To: Chairman Skinner and the VRE Operations Board  
From: Rich Dalton  
Date: February 21, 2020  
Re: Authorization to Issue a Request for Proposals for Federal Government Relations Services

**Recommendation:**

The VRE Operations Board is asked to authorize the Acting Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Federal Government Relations Services for a three-year base period with two additional one-year option periods.

**Summary:**

This action authorizes staff to issue an RFP for Federal Government Relations Services for the provision of services required to assist VRE in its efforts to achieve Federal government relations objectives as identified by the VRE Operations Board and incorporated in an annual Legislative Agenda approved by its parent Commissions; and to deal with Federal legislative, regulatory and other issues as they arise.

**Background:**

VRE has found it more expedient and effective to contract for Government Relations Services at both the State and Federal levels 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 Federal Executive Branch and Legislative issues as distinct from State issues. This procurement is for Federal Government Relations Services only. The current contract for these services was executed in August 2016 for a base three-year period and two one-year option periods. The first one-year option period will expire August 2020 and staff has recommended not exercising the second option period.

As determined in accordance with VRE Public Procurement Policies and Procedures, an Invitation for Bids 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.

Following an evaluation of proposals, negotiations are 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 is considered in the 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, an analysis is performed to compare the proposed cost with the independent cost estimate to determine whether the proposed cost is fair and reasonable.

The scope of work for the RFP includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Establish and maintain good working relationships with the Virginia Congressional delegation and other members of Congress – especially chairs of relevant committees and subcommittees, their staffs, and committee staffers.
- Establish and maintain good working relationships with the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Surface Transportation Board, the National Transportation Safety Board, and other relevant Executive Branch and Independent Federal agencies.
- Monitor, track, and inform VRE of rail or transit issues and rulemaking with the Administration, federal agencies and Congress that may directly or indirectly impact VRE, its parent commissions or member jurisdictions, under the direction of the Chief of Staff.
- Provide support, strategy and guidance on securing Capital Investment Grants and other Federal discretionary grants.

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

**Fiscal Impact:**

Funding for these activities is provided for in the FY 2020 and FY 2021 budgets under *Chief of Staff - Other Professional Services*. Funding for future years will be included in each proposed annual budget.
WHEREAS, VRE has found it more expedient and effective to contract for Government Relations Services at both the State and Federal levels than to employ staff to attempt to monitor the myriad of government and legislative activities in Richmond and Washington, D.C.; and,

WHEREAS, VRE has chosen to contract separately for Government Relations Services specific to Federal issues as distinct from State issues; and,

WHEREAS, the first one-year option period of the current contract for Federal Legislative Services expires in August 2020;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the VRE Operations Board does hereby acknowledge the determination made by the VRE Contract Administrator in accordance with 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 Acting Chief Executive Officer to issue a Request for Proposals for Federal Government Relations Services for a three-year base period with two additional one-year option periods.

Approved this 21st day of February 2020

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Gary Skinner
Chairman

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Jeanine Lawson
Secretary