

Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: LM

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting: December 1, 2015
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: City Clerk Mary Gourley
Subject: Acceptance of Report out of Update on Progress to Date on the City Web Site Upgrade as well as Status Update on Searchable On Line Municipal Code
Recommendation: That the Mayor and City Council Receive the Informational Report
Funding: Currently Budgeted: xxx Yes No N/A
Net General Fund Cost: \$
Amount: \$

INTRODUCTION:

This item is to request the City Council receive the informational report on the progress to date on the City Web Site Upgrade as well as Status Update on Searchable On Line Municipal Code.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the approved FY 2015-2016 City Budget, the City Council approved funding to upgrade the City Web site as well as funding for an on line searchable Municipal Code.

The City currently operates and maintains its own City Web Site which was last re-designed in 2009/2010. Once the web site was re-designed, volunteers and staff have been updating and maintaining the City Web Site but the web site is now at a point where the level of expertise required to update/redesign the web site goes beyond the level of staff. In order to enhance the look, functionality and versatility of the current City Web Site, a professional web team consultant is required to perform these services as staff does not have the expertise or IT personnel required for such an update/re-design.

Our current website consists of a number of "static" "non-interactive" pages which contain useful information about the City, its departments and services. In addition, it features news releases, a calendar of events/meetings, allows residents to email a general information City email account for miscellaneous requests that is directed to the appropriate department, and provides meeting agendas and minutes of the City Council and other Boards and Commissions and Committees. The website also allows users to view streaming video of a City Council Meeting or view meetings through You Tube as well as linking to other City media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.

However, as technology in this area is continuously improving, the City's current design does not include many of the interactive features available today, such as searchable calendars, online fillable forms, interactive mapping or electronic bill processing, to name a few. With a more interactive web site, citizens feel more empowered because they can conduct business without having to call or come into City Hall. City staff will see a reduction in staff time for updating the City web site as well as an improved operational efficiency and user friendliness.

While the City could solicit proposals for website design services from various vendors, the City can allow the use of the non-negotiated competitive processes conducted by public agencies determining that the public's interest will be adequately protected if it is determined that the total cost of the service is likely to

be less than could be obtained through an independent City competitive process. This project will update and migrate the City of Sebastopol's website from its current platform to a new secure, easily updated, modern platform.

DISCUSSION:

In early October, City staff began the process of soliciting vendors to meet with representatives of the City to discuss avenues to upgrade/update/re-design the City web site to ensure a modern, interactive, secure web site.

Staff researched vendors associated with the League of CA Cities, reached out to other cities of similar size, as well as local companies that staff thought contained the expertise to help guide the City through this process. Staff reached out to potential vendors and met with four vendors who staff thought possessed the requirement ability and expertise to help the City navigate the technicalities of updating a City Web site.

Many of the key components included:

- Security
- Mobile friendly
- Users can be given levels of access
- Users can easily update content, upload documents, update calendars, etc.
- Documents are easily found by Search function
- People are easily found by Search function
- Simple navigation with drop down or expandable menus
- Simple design
- ADA compliant
- Simple calendar for meetings
- Image gallery
- Video gallery (ability to link to YouTube and Livestream)
- Incorporate Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)

City staff used the following requirements and responsiveness to determine further interviews:

- Vendor will use requirements noted above and evaluate the existing website while making suggestions for improvements to the labeling and organization of the new website, within reasonable parameters to increase the usability by city staff and the public at large.
- Vendor will recommend platform for the site, including design of new site, graphics, menu navigation, layouts, color scheme, security measures, document management, calendar management, people/staff directory, business directory, link library, and video library and proceed with set up of the new environment.
- Vendor will create a plan with necessary tasks and timelines for preparation for importing/migration, migration to new platform, testing and quality assurance, and go live while ensuring security and stability of all elements of site.
- Vendor will propose budget for said scope of work, including all known planning, tools, fees, etc.
- Vendor will hand off management of site by setting up Administrator accounts for those staff who will be managing content, carefully review the new site for accuracy, make adjustments, set up any needed redirects, then go live. Vendor will remain available for support should technical issues arise requiring the expertise of the vendor.

Vendors were asked to describe and show the City the technology they would use to update/upgrade the web site such as:

- updating, posting, adding documents, images, video, pages, etc.
- proprietary content management system
- costs involved with a proprietary content management system; annual cost; monthly cost
- what happens if you go out of business
- if design will be mobile and portable (tablet) adaptable
- calendar items, edit them, and remove them - Add agenda items to calendar items
- incorporate social media
- will your design or technology allow for ADA compliance
- hosting of site
- timeline

In addition to redesigning the website and creating a new navigation system, the vendors were also asked to incorporate enhanced features and interactive components into the new website such as:

- An interactive, searchable calendar
- Dynamic banners
- A document library for forms and other widely used documents
- A survey tool that allows the City to create online surveys and track results in real-time
- A photo gallery
- An interactive facilities directory
- An e-notification tool that allows users to subscribe to receive email alerts, news, announcements, or meeting agendas.

One of the most exciting features to be incorporated into the website is a content management tool that will enable non-technical staff to update content and manage different areas of the website, such as announcements, press releases, news and other pages. This tool will greatly enhance the City's ability to keep its website fresh and relevant. More importantly, this tool will allow the City to grow its website over time without the expense of a full-time webmaster or contract with an outside web design firm.

The design and implementation of a new website is estimated to take up between four (4) to six (6) months. As of the writing of this staff report, staff is preparing for second interviews with input from all Departments. Staff anticipates these interviews to be conducted early December 2015 with a proposal to be submitted to the City Council for approval January/February 2016 timeframe.

At the same time as the web site redesign, City staff hired a consultant to provide codification and electronic publishing services for the City for recodifying and republishing the existing Municipal Code and providing publishing services for new ordinances to supplement the Municipal Code. This includes set up of the Municipal Code for on line access and search ability. The consultant will also provide internet hosting services for the online City Municipal Code in a format accessed through the City Web Site,

To date, City staff has been working with the consultant to update the Municipal Code into a useable format for the City Web site. The consultant is working on preparing and reformatting the City and proposes to have the project completed in the February/March time frame.

As the City Web Site may take four to six months to complete once a consultant is hired, the Municipal Code will be loaded onto the current City directory and transferred upon update of a new City web site.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council receive the informational report on the progress to date on the City Web Site Upgrade as well as Status Update on Searchable On Line Municipal Code.