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MEMORANDUM

To: Budget & Finance Committee
From: Lisa J. Plevin, Executive Director *LJP*
Subject: Committee Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2019
Date: September 11, 2019

A Budget and Finance (B&F) Committee meeting/call was held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 9:30am. Committee Member present was: Member Visioli; Committee Members present via teleconference were: Council Chair Richko, Committee Chair Holtaway and Member James.

Also present via tele-conference: Lauren Nathan-LaRusso, GAU Senior Counsel

Staff Members present: Lisa J. Plevin, Christine LaRocca, James Humphries, Nathan McLean and Annette Tagliareni.

Committee Chair Holtaway opened the meeting at 9:30am.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Services Contract

James Humphries gave a brief presentation regarding the GIS Services Contract which included background and award recommendations.

Background

Mr. Humphries noted that GIS services are integral to daily operation of Council. He noted that it is a highly competitive field which is constantly changing. Staff retention and ability to keep up with latest technology is a challenge. Because of these challenges a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was issued on June 28, 2019 (closed on July 18, 2019).

Lisa Plevin noted that staff retention has been a significant problem which impacts Council deadlines.

Member James asked why retention is a challenge. Staff responded that the reasons for retention issues include the following: 1) the GIS department is only a 3-person staff, thus not allowing for promotional opportunities; 2) the pay is not competitive with the private sector; and 3) the location of the office in Chester may not be appealing to potential applicants. Ms. Plevin added that the GIS department recently hired a GIS Specialist, but retention continues to be an issue.

Award Recommendation

Ten (10) responses to RFQ were received. Four met minimum requirements. Council staff recommended three vendors for three-year contracts, not to exceed \$25,000/annually per vendor. The proposed term and amount are based on anticipated needs and prior experience. Three of the recommended vendors demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the work and needs of the Highlands Council.

Lauren Nathan-LaRusso, GAU Senior Counsel asked why multiple contracts. Staff elaborated on each vendor and their different expertise. Staff would have the flexibility to pick and choose based on Council's needs.

Member James asked about the not to exceed amount of \$25,000/annually. What if you need more funding for one vendor and less for another? Christine LaRocca responded that funding could be expanded through a contract amendment.

Ms. Nathan-LaRusso noted that other authorities put in amounts similar to this contract.

Member Visioli noted that putting a cap is not unusual.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to approve the GIS Services Contract. Committee Member Visioli made a motion and Council Chair Richko seconded it. All were in favor.

Interactive Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) Contract

Member James recused himself at 9:45am due to a conflict of interest.

Ms. Plevin noted to the committee that unlike the previous discussion regarding the GIS services-based contract, this discussion regarding an ERI Contract is a project/product-based contract and will be a very valuable resource to municipalities and counties in the Highlands region.

James Humphries gave a brief presentation regarding the ERI Contract which included background, and award recommendations.

Background

Mr. Humphries noted that ERIs are valuable tools for municipalities and counties for master planning, land use ordinance development, project review, and more. The current process is to

manually create a static, point-in-time assessment of resources, approximately once every 10 years. Static ERIs are costly to create, time consuming to develop, and quickly become obsolete.

Staff then displayed a chart which showed the differences/benefits between data, development, format, applicability, and return on investment with the current ERI model and an interactive ERI (web-based mapping product).

Award Recommendation

Five proposals were received in response to the Request for Proposals. All five vendors were interviewed. Council staff recommended a vendor that has:

- exceptional understanding of technical requirements,
- ERI development and use,
- extensive experience doing similar work as confirmed through references, and
- proposed incorporating end-user outreach as part of development process.

The award amount is \$274,633 to develop Interactive ERI which includes two years of hosting and maintenance. It was noted that the product would need ongoing hosting (operating in the Cloud) and maintenance of the data beyond contract.

Staff noted that the two-year limit provides options for future to:

- continue with current vendor,
- find alternative vendor, or
- host and maintain internally if internal resources permit (staffing and tech)

Member Visioli asked if the award amount includes two years of hosting and maintenance. Staff responded that it did. Staff also noted that the application would be portable, and after the initial two years, the cost for hosting and maintenance is estimated at \$20,000/annually at the high end. Ms. Plevin added that it will be a flexible tool and only valuable if it continues into perpetuity.

The committee felt it would be a great tool for the municipalities and counties and a giant step toward government efficiency.

Committee Chair Holtaway asked for a motion to approve the Contract for Interactive ERI. Council Chair Richko made a motion and Committee Member Visioli seconded it. All were in favor.

In closing, Ms. Plevin noted that staff will be contacting the committee members to schedule the next Budget & Finance Committee meeting to discuss Council's FY2020 budgets. Also, the committee will receive two draft RFPs in the near future. Committee Chair Holtaway expressed his appreciation for the new process of sharing RFPs with the Committee before they are made public.

The committee meeting adjourned at 10:00am.