



Solano County

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Legislation Text

File #: 19-201, **Version:** 1

Approve a renewal to an agreement with Gartner Incorporated for a 1 year subscription to its advanced planning and research services in the amount of \$93,000; and Authorize the Chief Information Officer to execute the agreement

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒
Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Information Technology recommends that the Board approve a renewal to an agreement with Gartner Incorporated for a 1 year subscription to its advanced planning and research services, in the amount of \$93,000 and authorize the Chief Information Officer to execute the agreement.

SUMMARY:

Gartner Incorporated is the preeminent provider of research, benchmarking, consulting and planning services in the information technology (IT) industry. The Department has subscribed to Gartner's research and advisory services since 2010 and has used Gartner services to provide advice on IT service delivery models, staffing, service benchmarking, sourcing, contracting, technology architecture, and product selection. The Department has found the services to be extremely beneficial and has leveraged Gartner's expertise in the technology marketplace to reduce costs on products and service contracts, improve service level agreements, negotiate favorable terms and conditions and in the identification and reduction of contract risks. The Department is recommending that the agreement with Gartner be renewed for the next year. The license agreement is included as Attachment A.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are sufficient budget appropriations for this service in the Department of Information Technology's FY2018/2019 budget. The costs associated with preparing the agenda item are nominal and absorbed within the department's FY2018/19 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

The Department is requesting approval to renew the County's subscription to Gartner Inc.'s research services for 2019-2020. The Department has subscribed to Gartner for its research services since 2010. Gartner offers several levels of service and we initially subscribed to its basic level which provided research on products and manufacturers. Staff found that service to be very useful in informing our product selection decisions.

The Department is in the process of developing its organization, management team, and expanding the depth of responsibility of the County technical staff. Additionally, the County is in the process of moving to a hybrid cloud-based technology environment where some applications will be hosted on premise and others distributed to multiple vendor cloud environments depending upon the specific benefits to the application and its County business owner. This system topology involves more vendors and more complex contract vehicles including such things as infrastructure as a service, platform as a service, and software as a service. Each of

these contract vehicles has its own set of business concerns and risks.

Some examples of how the Department has leveraged services and research include:

- In-depth review of contract terms, pricing, and service levels for the Hosted Communications Services and IT Service Management agreements, benefiting the County with significant vendor concessions in contract terms, pricing, and service levels.
- In-depth review of contract terms, pricing and service levels for a hosted video solution for law enforcement that identified significant short-comings and risks in the initial offering and helped shape the County's negotiating position.
- Architectural technical and business advice on hyper-converged technology infrastructure offerings, benefiting the County by correctly sizing and optimizing the procurement of servers, storage, and the supporting network.
- Numerous technical review and advisory calls on security architecture, data encryption, and infrastructure planning.
- Consumed hundreds of research documents providing the department guidance on multiple technology initiatives, roadmap planning, best practice processes, and allowing the department to rapidly relate business requirements against provider products and services.
- Completed maturity assessments specific to department technology capabilities to better understand operational practices that inhibit or enhance business outcomes.
- Joined monthly interactions with executive partner and analysts on cloud opportunities, risk management, technology trends and strategic planning.
- Attended executive events tailored to exchange ideas from IT industry leaders and gain a strategic view of emerging trends shaping IT and the business. These events explore new ways to approach IT challenges.

The Department is requesting to renew one license for Gartner's Leadership Team services that will provide access to the following critical resources:

- Dedicated strategic executive partner to assist in guiding the Department in multiple ongoing strategic and operational improvements (e.g., IT maturity assessments, strategy and roadmaps, business relationship management, risk management, governance, and cost optimization).
- Independent and objective assessment of buyer-seller documents (e.g., request for proposal, service level agreements, and vendor contracts).
- Support the team of senior managers and lead staff with professional development and succession planning.
- One-on-one access to more than 1,900 expert analysts covering over 1,300 IT topics.
- Unlimited access to thousands of independent research reports regarding technology vendors and best practices applicable to current business challenges.
- Detailed benchmarks that assist in establishing various IT metrics (e.g., customer satisfaction, service availability, and workforce investment).
- Detailed benchmarks that assist in the validation of costs and service levels for use in vendor contract negotiations.
- Access to executive program events and team workshops focused on areas needing improvement (e.g., service management, customer service, planning and governance).

Over the course of the next year, the Department will be issuing requests for proposals for sourcing providers (the agreement with Avenu Insights & Analytics expires December 2019). We plan to engage Gartner in reviewing our proposal, vendor responses, and associated contracts via our licenses for its services. We think this approach will be more economical than contracting for this sort of support service, separately, as we did

several years ago.

In addition to engaging Gartner advisory services in new sourcing contracts, other initiatives over the course of the next year will include:

- Review of technical plans and products to support a major network refresh including software defined networking (SDN)
- Technical roadmap for hybrid-cloud storage of surveillance video
- Technical roadmap for replacement of the County's central data store (SAN) that's currently over 5 years old.
- Review current best practices for backup systems, related compression, de-duplication, data encryption and replace current under-performing products
- Developing financial models and chargeback algorithms for hybrid-cloud infrastructures.

The Gartner subscription is transferrable should there be a change in management. It is a solid investment not only for the technical research and advisory services but also for the many staff development and educational opportunities made available through the Gartner library and webinars.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose to not approve this agreement; however, this is not recommended. In addition to access to industry-leading technical research, the Department and the County benefits from Gartner's ongoing, expert support on technology and service improvements initiatives.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the contract as to form.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION