



Legislation Text

File #: 19-634, Version: 1

Approve an agreement and order form with Accela, Inc. for 4 annual subscriptions from September 12, 2019 through September 11, 2023 totaling \$465,494 to access Accela Environmental Health, a cloud based permitting and inspection data management software system needed to replace an existing data management system; Approve a contract with SEP Technology Consulting, LLC for \$238,820 with a term of September 24, 2019 through June 30, 2020 for one time configuration and training to use the software; and Delegate authority to the Director of Resource Management to execute the agreement, order form, contract and any change orders or amendments up to 10% of the contract amount and to renew subsequent annual subscriptions that are within 7% of the prior year net total amount within budgeted appropriations

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

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:

The Department of Resource Management recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve an agreement and order form for four annual subscriptions from September 12, 2019 through September 11, 2023 totaling \$465,494 with Accela, Inc. to access Accela Environmental Health, a cloud based permitting and inspection data management system needed to replace an existing data management system;
2. Approve a contract with SEP Technology Consulting, LLC for \$209,420 with a term from September 24, 2019 through June 30, 2020 for one-time configuration and training to use the software; and
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Resource Management to execute the agreement, order form, contract and any change orders or amendments up to 10% of the contract amount and to renew subsequent annual subscriptions that are within 7% of the prior year net total amount within budgeted appropriations.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Resource Management is seeking a software subscription service agreement with Accela, Inc. for access to its Accela Environmental Health module to replace the portion of an existing data management system known as Sweeps provided by Sweeps Software, Inc. that is used for most of the Department's Environmental Health programs. The use of Accela Environmental Health is necessary to improve compliance with state mandated electronic reporting requirements for hazardous materials program information to the state's on-line database, which Sweeps has been unable to perform effectively or efficiently. Accela Environmental Health will also improve staff efficiencies and customer service. The software includes electronic inspection reports and forms in many programs, including the retail food protection and hazardous materials programs, that are automatically updated to current requirements, saving staff time that is currently devoted to building, maintaining and updating program specific electronic reports within Sweeps. Its platform allows for staff to access the software from the field using a variety of field equipment (cell phones, tablets), which should save time from bringing bulkier equipment to inspections, and it has a public portal that will allow on-line payments and document submissions from regulated businesses.

In order to utilize Accela Environmental Health, it must also be configured to match the Department's specific permitting and inspection workflow and staff must be trained on use of the software. To accomplish this work, the Department is seeking a contract with SEP Technology Consulting, LLC to configure Accela Environmental Health and train staff on its use. SEP Technology Consulting, LLC has worked closely with Accela, Inc. in other jurisdictions nationally to successfully configure Accela Environmental Health and train staff.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The total four (4) year cost of this request is \$704,313.50. This includes the \$465,493.50 four-year subscription cost to Accela, Inc. for Accela Environmental Health, which is payable through annual subscription fees as enumerated below.

Year 1	September 12, 2019-September 11,2020	\$108,000
Year 2	September 12, 2020-September 11,2021	\$113,400
Year 3	September 12, 2021-September 11,2022	\$119,070
Year 4	September 12, 2022-September 11,2023	\$125,024

This payment schedule reflects a 5% increase over the prior year's annual subscription cost, which is in alignment with the annual percent increase of other Accela products utilized by the Department. Subsequent annual subscription costs will be included within each future fiscal year's specific proposed budget. The time frame of the subscription for Accela Environmental Health will correspond to the Accela Land Management module for development related permits and Licensing module for Business licenses modules used within the Department. The cost for configuration and training by SEPTechnology Consulting, LLC is fixed at \$224,420, with an additional \$14,400 estimated to cover reimbursable costs. The FY2019/20 Adopted Budget includes the first-year subscription costs for Accela Environmental Health of \$108,000 and the configuration and training costs of \$238,820. The cost for Accela Environmental Health and its configuration is recovered through Environmental Health permit fees and from enforcement revenue to improve hazardous materials programs.

There will be a period of overlap between Accela Environmental Health and use of Sweeps due to the time necessary to fully configure Accela Environmental Health, train staff on its use, convert some Sweeps data over to the new platform, and to test the new software's performance. The costs of both systems are included in the FY2019/20 Adopted Budget.

The costs associated with preparing the agenda item are nominal and absorbed by the department's FY2019/20 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION:

The Department's Environmental Health Services Division is responsible for permitting or registering and routinely inspecting over 6,900 restaurants, gas stations, businesses with hazardous materials, public pools, hotels and motels, state small water systems, septic tank pumpers, body artists, and other businesses and services to protect public health and the environment. To keep track of the permitting and inspection of these businesses and services, Environmental Health utilizes Sweeps, which is based on the Pervasive software platform (an on-site server to desktop Windows based program). At the time, Sweeps was utilized by most environmental health agencies throughout California. Beginning in the early 2000's, Envision and then Envision Connect, a software made by Decade Software, became the predominantly used by most environmental health agencies in California over Sweeps. Over the years, Decade Software worked very closely with environmental health agencies to streamline inspections into cloud-based formats. Decade Software was also very instrumental in early stakeholder discussions with the California Environmental

Protection Agency (CalEPA) and final implementation of computer to computer transfer of local hazardous materials program regulatory information to the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS) state database to comply with state mandated hazardous materials reporting requirements. In November 2014, Accela, Inc. purchased Decade Software to integrate components of Decade's environmental health platform into Accela's Civic Platform as a separate Environmental Health module.

Accela Environmental Health provides a modern, intuitive and customizable user interface to help improve efficiency and effectiveness, which will improve customer service. Use of Accela Environmental Health will allow staff time to be focused on inspections, plan reviews and other responses to customers rather than on reporting requirements to the state or the development of electronic forms or inspections. For example, Accela Environmental Health has fully automated reporting to CERS. Currently, the Department estimates that 1.02 FTE or greater is needed annually to manually make Sweeps report electronically to CERS. This manual entry results in transcription errors and missing information, which was recently identified as a deficit in the County's hazardous materials program implementation in a state audit. It also takes staff out of the field to correct errors in submissions to the state. Accela Environmental Health also has an on-line citizen access tool that could allow operators to track the progress of plans and permits, saving time spent answering routine calls regarding status.

Currently the Environmental Health Service Division, along with the Planning, Building and Public Works Divisions in Resource Management, utilizes Accela's Land Management and Licensing modules to assist with the issuance and inspection of land development related permits, including septic systems, water wells, building permits and zoning permits, and for business licenses. If approved, this request will consolidate all environmental health division programs to an Accela based platform, whether through an on-site server or cloud-based subscription service, which will lead to efficiencies in processing permits common throughout the Department.

SEP Technology Consulting, LLC estimates that it will take approximately six months to fully configure the software and train staff on its use.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board may choose not to approve the agreements or order form. This is not recommended because Accela Environmental Health should significantly improve efficiency and effectiveness of mandated services and is needed to comply with state mandated electronic reporting requirements for hazardous materials programs, and SEP Technology Consulting, LLC has successfully installed this software for other jurisdictions nationally.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Department of Information Technology (DoIT) and County Counsel were consulted on this item and had input into the agreements. The Department discussed the use of Accela with San Diego County's Environmental Health as they currently utilize Accela for their Environmental Health programs.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION