



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Christopher S. Lewinski
Information Technology

WISCONSIN

March 1, 2024

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Alayne Krause,

I am pleased to submit the 2023 Annual Report for the Information Technology (IT) Department.

In 2023 the IT Department provided technical support for an increasingly mobile and remote workforce, which continues to grow and evolve over time. At the same time, IT introduced new and advanced security controls designed to reduce risk and protect the County's data assets. Further, IT continued to support aged, end-of-life software systems for which timely replacement is delayed due to ongoing resource allocation issues within the County organization.

Noteworthy accomplishments in 2023 included the successful implementation of a Managed Endpoint Detection and Response software to all County endpoints, which provides 24x7 monitoring by a dedicated, third-party Security Operation Center; the implementation of Multi-Factor Authentication; the hardware refresh of Rocky Knoll Health Care Center's server and storage environment, which significantly enhanced their network resiliency; and the successful upgrade of the County Board Chambers audio system.

I am very proud of the services the Information Technology team has delivered in the last year— solid work that could not be done without the continued guidance and support of the County Administrator, Finance Committee, and County Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christopher S. Lewinski
Information Technology Director

Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

The mission of the Information Technology Department is to effectively and efficiently safeguard and account for the County's technological resources and to provide information technology service in support of all County departments.

The Information Technology (IT) Department supports County departments with a 24-hour Service Desk and provides planning, management, and implementation services for the County's IT projects, systems, networks, and devices.

Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2023

- Conducted a Payment Card Interface (PCI) Compliance exercise with a third-party consultant that identified areas for improvement in the County's information security posture and business processes.
- Implemented a Managed Endpoint Detection and Response software solution on all County endpoints.
- Implemented Multi-Factor Authentication to reduce the risk of employee credential compromise.
- Resolved just under 9,000 service desk tickets while maintaining a customer satisfaction rating of 4.65 out of 5, the highest score since tracking began in 2015.
- Maintained an annual network uptime of 100%, its highest ever, since tracking began in 2016.

Budget

	2023 Budget	2023 Results	Variance
Revenues	\$2,694,875	\$2,669,957	-\$24,918
Expenses	\$2,851,441	\$3,016,928	-\$165,487
Transfer In/Out	\$120,133	\$117,734	-\$2,399
Total	-\$36,433	-\$229,237	-\$192,804

Overall, the IT Department had a positive variance of \$6,932 for 2023, not including depreciation that is not budgeted.

The IT Department was successful in achieving the 2024 budget target. The Department had a 9% increase in the budgeted IT allocation from 2023 to 2024, which is higher than normal. Over half of this increase is due to moving the wages and benefits for the Health and Human Services (HHS) Applications Administrator position to the IT budget in 2024. This amount will be directly charged back to the HHS Department via the allocation.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

- Security of the County's data and network assets. The cybersecurity threat landscape continues to evolve, with an increasing number of attacks targeting governmental agencies, specifically through the use of social engineering tactics in emails. In response, the IT Department will focus its risk mitigation and compliance efforts on securing the County's

greatest attack surface and threat: its employees. This will be accomplished through required cybersecurity awareness training for all County employees.

- **Increasing Technology Costs.** Information Technology software and hardware costs continue to soar, with some support contract renewals experiencing double-digit percentage increases over the previous year. This trend is exacerbated by increasingly shortened product lifecycles, forcing more frequent upgrades and system replacements. The IT Department will continue to seek more cost-effective solutions through Cloud service offerings and longer contract terms to smooth these budgetary spikes.
- **Expanding Technology Footprint and Complexity.** County employees have never been more dependent on technology for their daily roles and responsibilities than they are today. Because of that reliance, Sheboygan County's technology footprint— which includes its server and network environments, data storage and backup repositories, software systems and hardware assets— has grown significantly, in size, complexity, and workload. Further, this footprint has evolved to include presence of the County network and computers in facilities that are not owned (or secured) by the County. This creates new challenges to keep County data and systems secure, as well as supporting these systems in decentralized environments.
- **County Workforce Turnover and Loss of Institutional Knowledge.** Given the volatility of the workforce labor market, the IT team has witnessed a significant (> 200%) increase in employee hires and separations across many County departments. Each separation and subsequent new hire taxes IT support resources due to the heavy needs created by system account creation and management, as well as computer refreshes and deployments. Additionally, the loss of institutional knowledge through departing employees, combined with the lack of a comprehensive systems training program, creates added workload through service tickets created by employees who struggle to use County systems effectively. This resulted in a 21.6% increase in the number of tickets from 2022 to 2023.

Goals and Objectives for 2024

- Development and implementation of a more comprehensive cybersecurity training program for all employees to reduce cyber risk.
- Documentation of individual IT team members' duties to foster succession planning within the Department.
- Upgrade of County computers to the Windows 11 Operating System prior to the end of life for Windows 10 in 2025.
- Decommissioning of remaining copper Plain Old Telephone System lines in anticipation of end of support for this antiquated infrastructure by the telecommunications companies. These lines will be migrated to the County's Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system.
- Development of project plan and timeline for transition of County employees away from Microsoft Office, prior to its end of support in 2025.