To: Chair Cristol and the VRE Operations Board

From: Doug Allen

Date: March 15, 2019

Re: Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for State Government Relations Services

Recommendation:

The VRE Operations Board is asked to authorize the Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for State Government Relations Services for a base period of three years with an option to extend for up to two additional years.

Summary:

This action will authorize staff to issue an RFP for State Government Relations Services for the provision of government relations and legislative services required to assist VRE in its efforts to achieve specific state government relations objectives as identified by the VRE Operations Board and Chief Executive Officer and as incorporated in an annual Legislative Agenda approved by its parent Commissions. The current contract for State Legislative Services expires in December 2019.

Background:

VRE has found it more expedient and effective to contract for Government Relations Services at both the State and Federal level than to employ staff to attempt to monitor the myriad of government and legislative activities in Richmond and Washington, D.C. Professional government relations firms are also able to make and maintain the numerous contacts with elected officials and their staffs needed to effectively keep abreast of, analyze,
and engage on issues related to VRE, public transportation, and rail. VRE has chosen to contract separately for Government Relations services specific to State issues as distinct from Federal Executive Branch and Legislative issues. This procurement is for State Government Relations Services only. The current contract for State Legislative Services expires in December 2019.

As determined in accordance with VRE Public Procurement Policies and Procedures, an Invitation for Bids (IFB) is neither practicable nor fiscally advantageous to VRE, and an RFP is the preferred method of procurement for this solicitation since there are different approaches to the desired service and an evaluation of technical merit is required.

This procurement will be conducted as a joint solicitation with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC). However, VRE and NVTC will execute separate contracts and could award to different proposers. The Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission has also been invited to be part of this procurement and is assessing if their participation would be advantageous to them. Upon completion of evaluation of proposals, negotiations will be conducted with the two highest ranked firms deemed to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting Proposals, based on the factors specified in the evaluation criteria. Price will be considered in context of technical performance for this service to achieve a best value determination. After receipt of the best and final offer from the top-ranked firm, a cost analysis is performed to compare the proposed cost with the independent cost estimate to determine if the proposed cost is fair and reasonable.

The scope of work for the RFP includes providing government relations and legislative services required to assist VRE in its efforts to achieve specific state policy objectives. These objectives will be identified by the VRE Operations Board and Chief Executive Officer and incorporated in an annual Legislative Agenda approved by its parent Commissions. At the direction of VRE, the primary duty of the Contractor shall be to monitor, track, analyze and educate on rail or transit issues at the General Assembly, State agencies, the Commonwealth Transportation Board or the Office of the Governor. Services will also include representing VRE regarding state policy matters that may impact VRE, as well as developing and producing tangible materials to support VRE activities. Such activities shall include promoting rail transportation, future transit projects, efforts to gain funding for projects and other government relations activities.

Upon receipt and evaluation of proposals, staff will return to the Operations Board for authorization to award the contract.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The FY 2020 operating budget for Chief of Staff – Other Professional Services includes funding for this activity. Funding for future years will be included in each proposed annual budget.
WHEREAS, VRE contracts separately for Government Relations Services at the State and Federal level to provide government relations and legislative services required to assist VRE in its efforts to achieve specific policy objectives; and,

WHEREAS, the current contract for State Legislative Services expires December 2019; and,

WHEREAS, a procurement for State Government Relations Services will be conducted as a joint solicitation with the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission allowing VRE and NVTC to execute separate contracts with different proposers; and,

WHEREAS, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission has also been invited to be part of this procurement and is assessing if their participation would be advantageous to them;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the VRE Operations Board does hereby acknowledge the determination made by the VRE Contract Administrator in accordance with the VRE Public Procurement Policies and Procedures that competitive bidding is not practicable, nor fiscally advantageous to VRE, and that competitive negotiation is the appropriate method to procure these services; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the VRE Operations Board does hereby authorize the Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals for State Government Relations Services.

Approved this 15th day of March 2019

____________________________
Katie Cristol
Chair

____________________________
John Cook
Secretary