Agenda Item 8-C  
Action Item

To: Chair Cristol and the VRE Operations Board  
From: Rich Dalton  
Date: December 20, 2019  
Re: Authorization to Execute a Contract for an Email and Text Message Communication System

Recommendation:

The VRE Operations Board is asked to authorize the Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to execute a contract with Everbridge, Inc. of Burlington, Massachusetts, for an Email and Text Message Communication System in the amount of $902,115, plus a 10 percent contingency of $90,212, for a total amount not to exceed $992,327, for a base year and four option years, with the CEO exercising the option years at his discretion.

Summary:

An advanced mass alert communication system is needed to send service alerts to riders more quickly and with improved accuracy. The recommended alert platform from Everbridge will require fewer steps by VRE staff to deploy messages and will utilize pre-approved templates for common service alerts. Additionally, the recommended system will provide new security capabilities for both riders and VRE staff.

Background:

In December 2018, VRE awarded a Purchase Order to Granicus, LLC, under the small purchase threshold to provide mass communication services with an allowance of up to 3.9 million text messages. Due to the sustained high volume of service-related messages sent through the communication service during the spring and summer of 2019, VRE amended the Purchase Order in July 2019 (with the authorization of the Operations Board) to an amount not to exceed $140,000 to provide for additional carrier charges incurred by Granicus for text messages. Separately, Operations Board authorization was also received in July 2019 to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an email and text message...
communication so various communication platforms could be evaluated with the intent of awarding a longer-term contract.

In developing the Scope of Work (SOW) for the RFP, it became apparent several solutions on the market offer enhanced capabilities as well as opportunities for integration with existing VRE systems. Incorporating a series of these progressive features, the SOW not only detailed the needs of a basic email and text alert service, but also outlined new requirements including 1) the ability to design template messages for common service alerts as well as the capacity to pre-program alerts to be delivered at a specified time; 2) the ability for riders to initiate a real-time report for security concerns with photo attachments; 3) the ability to alert VRE staff immediately via email, text and automated phone messages in the event of an emergency at an office location; and 4) utilization of Application Programming Interfaces to automatically push email and text alerts to social media, including Facebook and Twitter, if desired, as a means of streamlining communication efforts. Staff believes the streamlined, yet robust capabilities of such a solution are well tailored for public transportation and will serve to enhance VRE’s service communications.

A mailing list of eight prospective Offerors was established for the solicitation to ensure access to adequate sources of services. An RFP was issued on October 7, 2019, and proposals were due on November 7, 2019. Four responses were received.

Evaluation of the proposals received was performed by the Technical Evaluation Team (TET), which consisted of four VRE staff members representing the Rail Operations, Marketing, Information Technology, and Safety and Security departments. The TET met to discuss and evaluate the proposals using the following criteria:

1. Understanding of the Project Scope of Work and Technical Requirements
2. Capability and Expertise of the Offeror
3. Project Plan and Proposed Technical Solution
4. Training and Support Plan
5. Cost for Services

Interviews, which included demonstration of the proposed technical solutions, were conducted with the top two firms. It was determined the proposal from Everbridge was technically compliant and selected to be best value for the project.

Following is the final ranking of firms who submitted a proposal for an Email and Text Message Communication System.
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<th>Offerors</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Everbridge, Inc.</td>
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<td>2. CivicPlus, LLC</td>
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<td>3. Salem InfoTech Inc.</td>
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<td>4. Lotus Analytics</td>
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VRE staff conducted negotiations with Everbridge to clarify assumptions and reach an agreement on the cost for the base year and each option year of the contract. Everbridge’s cost for the base year of the contract is significantly higher than VRE’s cost estimate, which was developed based upon the Purchase Order with Granicus for mass communication services.

Through additional analysis of the cost elements included in Everbridge’s proposal for the base year of the contract, it is evident the cost estimate did not fully account for the initial setup and transition to the new platform, including migration of rider contact information, design of template messages for common service alerts, and on-site training for VRE communications staff.

For the four option years of the contract, Everbridge has agreed to a fixed price of not to exceed $172,008, approximately 20% less than the base year price, including an allowance for up to 9 million SMS alerts annually.

After taking these factors into account, VRE deems Everbridge’s cost for the base year and each option year of the contract to be fair and reasonable.

The contract will be for a base year and four option years, with the VRE CEO exercising the option years at his discretion. This authorization allows work to commence upon execution of the contract.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The current budget for ‘Rail Operations – Other Communications Costs’ in FY 2020 includes funding of $50,000 for these mass communication services. Additional funding of $110,000 for this activity has already been included in the Amended FY 2020 Operating Budget, with spending authority being transferred from VRE’s operational contingency. The Recommended FY 2021 Operating Budget also reflects the increased spending on this activity, with total budgeted expenditures of $195,000 reflecting half of the base contract year and half of the first option year. Funding for future years beyond FY 2021 will be included in each proposed annual budget.
Virginia Railway Express
Operations Board

Resolution
8C-12-2019

Authorization to Execute a Contract for an
Email and Text Message Communication System

WHEREAS, an advanced mass alert system is needed to send service alerts more quickly and with improved accuracy; and,

WHEREAS, the VRE Operations Board authorized the Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals for an Email and Text Message Communication System in July 2019; and,

WHEREAS, it was determined the proposal from Everbridge, Inc. received in response to the RFP was technically compliant and selected to be best value for the project; and,

WHEREAS, the Operations Board’s approval of this procurement does not represent its independent assessment of the candidate’s responses to the solicitation or of each step in the procurement process followed by staff; rather, the Operations Board’s action is premised upon its conclusion, after review of the information before it, that the process used by the staff was in accordance with law and that the staff recommendation appears to be reasonable;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the VRE Operations Board does hereby authorize the Acting Chief Executive Officer to execute a contract with Everbridge, Inc. of Burlington, Massachusetts, for an Email and Text Message Communication System in the amount of $902,115, plus a 10 percent contingency of $90,212, for a total amount not to exceed $992,327, for a base year and four option years, with the CEO exercising the option years at his discretion.

Approved this 20th day of December 2019

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Katie Cristol
Chair

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John Cook
Secretary