To: Chairman Smedberg and the VRE Operations Board

From: Doug Allen

Date: September 20, 2013

Re: Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Website Design and Development

Recommendation:

The VRE Operations Board is being asked to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for website design and development to fully redesign the VRE website and implement a content management system (CMS) for VRE.

Background:

The VRE website was last upgraded in 2005 and by today’s standards the current website lacks the sophistication via content management to provide VRE with a level of service that it is accustomed to providing its users. Additionally, the website currently lacks any capacity to monitor and assess user patterns to better enable VRE to serve its riders and the general public.

VRE will solicit proposals from a firm or individual designer/website developer to redevelop VRE’s current website (vre.org) in order to enhance its overall online presence. Our goal is to expand on-line information about VRE’s services and keep passengers, visitors and others better informed about various train service, schedules, activities and events, as well as support necessary communication throughout the system.
The immediate goal of this project is to redesign the current website’s existing content into a format that will be easily navigated, easily updated, that contains downloadable documents, and that will position the website for further growth and development in the future.

The new website is expected to consist of a main site with separate pages as required to incorporate all current website content and primary web services including e-mail links as well as links to outside websites where necessary. The information architecture that is the basis for the immediate upgrade must be able to handle increased content and additional features through the use of content management system (CMS) templates and add-on components/plug-ins.

**Goals Of The Solicitation:**

1. Redesign the website with a new look and feel that reflects VRE’s diverse make up and vision.
2. A website that is modern and visually appealing.
3. Improve the website information architecture to provide easier navigation and accessibility of the site to VRE schedules, fares, information and activities.
4. Improve the timeliness of website information being updated through the use of a content management system (CMS).
5. CMS functions that will no longer have VRE reliant on an outside webmaster to add new web pages/documents and make changes to existing pages.
6. A design architecture that will allow for easy accommodation of new pages and features as well as future sub-sites.

Upon receipt of qualified proposals, VRE will return to the Operations Board with a request for authorization to award the contract.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Funds are allocated in the annual FY 2014 operating budget based upon estimated costs.
Virginia Railway Express
Operations Board

Resolution
8A-09-2013

Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Website Design and Development

WHEREAS, in July 2005, VRE entered into a contract with AITG, Incorporated for website redesign work; and,

WHEREAS, that contract constitutes the last major investment by VRE for its website and internal contract system management of the website; and,

WHEREAS, the VRE website today is one of the most vital links with our passengers and potential customers that VRE staff is recommending that a complete overhaul of the existing web infrastructure be initiated to incorporate the latest technology and more user friendly applications for our passengers and the general public.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the VRE Operations Board does hereby authorize the VRE Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals to redesign the existing VRE website and to implement the content management system for the new VRE web page.

Approved this 20th day of September 2013

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Paul Smedberg
Chairman

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John Cook
Secretary