



Legislation Text

File #: 19-337, **Version:** 1

Authorize the Department of Information Technology to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the upgrade of the County's on-premise Voice over IP telephone communications system

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

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Information Technology (DoIT) recommends the Board of Supervisors to:

Authorize the Chief Information Officer to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the upgrade of the County's on-premise Voice over IP telephone communications system.

SUMMARY:

The VoIP telecommunications systems that the County relies on for voice/fax/voicemail services is aging and currently beyond its vendor supported useful life. The software and hardware that supports this system must be upgraded to provide highly reliable communications services.

On April 25, 2017 the County entered into a contract to transition its VoIP communications services to a cloud-based telecommunications provider. The system has not been placed in service due to multiple functional barriers that the County deems unsolvable with the cloud-based solution. The County has incurred costs in the attempt to implement the cloud-based solution, however these implementation costs were on-par with the avoided costs of ongoing maintenance of the on-premise solution.

At this time, the County cannot reliably predict a successful go-live of the previously planned cloud-based VoIP solution. However, the County can estimate costs and a timeline to upgrade our known and reliable on-premise solution. The costs estimated to upgrade and then maintain an on-premise solution are less than the costs to implement and then maintain a cloud-based solution. It is therefore recommended to reinvest in our on-premise VoIP telecommunications system.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

DoIT is estimating a one-time cost of approximately \$380,000 to upgrade the on-premise VoIP system. This budgetary estimate includes both professional services to aid with software and hardware upgrades to modernize the datacenter architecture required to run the VoIP solution. Ongoing annual maintenance costs for the on-premise VoIP solution are estimated at \$352,000. Both of these estimates will be refined during the RFP process with final costs presented as part of a recommended contract award.

The funds for the one-time costs to upgrade will be drawn from existing salary savings in the DoIT appropriations for FY2018/19 provided a completed contract can be approved by your board before the end of the fiscal year. Salary savings that can be attributed to General Fund salaries and not attributable to grant funded positions currently exist in the FY2018/19 appropriation and will be used for this one-time cost. Ongoing maintenance costs are predicted to begin in FY2019/20 and are currently included in the recommended DoIT budget.

The costs associated with preparing the agenda item and RFP are nominal and absorbed by the department's FY2018/19 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

The County needs a highly reliable telephone communications system and the current solution is at risk. The current on-premise solution is past the official end of life. The costs to upgrade the current solution (\$380k) and costs to provide ongoing maintenance (\$352k) are less than the cost to implement and maintain the hosted solution.

The cloud hosted solution under implementation does not meet the County's needs and cannot meet regulatory requirements to properly encrypt voice traffic to protect Federal Tax Information which may be transmitted over the system. The costs to complete the implementation are unknown as success is not yet predictable. Implementation costs to date have exceeded \$266k. Annual ongoing maintenance of this solution would start at \$610k.

DoIT is seeking approval to release an RFP that seeks responses from Cisco recommended implementation vendors to support the County in the upgrade. The County is targeting to return to the Board on June 11, 2019 seeking approval of contract documents, and authorization to transfer appropriations from salary savings to expense line items for funding the upgrade.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose to not allow DoIT to issue an RFP for the on-premise VoIP upgrade, however the current equipment and software is past its end of life and will not be supported by Cisco. Without the upgrade, County is at risk of an extended down time of telephone communication system.

The Board could also choose to direct DoIT to continue with the cloud hosted VoIP solution, however that solution does not meet regulatory security requirements and has also been proven to not meet some key end-user functional requirements.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Department of Information Technology has consulted with County Counsel and General Services on a purchasing method to expedite the procurement process to meet the necessary timeline. Further consultation with County Counsel occurred to ensure that the County's withdraw from the contract with the cloud hosted VoIP provider met all requirements and was on solid legal footing.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION