the full council. It has taken us over six months to make our final recommendation, and now we're asking the council to accept our recommendation.

I want to give you a brief overview of why we chose Springbrook over CUSI. First, Springbrook offers greater functionality than Fundware. In the budgeting module, Springbrook has the ability to list what makes up a budget request for each account, item by item. If an item is removed or added, the budget request changes automatically. To accomplish the same task in Fundware, the dollar amount must either be added or subtracted manually, or the change would have to be made in a spreadsheet outside of the system and imported back in. Either option is more difficult and more prone to errors than Springbrook's method. Additionally, Springbrook provides greater assistance than Fundware in creating the budget document.

In the purchasing module, Springbrook has the ability to automatically route purchase requisitions to the appropriate person based on the dollar amount of the requisition. CUSI demonstrated how a similar function could be implemented in Fundware, but it is not a built-in function, and is once again more difficult and more prone to errors.

Throughout the system, Springbrook offers the ability to attach a scanned or electronic document to any record. This can be a tremendous benefit to the city. If you want to see the invoice that corresponds to a P.O., it's right there with the electronic P.O. We can attach time sheets to payroll. We can attach bids, tally sheets, variances, spreadsheets, or anything at all that's relevant to any transaction, purchase, customer, or employee, and it will reside there in the system. This is a powerful feature that Fundware lacks. Furthermore, Springbrook is planning to integrate this feature with our current records management software. This will not only prevent an overlap in functionality between the two systems, but it will also allow Springbrook to take advantage of the Department of Defense certified security that exists with our records management software.

Those are a few of the functional reasons that we chose Springbrook. There are also some technical reasons. CUSI has proposed software from three different software companies to cover all our needs, while Springbrook offers all the functionality as a single company. In general, software from a single company tends to be more integrated, both from a user's point of view and from a database point of view.

CUSI's proposal requires three different data sources, while Springbrook utilizes one. The more data sources there are, the more potential points of failure there are.

When we made our final recommendation to the finance committee in September, CUSI's proposal was about $20,000 less than Springbrook's over five years, after taking into account ancillary costs not covered by the software company. The next day, I received additional information from CUSI about the ancillary costs that increased the difference from $20,000 to about $40,000 over five years. Now that both companies have come back with unsolicited price decreases, the cost is about $25,000 over five years.

I have been asked how much price difference is too big to ignore. I can't answer that question definitively. What I can say is that it's not worth purchasing a new finance package unless its use will save a significant number of man-hours. If we reduce the work load on city employees, we will increase their efficiency and thus decrease the number of new employees that will have to be hired as the city's workload grows. It is my opinion that Springbrook's software has enough features over Fundware that the $25,000 cost difference will be made up in saved man-hours over five years.

It has been suggested that Fundware has better security than Springbrook. I believe that this is Fundware's attempt to put a positive spin on the fact that their software uses a mish-mash of old and new technologies to store data. Security may be improved by virtue of the fact that the data is strewn about incomprehensibly, but that advantage is far outweighed by decreased reliability, accessibility, and performance.

It has been said that CUSI is providing a fully-developed product while Springbrook is selling a product still under development. This is true on only two modules: code enforcement and fleet maintenance. Springbrook should have both modules completed

by the spring. Furthermore, Springbrook has told us that if we committed to purchasing the fleet maintenance module, we would have some input in its final functionality.

It has been said that local support would be a huge advantage to the city. In some cases, I would agree. For this project, I don't believe that local support is a significant advantage. We can give Springbrook access to our network via the Internet such that virtually any software problem can be solved remotely. Over the Internet, Springbrook tech support will have the ability to view any user's computer, so that they can see exactly what the user is seeing, and answer any day-to-day questions with a live on-screen demonstration in conjunction with a phone call.

I have been asked if I considered the benefits to the local economy. Honestly, no, I did not. I am a computer guy, not an economic analyst. Larry and I were charged with finding the best software product for the city, and that is what we have done. All things being equal, I would not hesitate to recommend a local company for this or any other project. In this case, however, all things are not equal. Months of research have proven to us beyond any doubt that Springbrook has a better product than CUSI. There are enough differences between the two products to outweigh both the local factor and the price factor.