Alderperson: Karen Schmidt
Item: 7D-Consent Agenda: Web Site Redesign and Implementation
Question(s)/Comments(s): I have concerns about 7D, the web site design, some of which come from residents who work with web sites and some from me and what I know in my own work. I am not asking why we want to get a new web site and a CMS, I am really glad we are doing this. What I don't understand is what we are paying for, and why we are ending up going so far away for this.

There are a lot of CMS that are open source off the shelf; I see we are buying a proprietary system. It says it's compatible with Windows 7.0 and 8.0 but not earlier or later versions, but this is a multi-year contract. They have a LOT of extra cost services: **Additional services not covered in this Agreement and extra hours will be presented to City for approval prior to commencement of work ("Extra Work"). Extra Work will be billed at Contractor's prevailing hourly rates, which are currently as follows: Content Migration, $85/hr; Graphic Production, $95/hr; Quality Assurance, Testing, Debugging, Technical Support, Webmaster Services, HTML Programming, $105/hr; Consulting, Project Management, Database Design, Dynamic Programming, $135/hr; Graphic Design, Training $125/hr; Straight flatbed scanning will be billed at $10 per scan. Touch up work to images will be billed at the Graphic Design hourly rate.** That seems to me like they ought to be included in the $50K cost. What are we doing on our end, what are our responsibilities?

I apologize upfront for being picking about this, but 50K really seems like a lot of money, and it looks like the company is going to keep sending us invoices.

I think we might hear from local web site firms who didn't see the RFP opportunity. Not the City's fault, I can see we followed our normal procedure, but I wonder if we go through the Chamber, EDC, etc. to advertise our RFP's to be sure they get out to our local companies?

Staff Response: Staff did advertise the RFP following established City procedures required by law. There were a total of fifty-three (53) downloads of the RFP from the City website. Of these downloads, four(4) local companies were represented. Twenty-three vendors attended the mandatory pre-RFP meeting held on March 1, 2011. RFP responses were actually received from a total of seven(7) vendors, two(2) of which were local firms.

Staff's approach to the selection process was to seek a solution that would bring the City's web site to the highest level of features and functionality for a municipal web site, and to turn what has become a dated web site into a showcase for the City of Bloomington. Key components of this pursuit involve creating a visually pleasing web site that also has a high degree of functionality and easy access to information. Staff believes a key to making sure the information on the City's web site is dynamic and fresh, is to place emphasis on City-wide staff's ability to add and modify information within the site. Although this is being done today, the City's current CMS system is a bit cumbersome and creates a slight road block to non-technical staff being able to add content. Staff feels the ease of use of the Vision Internet CMS will open the contribution of content for the City's web site to more non-technical staff.

Although the Vision Internet CMS is not considered open source, after development of the site the City will have full ownership of the code. The Vision Internet CMS is built on Microsoft Windows, SQL Server and ASP.NET development languages, all of which aligns with our current infrastructure and staff proficiencies. Information Services staff will have the ability to modify the site if needed using tools and technologies already in place that they are certified with. All of this means that even though the system is proprietary, it is built on proven Microsoft tools which provides long-term protection to the City.

Because Vision Internet CMS does utilize Microsoft technologies, the backend or staff side of the CMS is currently compatible with Internet Explorer (IE) 7.0 and 8.0. The front end or public side of the site will be developed to support IE 7.0 and 8.0 as well as Firefox 3.6. These browsers currently account for 93.3% of the traffic to our site. This does not mean our site will NOT work on the other browsers in the market, but that it will not be specifically optimized for them. The site will also support a number of mobile browsers such as: iPhone OS Safari 4, Android Chrome 4, Windows Mobile OS IE 6, BlackBerry Browser 4.5 and 5.0, Opera Mini 4 and 5, and Palm webOS. Due to the uncertainty of adopted standards in future browsers, it would not be appropriate to claim compatibility. The design of the site will be developed with standards-based guidelines and best practices to ensure the most compatible site that is practical. Minor changes may need to be made as future browsers are released.

Another goal built into staff's selection process was to shift some of the development responsibility from City Information Services staff to a web design company. In effect, "out-sourcing" this design work to free up time for limited I.S. staff to focus on other priorities. Although staff agrees this development could be performed by any accomplished web developer, our approach was to look for companies with proven experience in working specifically with local government agencies. Our reasoning for this stems simply from a belief that companies with this type of focus have learned, from years of experience, what works for municipalities and what doesn't. These companies also have many of the web site features and functions pre-built and integrated into their CMS. This actually requires less up-front development costs and makes the implementation process shorter. Staff also believes that, when and if custom development is required, the development process will be more efficient.

Items listed in item #7 of the contract refer to items above and beyond the defined Scope of Work (SOW) developed between City staff and Vision Internet. The SOW is referred to in the contract as "Attachment A". My apologies, but due to a miscue on staff's part, only the contract document itself (not the Scope of Work/Attachment A) was included with the original staff report. Please see the attached Scope of Work document for detailed information concerning what is included in the $50,140.00 design and implementation proposal. All work detailed on the SOW are included in this cost. Costs referenced in item #7 of the contract would only come into play if the City changed this original scope of work.

Staff believes the proposal from Vision Internet is well within the anticipated costs associated with a project of this size and scope. Of the seven(7) RFP respondents, all were within a range of $42,000.00 to $58,974.00. All reference checks concerning Vision Internet indicated their projects were on time and on budget. There was no indication from the references that any hidden charges occurred.

Alderperson: Mboka Mwilambwe
Item: 7D-Consent Agenda: Web Site Redesign and Implementation
Question(s)/Comment(s): I am assuming that residents will have the opportunity for feedback throughout the development process?

I am assuming that great emphasis will be placed on self-serve capabilities so that Staff will be freed up from having deal with too many inquiries? What will be their method for determining what to feature on the site, i.e. how will they determine what kind of questions go into the FAQ section? How do they accommodate individuals with limited to no access to the internet? What is the City's back-up plan should we not be happy with the company through the development process or even after the product has been delivered?

I am not the most tech-savvy, but Google Chrome is not mentioned as a web browser that the content will be compatible with. I have noticed more and more people using it especially the younger generations. Should we be concerned about that?
Staff Response: Staff definitely intends to include input from Council and citizen groups. In fact, the recommended vendor had multiple excellent references regarding their willingness, process and flexibility in including multiple groups' input in the design process. Staff plans to work with Administration and the City Council communications working group to develop a plan as to how best to include Council and citizen input. Staff is absolutely committed to obtaining this input and incorporating it into the design process. Staff has also been receiving public input via a random survey request posed to City web site visitors for the past six(6) months. This feedback will also be incorporated into the design process.

Self-serve capabilities are paramount in the design process. The new web site design will incorporate new self-serve features. There are also be many new self-serve features tied into the implementation of the City's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project. Many self-serve features require that system on the "backend" to take those citizen requests and place them in an internal system that allows staff to effectively handle and respond to those requests. Simply stated, the backend system takes those requests and makes sure they don't fall through the cracks.

Content for the web site will be defined within the design process. The definition process will include interviews from staff, Council and any other defined stakeholders. Feedback will also be obtained from the public as the design process is further clarified.

Public access to web content for those without Internet access is not directly accommodated within the Vision Internet SOW. There are aspects of the ERP implementation that will eventually aid City staff in assisting these citizens via telephone. There is a 311 component included with the ERP system that could aid reception staff's access to key web content and other frequently asked questions within the City and other local government agencies.

Although Vision Internet's contract does not specifically mention compatibility with the Google Chrome desktop browser, staff has inquired about this compatibility and has performed its own tests using the Chrome browser to access other sites developed by Vision Internet.   These tests have uncovered no loss of functionality or graphical anomalies. By the fact that the site will be based on industry standard guidelines, it will be inherently compatible with a majority of the browsers on the market both today and in the future. Also, as mentioned in response to Alderman Schmidt's question above, Vision Internet further guarantees compatibility with multiple smart phone browsers in use today.

Alderperson: Bernie Anderson
Item: 7I-Consent Agenda: Ordinance Amending Chapter 38, Section 167.2 (Sidewalk Café)
Question(s)/Comment(s): I don't have an issue with this type of sidewalk usage such as Eric's on Wood Street, but could there be other issues we are exposing ourselves to with a blanket permit? Why would this not be considered a special use permit?
Staff Response: Removed from Consent - Ordinance Amending Chapter 38, Section 167.2 of the Bloomington City Code (Sidewalk Café). (Recommend that the Text Amendment be approved and the Ordinance passed.)

Alderperson: Karen Schmidt
Item: 9A-Regular Agenda: Text Amendment to Section 301.6 of Chapter 21 – Refuse Fee Retain Fourteen Dollar Monthly Fee
Question(s)/Comment(s): Just a heads-up that I have concerns about a 4 year extension on this. I am confused about our work to document the costs of refuse collection, to consider differential costs to residents based on their use of our system, to provide incentives for producing more recycling and less garbage, for considering not having the city collect bulk waste, etc. I thought we were looking at all of these and would be adjusting our services and fees accordingly. If I have this wrong, please let me know? If I am not wrong, then I am not comfortable with supporting a 4 year extension.
Staff Response: The ordinance is intended to remove any date where the current fee of $14 would end. While the out year budgets show this fee continuing up to 2016, it is important to note that the Public Works Department expects that this fee will need to be modified with City Council approval after the completion of the Solid Waste Master Plan. The Solid Waste Master Plan will include items for consideration such as a tiered rate system, what to do with the bulk waste service level and ways to incentivize recycling.

Alderperson: Mboka Mwilambwe
Item: 9A-Regular Agenda: Text Amendment to Section 301.6 of Chapter 21 – Refuse Fee Retain Fourteen Dollar Monthly Fee
Question(s)/Comment(s): What of our discussion about a sliding scale for garbage fee? If the current fee is assumed for the next four years, does this mean that the sliding scale concept would not be considered until 2016? What were the benchmark communities? It would be good to add in packet for future reference. Cost analysis of the program is a good idea. It will better inform future decisions.
Staff Response: The ordinance is intended to remove any date where the current fee of $14 would end. While the out year budgets show this fee continuing up to 2016, it is important to note that the Public Works Department expects that this fee will need to be modified with City Council approval after the completion of the Solid Waste Master Plan. The Solid Waste Master Plan will include items for consideration such as a tiered rate system, what to do with the bulk waste service level and ways to incentivize recycling.