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Lakesite promotes government transparency

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City documents are now much easier to find in Lakesite, which recently purchased ClerkBase, an online records program. Every word in the documents is indexed and fully searchable, said City Recorder Jodi LaCroix.

"It takes so much less time to do a search," she said. "Citizens can know what's going on in their community. It will keep them engaged in their government."

ClerkBase is currently in the process of adding documents, which will eventually date back to the city's incorporation in 1972. Documents dating to 2005 are already available. Documents that will be available are

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the city charter, the municipal code of ordinances, the zoning ordinance, independent resolutions and ordinances adopted over the years, the agenda for the upcoming City Commission meeting, and commission meeting minutes.

LaCroix said she asked the commission to purchase the system because searches were taking too long and she saw the need.

"We wanted to be more open

and transparent," she said. "This commission is very dedicated to that. We want you to see what we're doing. If people have questions, now they know how to get those answers."

LaCroix said she has walked several citizens through the process of using ClerkBase, and the people she has talked to seem to really like it.

"It's the history of the community all in one place," she said. "It's a really useful tool."

The cost of the system was just under \$5,000, and the city will pay nominal fees annually, said LaCroix.

Commissioners can also pull

up the documents on their tablet computers during meetings in lieu of printing out large packets, she said.

"The aim is to go paperless," said LaCroix.

She said Lakesite is the first city in Tennessee to use ClerkBase.

"I hope other municipalities take a look at it," said LaCroix. "It's important this day and age that people see there's nothing being hidden. They're all public records, so it should be out there. We want to make sure the citizens get what they want."

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