Customer: Lafayette Township
Website: www.lafayettetwp.org
Customer Size: 7 employees
Location: New Jersey
Industry: Municipal Government
Partner: eMazzanti Technologies
Partner Website: www.emazzanti.net

Summary

Lafayette Township, New Jersy, boasts a population of just 2400 with seven full-time employees. Like other small towns, it presents an attractive target for cyber criminals. Lafayette needed a comprehensive solution that delivered robust cyber security and IT services with the flexibility to start small and grow.

A frustrating two-year search and a chance encounter led them to eMazzanti Technologies, a provider willing to build a solution step by step. Lafayette now enjoys enhanced cyber security and productivity at a cost they can afford.

"Unlike other providers, eMazzanti was more than willing to tailor their approach, scaling down their services to exactly what we were looking for and delivering the flexible and cost-effective solutions we needed."

Software and Services

- ◼ eMazzanti's eCare Managed Security Services and Cloud Backup
- ◼ Microsoft 365 Email and Productivity tools.

For more information about eMazzanti Technologies IT solutions visit: emazzanti.net

Superior Security and Flexible Solutions Spell Success for Lafayette Township

"We want to make sure we're making the best long-term choices and implementing cost-effective solutions. Our partnership with eMazzanti provides that, meeting immediate needs while filling critical gaps proactively."

Mayor Richard Hughes, Lafayette Township, New Jersey

CHALLENGE

Facing Loss of Mandated Insurance

Like all municipalities in New Jersey, peaceful, rural Lafayette Township must carry cyber liability insurance. However, the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) gave notice that they would not renew Lafayette's insurance due to insufficient cyber security measures.

Without liability insurance, Lafayette would be subject to both fines and legal difficulties. In addition, they would have to cover all costs associated with any cyber breach, potentially millions of dollars. Finally, Lafayette residents and businesses would lose trust in the township's ability to safeguard their information.

Part of the problem resulted from the town's reliance on shared services. Due to their small size, Lafayette supplements their full-time staff by sharing employees with other municipalities. These shared employees require remote access to Lafayette's network, complicating the security environment. Outmoded security infrastructure added further challenges.

Outdated IT Services

In addition to cyber security gaps, Lafayette township administrators knew they needed to update their IT infrastructure and communications. To begin with, ancient hardware and outdated networks made it difficult to meet state compliance standards.

At the same time, the township needed to refresh its backup strategy. Backups happened, but not with the consistency and quality that administrators knew they needed. And without reliable, secure backups, Lafayette risked data loss and interrupted services.

Email presented another problem. Two previous vendors had tried and failed to get the office up and running on G-Suite. The township wanted to switch to Microsoft 365, but they needed a vendor with the expertise and willingness to take a gradual approach.

"We needed to ramp up the use of Microsoft 365 over time, rather than dive into everything at once," explained Patrick Geaney, township committeeman and technical liaison.

Restrictive Municipal Spending Caps

To add yet another layer of difficulty, New Jersey law states that municipalities can only grow their budget by a maximum of 2.5 percent per year without a town vote. Consequently, Lafayette Township needed to make significant improvements to their infrastructure and services without increasing their spending. A tall order.

Searching for Long-Term IT Partner Willing to Customize

While Lafayette Township leaders felt the urgency to protect critical municipal assets, they knew they lacked the necessary expertise in-house. As Geaney pointed out, "I was a newly elected committeeman, and Mayor Hughes tasked me with being the liaison for our cyber security effort, but cyber security isn't my day job."

Lafayette needed an IT partner for the long term, a provider willing to scale a solution to their specific needs and provide expert guidance moving forward.

For two years, community leaders searched for outside help to strengthen cyber security and oversee their IT. Discussions with vendor after vendor left them frustrated. "Other suppliers gave us rigid proposals with a 'take it or leave it' approach," explained Mayor Hughes.

The providers offered limited options, with pricing and structure geared toward organizations with much more complex infrastructures. But out-of-the-box solutions would not meet Lafayette's needs. And inflexible pricing structures made staying within spending limits nearly impossible.

SOLUTION

IT Support Package Tailored to Township Needs and Budget

In November 2022, Hughes met Carl Mazzanti, President of eMazzanti Technologies, in a chance encounter at a conference in Atlantic City. Mazzanti and his experienced team offered a breath of fresh air. In stark contrast to their competitors, they demonstrated a willingness to partner with Lafayette on the township's terms.

"Unlike other providers, eMazzanti was more than willing to tailor their approach, scaling down their services to exactly what we were looking for and delivering the flexible and cost-effective solutions we needed," remembered Geaney.

Critical services provided included updating the network infrastructure and implementing a strong and reliable cloud

backup solution. eMazzanti also provided hardware monitoring and support, as well as license renewals and patching. And eMazzanti engineers are just a phone call away for any technical support.

Critical Cyber Security Updates

To meet state and JIF compliance standards, eMazzanti worked with Lafayette to implement a comprehensive cyber security solution. This solution included high-performance WatchGuard firewalls, multi-factor authentication (MFA), mobile device management (MDM), advanced threat protection (

ATP), and more.

Another critical step involved upgrading the township to Microsoft 365. With a range of security features that include Microsoft Defender, Azure Information Protection, and Advanced Threat Analytics, Microsoft 365 plays an essential role in protecting vital data assets.

In addition to WatchGuard and Microsoft 365, eMazzanti solutions for Lafayette included updated email security with MXINSPECT and enterprise-grade threat protection with eCare Secure Route.

BENEFITS

Saved Thousands in Potential Cyber Breach Costs

With outstanding cyber security measures in place, Lafayette had no problem satisfying JIF requirements and renewing their cyber liability insurance, thus avoiding stiff penalties. More importantly, with the median cost of a cyber breach running from $60,000 to as much as $1.87 million, the modest investment delivered exponential value.

State-of-the-art Security and IT Services in Record Time

For busy community leaders juggling competing demands, eMazzanti has been a godsend. Beyond satisfying insurance requirements, the partnership allowed the township to

see significant progress quickly, beginning with a painless implementation. In no time, shared services and full-time employees gained secure and efficient access to the system.

"We made a lot of progress in a short period of time," said Geaney. "eMazzanti engineers and staff came on site frequently, making it as easy as possible to get up and running."

Hughes agreed, adding, "eMazzanti has also been able to identify gaps and additional needs proactively for us. They even worked with some of our software providers, taking over much of the burden of sorting out the details."

Flexible Solutions without Busting Spending Caps

Throughout the process, eMazzanti worked closely with its partners, including WatchGuard and Microsoft, to obtain special pricing for Lafayette. They also carefully scaled solutions to match Lafayette's budget and priorities. As a result, the township succeeded in meeting and exceeding their immediate cyber security and IT services needs while remaining within spending caps.

Expert Advice with a Path for Growth

With eMazzanti on board, the township gained a trusted partner, augmenting their small staff with decades of technical expertise and world-class solutions. Timely advice and support from eMazzanti empower Lafayette to explore next steps in providing exceptional services for their employees and the citizens they serve.

"For example, we are looking at expanding to utilize Microsoft Teams for internal correspondence," said Geaney. "That's something we didn't need at the outset, an example of how the partnership has enabled us to grow. eMazzanti has absolutely exceeded our expectations in getting us where we need to be."