MARYLAND STATE RETIREMENT AGENCY

PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING
FOR
REDESIGN AND DEVELOP AGENCY WEB SITE WITH CMS

SOLICITATION NO.: G20B7400003/ SRA 17-04

APRIL 21, 2017
120 East Baltimore Street
Room 1631-A
Baltimore, Maryland

10:05 a.m. - 11:15

PRESENT FROM MSRA:

MARGIE J. GORDON, Senior Procurement Officer

IRA R. GREENSTEIN, Chief Information Systems Officer

MICHAEL D. GOLDEN, Director, External Affairs

JOHN W. HAYNES, Procurement Specialist

THOMAS MONTANYE, Director, Systems Development

ALSO PRESENT:

JIM BLACK, ITNOVA

KEN PAPA, Proactive Shift

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BRIAN ZERNHELT, Software Consortium

REPORTED BY: KATHLEEN A. COYLE, Notary Public

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. GORDON: Good morning everyone. And I trust everyone has signed in and left a business card if you had one, and took a key information sheet, please, in case you don't have your RFP in front of you. I want to inform you, if you don't already know, we have Ms. Kathy Coyle from Hunt Reporting to record the minutes. And once they are reviewed, then they will be posted on eMaryland Marketplace along with questions and answers and any addendums that might go forth, which probably not. Oh, no. It's not on eMaryland. I take that back. It's not on eMaryland Marketplace. It will be going out to the contract, master contract vendors. I keep forgetting what this one is.

This is the TORFP G20B7400003, redesign and develop agency website with CMS. Our code is

SRA 17-04. And we will start with the introduction of the panel, and then we'll go around the room so you can introduce yourself and the company that you work for, or are associated with. My name is Margie Gordon. I'm a senior procurement officer.

MR. HAYNES: I'm John Haynes, procurement specialist.

MR. GOLDEN: Michael Golden, director of external affairs.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Ira Greenstein, chief information systems officer.

MR. MONTANYE: Tom Montanye, director of systems development.

MS. GORDON: This -- I'm sorry. Go ahead.

MR. BLACK: Jim Black with ITNOVA. We are an MBE, EWIC, and also 8A certified, based in Annapolis, Maryland.

MR. PAPA: I'm Ken Papa. I'm with TEM Software. And we're out of the DC -- they're out of Pennsylvania. I live in DC. So they sent me as their representative. They have -- I'm not sure exactly what all their qualifications are from the contractual level.

MS. GORDON: Okay.

MR. ZERNHELT: Brian Zernhelt with Software Consortium.

MS. GORDON: All right. As you know, this is for the redesign and develop agency website. It's a CATS+ contract in functional area two, web and internet systems. It is also a small business reserve only solicitation. The closing time and date for this TORFP is due by 2:00 p.m., on May 9, no later than 2:00 p.m. No late bids will be accepted. Questions and proposals are to be sent to myself at procurement@sra.state.md.us And all that information is located on this key summary sheet that is page four of your RFP. It talks about everything you ever wanted to know about this TORFP. And there's no MBE goal or VSBE goal, which is veterans or minority business. And the primary place of performance for this TORFP is, Ira?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Well, here or your, you know, wherever it is. But this is the agency's one and only site.

MS. GORDON: And we also request that you do -- if you don't choose to submit a proposal that you do submit a return response feedback form. And those can be located on the website. So that's to help us in the event something you can't comply with or you feel something is wrong, we get all that feedback for the next time.

So going to page eight, section 1.4, and it's also basically section four on page 35, which is my most important thing to talk to you about is the task order proposal format submission requirements. It's a little bit different this year. It's basically that everything gets emailed. We prefer email. You can do by written documents. But if you do choose for the email, then both of those emails have to be separate for the technical and financial, and they have to be password protected. And what you will do is send me a separate email to let me know what your password is. And that's just to me. Okay. Everything comes just to me at that procurement@sra address.

MR. ZERNEHEL: You want them both password protected?

MS. GORDON: Both of them. Yes, that's the new thing this year.

MR. PAPA: If they're going to send you a password it might be good to send it through a different medium, you know, text it or send it to a different email. Just a general, good security practice. You know, it doesn't do too much good to send it as a separate email if it's going to the same box. Just a thought. Just a thought.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Thank you. Understood.

MR. PAPA: Okay.

MS. GORDON: Well, I'm only going by what they say.

MR. PAPA: Okay.

MS. GORDON: Well, I can say you can call me and give me the password if you want to do it that way. My phone number and everything is listed on this key information sheet. So if you feel awkward about sending the password by email transmitting it, then you can give me a call and tell me the password that way.

MR. GREENSTEIN: We appreciate the comment.

MS. GORDON: We will make note of that DOIT.

MR. GOLDEN: You mean the agency or the DOIT?

MR. GREENSTEIN: The Department of Information, DOIT, in Annapolis.

MS. GORDON: Department of -- yes. Not the class clown.

Okay. Next is 4.1, basically says each master contractor receiving this CATS+ work shall respond no later than the submission date and time designated in the key information summary sheet. Each master contractor is required to submit one of two possible responses. As I said, the proposal, or two, a completed master contractor feedback form. And that is required by Department of Information Technology, DOIT, or acronym.

And then we would go onto, after all the attachments and everything that you must submit with the technical proposal also would be the conflict of interest affidavit and all the non-disclosure agreements. The attachments 5A, 5B for minimum qualifications summary and personnel resume form. And attachment 12, which is the living wage affidavit agreement. And attachment 15, which is regarding investments in Iran. And last but not least, in the technical/financial proposal, of course, would be attachment one, the price sheet signed off as a pdf.

Then we will drop to oral presentations/interviews. All offerors who propose task order personnel will be required to make an oral presentation to the State representatives in the form of oral presentations. Significant representations made by master contractor during the oral presentation shall be submitted in writing. All such representations will become part of the master contractors proposal and are binding if the task order is awarded to the master contractor. I myself will notify the master contractor of time and place of oral presentations. Do you have a comment on the orals?

MR. GREENSTEIN: No.

MS. GORDON: Okay. Questions, section 1.6. All questions must be submitted via email to myself, no later than the time and date indicated in the key information sheet. Answers applicable to all master contractors will be distributed to all master contractors who are known to have received a copy of this. Answers can be considered final and binding only when asked and answered in writing by the State.

Min quals, section two. And that’s on page 15. Offerors’ company minimum qualifications. Only those master contractors that fully meet all min quals criteria shall be eligible for proposal evaluation. The master contractor’s proposal and references will be used to verify min quals. The master contractor’s proposal shall demonstrate meeting the following minimum requirements: at least two years experience in public facing website design and implementation. The offerors personnel minimum qualifications: only those master contractors supply proposed key personnel that fully meet all minimum qualification criteria shall be eligible for TORFP proposal evaluation. The key personnel proposed under this TORFP must meet all minimum quals for the labor category proposed as identified in the CATS+ master contract, section 2.N. Resumes shall clearly outline starting dates and ending dates for each applicable experience or skill. The master contractor shall propose two key personnel in response to this Board. One individual must qualify as a senior level business analyst role, and the second must qualify as a senior level web developer role. All other planned positions shall be described generally in the staffing plan, and may not be used as evidence of fulfilling company or personnel minimum qualifications.

Task order contractor and personnel experience. The following experience will be evaluated as part of the technical proposal: 2.2.1 says for both master contractor proposed personnel breadth of knowledge of functions involving in decreasing preferential order. Public defined benefits/pension administration. Defined contribution program administration, treasury operations, comptroller operations. These functions engage in activities that are similar to those at the Maryland State Retirement Agency in that they intrinsically interact with the constituency in areas like investments, monthly benefit payments or assets/cash management where the constituency is presented with options from which they can choose service delivery mechanisms.

In 2.2.2 says will propose senior web

developer personnel. Experience developing websites using usability techniques, experience using CMS or website development. Let me stop there. What's CMS?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Content Management System.

MS. GORDON: Thank you. I knew that, but it just kind of slipped. Evidence of customer related contracted or employee related experiences designing websites that have been certified to comply with WCAG 2.0 or section 508 guidelines for accessibility. For proposed senior business analyst personnel, experience interviewing and documenting requirements from non-technical business unit staff, associated specifically with website design or ongoing maintenance.
Experience with public facing websites for public sector defined benefit pension organizations.

MR. GOLDEN: The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.

MS. GORDON: Okay. We'll now go to section three, which is the scope of work. And I will toss that over to Ira Greenstein.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Okay. I'm going to go in order, you know, touching on a couple of things in the task order RFP. I'm not going to go through the whole thing. You can read that on your own. I'm glad that Margie covered this stuff. Actually, I was going to cover that also. I would note that the order seems a little illogical to me that we have qualifications before the scope, but such is the template that we're working with.

The key information sheet on page four, it is time and materials. We do have a budget. We know what peer organizations have paid for their sites. On the other hand, we don't want to hem anyone in. We want the new site to be done well, and we want it to be done efficiently. We've left it as a time and materials.

On page eight, dealing with oral presentations. It says any significant representation made by master contractor during the oral presentation shall be submitted in writing. All such representations will become part of the master contractor’s proposal and are binding. One of the underlying, unwritten statements in there is that State rules are that nothing new can be introduced in orals. You can explain what’s in the proposal submission, but the proposal submission is what is evaluated. So no new materials or new credentials can be introduced at that point in time. That’s very important to note. And that is something which has come about in the last year or two as I recall. So make the proposal submission self contained.

Jumping to the scope of work. We’re issuing this task order RFP -- and this is on page 17 -- to obtain the public website redesign services and associated contents management tool, or content management system or CMS, in accordance with the scope of work described in section three. We do intend to host the website ourselves. On page 19 there are a number of highlights about what is different in an agency like this from State government in general. I would just note a couple of these. The primary focus of this agency is active and retired participants, along with beneficiaries in retirement programs. Also employers and investment, you know, managers do work through our website. But our primary focus is not the general public. This is different from other, you know, agencies in the State government. We intend for the site to be task focused rather than dumping of information. That is part of what we want in the redesign. We want the redesign to reflect the long-term relationship that we have with our members, which can be as much as 60 years. That is slightly different from other areas of State government. We also use our website to communicate with former employees who are vested and eligible for benefits, even though they may have left their respective employers decades before. In other words, you work for the state or for one of our 120 some odd participating governmental units, you are vested, but you have now gone on. You are still entitled to benefits. We spend a great deal of time here trying to find people who have reached retirement age, mandatory retirement age, and whose benefits we're holding here ready to be paid out, but we can't find them anymore because they haven't been in the workforce that we service for 20, 30 years. It's actually remarkable aspect of this agencies work --

MR. GOLDEN: It also includes people that are unvested.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Yes.

MR. GOLDEN: I mean, there are people that --

MR. GREENSTEIN: Leave and never --

MR. GOLDEN: -- leave but they have money in their account and it continues to accumulate interest for years after they leave service. And it just sits there. It's a, you know, pot of money that they're owed but, you know, they don't avail themselves of it. That's another --

MR. GREENSTEIN: Yes.

MR. GOLDEN: -- we're trying to go after those people that are unvested.

MR. GREENSTEIN: It comes to millions of dollars that we owe people and just can't find them to pay them. Many millions.

We are also unique within State government in that we are actually tasked with earning money by investing our portfolio. Right now our portfolio is somewhere around 47 billion dollars, which is actually larger than the entire State government budget.

Jumping ahead. On page 20 we list a number of things that we feel our website needs to be better at. And we've listed ways that we think we can improve on pages 20 and 21. I'm not going to go through all of them. But you might want to read that carefully.

On page 23, beginning on page 23, we've tried to be helpful by giving you our thoughts about what this assignment entails. You are the experts in this, and so we are looking to read in your proposals how you interpret this and what tasks you believe are important in the process. Did we miss something? Do you think that something that we put here is irrelevant? You know, this is what we think the tasks are. Feel free to comment on them in your proposals.

I do want to mention on page 25, item nine, has an option to provide pricing for the identified proposed CMS and any recommended add-ins or supporting tools. We had a great deal of discussion about the CMS and whether it's part of this, whether it's not part of this, whether the costs are included or whether they are not included, whether the CMS might be one thing, but if there are add-ins that would make our lives easier that enhance the content management system as it is out of the box. And trying to figure out how that would work for you and work for us. And this is the approach that resulted. We are aware that the pricing of CMS's varies greatly, that the amount of proprietary add-ins for various CMS's is significant. And we're looking to basically try to get a handle on what costs are initially and what licensing fees might be for the long term also in the pricing proposal. We recognize it may not work in every circumstance, and just beg your patience as you try to fill this stuff out. And let us know as you do the pricing if there are interpretations that we need to make along the way in how the information is submitted to us.

The last point on scope, and this is on page 27, and that is on training. Training really is a key since we do intend to host this ourselves. That's both technical training and also training for folks on the business side, the non-technical side here at the agency, because as a result ease of use and maintenance are important both technical and business to us. So as you look at tools that you are proposing, and as you think about the training, please understand that that is a very important thing to us.

In section four, I'm on page 36, the

proposal format is largely boilerplate state content. Please pay attention to this. Again, you can't add new materials later that are substantive. You can only clarify what's already in the original submission.

Jumping ahead to the task award process, the task order award process on page 40. The evaluation criteria we believe are consistent with the task order RFP's content. Please pay attention to this. This is how we do it. In particular, I want you to pay attention to B3, and that is the extent of the senior business analyst experience with public defined benefit pension organizations, specifically in website design and development. This is to us a big value add. We want someone who can speak our language. We really don't have lots of resources to do the translation ourselves, and there are difference between certainly the way we perceive this agency and the way other agencies perceive themselves. We want the contractor team to bring ideas to us based on its direct experience with our peer community. Okay. Peer being somewhat broadly defined as we have specified it in the documents here.

I also want to make note, on page 41, that the technical proposal will be given greater weight than the financial proposal.

The last comment I want to make is on the pricing sheet, on pages 43 and 44. The approach that we've taken to pricing is in order to get apples to apples comparison among bidders on a time and materials kind of contract. We did not feel that we could adequately define the scope to allow for a fixed price bid. And frankly, we wanted to leave some flexibility in this because we're very open to ideas. And frankly, we're not exactly sure -- we tried to define how many interviews, exactly how long it might take, and all that, and just found that there were too many variables for us to make this fixed price. Some of our peer organizations have done fixed price on this. We decided not to do that. So we had to come up with a pricing approach that allows comparison among the bidders, and this is what resulted.

And that is the end of my comments. And I throw the ball back to Margie.

MS. GORDON: Okay. Do you have any questions?

MR. PAPA: Yes.

MS. GORDON: You do?

MR. PAPA: Yes.

MS. GORDON: Okay.

MR. PAPA: Are you ready?

MR. GREENSTEIN: If you would please state --

MS. GORDON: If you would state your name and your company.

MR. PAPA: Okay. I'm Ken Papa with TEM Software. So I appreciate your desire to have a business analyst that speaks your language and knows this already but, I mean, how many of those do you think exist in the United States? Because I don't know -- I mean, I guess it depends on how narrowly you define, you know, your peers. But this is for small businesses. I mean, I could see like a really large -- and there's, like in 3.7.3 it sounds like you expect somebody to have an employee who is right up that alley. And I'm just wondering how many companies are going to have an employee business analyst with that specific experience on hand that can, you know, work in Baltimore for six months kind of thing. Because I find that kind of challenging to find such a person.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Well, we're not -- let me address that in slightly different order.

MR. PAPA: Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: The notion of being in Baltimore for six months I don't necessarily see it as being a constraint. And I think we anticipate that a lot of the work will be done off site.

MR. PAPA: Oh, okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: There is no reason for a programmer to have to be onsite doing programming all day long.

MR. PAPA: Uh-huh.

MR. GREENSTEIN: We don’t have to see the person to understand that they’re working.

MR. PAPA: Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: But we do want to appreciate the fact that when they are not onsite that when the hours come in on the invoice that it reflects, you know, something that approximates what we believe the amount of work is. Again, we talk to our peer organizations. You know, Tom, we do systems development here. The last two website have been developed internally. So we should have some sense of that. So the onsite is not a requirement. And this may be our principal place of business, but it is not where we expect probably a significant amount of work to occur. Okay. So that’s that.

In terms of your comment about the industry and industry expertise. I understand the comment. We’ve tried to be broad about this by expanding it to not only defined benefit programs but also defined contribution programs, which is a significant number of people in that industry, to treasury operations and to comptroller operations. In that way we understand that if you limited it specifically to public defined benefit plan administrators, there aren't all that many in the State of Maryland. We are the consolidated retirement agency servicing, I guess, you know, if you count the withdrawals, you know, about 150 organizations. And State government, quite frankly, is less than half, or represents less than half of our membership. We understand that. A great deal of discussion was held about this whole topic.

MR. PAPA: So that's sort of --

MR. GREENSTEIN: And the one other issue that you raised is with the implication that we, that your read of this is that it should be an employee or not. That is not where our heads are at. But if someone is bid in your proposal we want to appreciate how you know that person does good work. Did you get a resume off a resume board? You've never seen the person, you have no idea but, you know, you call them up, you do an interview, you maybe do a couple of reference checks, that's different from having an employee. We appreciate that both of them are valid or can be valid, but we also appreciate that there's a difference between I've worked with this person for two or three years, I know what kind of quality they do, versus I got their resume, I interviewed them, and they seem to know what they're doing and they have good references. Okay. And --

MS. GORDON: Just to interject. There is subcontracting allowed in this TORFP, but you have to remember that you as the prime are responsible for your subcontractors. I had to look that one up because of the fact that a lot of times when we say no MBEs or no veteran, VSBE, goals means no subcontracting. But that is not the case. There is no goal, but you can subcontract. And so I just wanted to let you know. And then there are paragraphs in here referencing subcontracting.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Tom points out, and I think it is worth saying, obviously, business analyst work on this site, onsite here is going to be more intense than programmer work onsite.

MR. PAPA: Uh-huh.

MR. GREENSTEIN: And that’s the nature of the work.

MR. PAPA: Right.

MR. GREENSTEIN: So that, you know, it’s not like it will never be a requirement to be onsite. We would hope that, and we would work with the contractor to try to make the amount of site visits as -- or the amount of work done onsite visits as efficient as can be so that if someone has to interview five people we don’t make it happen on a Monday for one, a Thursday for another, and a week from Tuesday. So we can try to line it up back to back to make it work as efficient as we can. But there is no specific, separate pricing for travel in this. And that is typical of most state contracts. This is a CATS contract, which presumes that the people who are going to propose on this have an established relationship with the State government already. It actually -- that's mandatory --

MR. PAPA: Right.

MR. GREENSTEIN: -- in this particular case that there is a relationship. And, therefore, that the people who would work on this, at least the majority of it, would be presumed to be within reasonable distance to here.

MS. GORDON: Other questions?

MR. ZERNEHEL: Are you finished?

MR. PAPA: I have several questions.

MS. GORDON: Okay.

MR. PAPA: Yeah. Because I did note there was a part that sounded like you guys were going to supply the computers, the networks and stuff like they'd be working on. So I kind of presumed that meant you expected, you know, seats from the chair here, something like that if you wanted them to work on your computers and things; did I misread that? I don’t know what section that was.

MR. GREENSTEIN: When the people are onsite typically we provide them a computer and, you know, access to our network. If it would make more sense to bring your own equipment in, we can work that out also. But there is no presumption that the development work will be done entirely onsite here. We figure that a lot of that will be done remotely. There are provisions to do remote tie in to here, but that’s open for discussion. I think, you know, we’ll -- different companies might have different ideas about that, and we’d be flexible in terms of what, whether to bring your own equipment or use ours, or to log in remotely and do development or to do it onsite.

MR. PAPA: Okay. So just to be clear, so the issue about the business analyst in the breadth of your knowledge in your scope, that’s, would you say that’s a minimum requirement or it’s just a kind of a preference thing for you, like you're going to favor people that have a business analyst that's as close to that scope as possible? Because I don't really see it as a -- I want to be clear about what's a minimum requirement and what is a kind of nice to have or a preference thing.

MR. GREENSTEIN: I hear what you are saying. This was also a significant topic of discussion between ourselves and the Department of Information Technology. All I can do is point out the language that is in section 2.1 of the, and 2.2 of the proposal, the task order RFP.

MR. PAPA: So it says that, in 2.2 it says, the following experience will be evaluated as part of the technical proposal. But it's not in the minimum qualifications.

MR. GREENSTEIN: That is a correct observation.

MR. PAPA: Okay. Because, I mean, actually, you've got very easy minimum qualifications. Your minimum qualifications, I mean, I'm surprised it's not even higher than that. I mean, like two years --

MR. GREENSTEIN: I hear what you are saying.

MR. PAPA: Okay. I just don't want to -- you know, I just want to be clear on, you know, what's going disqualify. All right.

MR. GREENSTEIN: The language that is here was very specific.

MR. PAPA: Okay. Another question. When it comes to the CMS, you also state that you want, you're going to evaluate the developers on their experience with the CMS chosen, system chosen?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Uh-huh.

MR. PAPA: You know, based on your requirements here I would kind of rather have some freedom to shop around for CMS's that suit your needs specifically and then pick, you know, define maybe developers that are good with that, possibly. You know, that's sort of the way I'd like to do this. But if I'm kind of more bound to my relationship with developers, I don't know that I'll have an existing relationship with developers, or experience with the CMS that fits your parameters in your scope better. You know, how do you speak to that?

MR. GREENSTEIN: This was a, as I noted, a significant point of discussion between ourselves and the Department of IT in Annapolis.

MR. PAPA: Uh-huh.

MR. GREENSTEIN: The nature of that discussion was whether one looks at the requirements and then picks a CMS that seems to fit, that is do a design and then say what CMS and templates would facilitate that design, would match it. Or the alternative of a given organization and given people are used to working with given CMS's, and given a design should be able to pretty much use a lot of different CMS's in order to deliver that design. But that a given organization is probably used to dealing with one or two CMS's themselves. Is that distinction clear?

MR. PAPA: Uh-huh.

MR. GREENSTEIN: The decision was made to take this approach. And I will not -- I would not be truthful if I said that everyone was entirely on the same page during the discussions, but this is the approach which we have taken in this document. If you have feedback that this -- that this particular issue is a factor or a significant factor in your decision on how to propose this, please feel free to provide that feedback to us and I will relay it to the parties who were involved in the discussion.

MR. PAPA: Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Is that a -- did I state that fairly, Margie?

MS. GORDON: Yes.

MR. GOLDEN: Smooth.

MS. GORDON: Didn't stumble.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Thank you.

MR. PAPA: All right. I think that's all I have.

MS. GORDON: Okay. Any other questions? Yes? Your name and company, please.

MR. ZERNHELT: Brian Zernhelt, Software Consortium. When you mention peer organizations are you referring to retirement, I mean, this agency in other states or other state agencies within Maryland?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Public pension plans across the United States.

MR. ZERNHELT: Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: We participate in a number of organizations, including the Public Retirement Information Systems Management Association, which is where a lot of our information comes from. We swap a lot of notes with each other. And we get together once a year to do that. When -- what the costs are, who we use, we poll each other during the year and public websites has been a polling issue for us in recent years. And so we have a sense of what other people are doing, what are recently developed sites by our peer organizations. We do take a look at them and we sort of say, gee, I like this or I don't like that, or that would work here, or that wouldn't work here. There are significant variances between public pension plans. When you look at the PRISM membership, the public retirement IS management, when you look at our membership, you know, some have loan programs, some do health care as part of the offerings, particularly in Canada. Some are single employers, some, like us, are a multi-employer. Some have one pension plan, we happen to have about 51 different plans that we support here. Some are very large, some are very small. And all of that factors into it. Did I answer your question, Brian?

MR. ZERNHELT: Yes. Very much. Thank you. I still have another. Your requirement for staffing in an analyst and a developer, you didn't identify a project manager. Will that role be taken over by a requirement or should one be recommended and that person -- in most cases I would agree you would always have a project manager to be the main part of communication.

MR. GREENSTEIN: That would be your choice. We see this as a small, you know, engagement not involving, you know, dozens of people. And so that to manage the two or three, or whatever number of people that would be working on this, we didn't see that role as required. We would, you know, we obviously manage contractors today without having a project manager. Tom provides that, or one of our other people provides that function. If that is a role that you see as required, we did not provide for it in the pricing, and we did that because we did not think that it was that huge of a team to work here.

MR. ZERNHELT: I guess more concerned as

changes happen, just to make sure that the line of communication, changes in document, all of sudden we're going to deal with a plan or, you know, where you're telling one individual, just making sure that's it's done efficiently too.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Most of the contractors that we've had had an individual like that. Sometimes they call it a marketing exec or an account exec.

MR. ZERNHELT: Right.

MR. GREENSTEIN: They do come onsite periodically to touch base. We do communicate back and forth, but we didn't see that as the substantive delivery of a website, and so we did not include that here. And we -- and a lot of times there's like the analyst or the programmer would be the lead and would do that. But typically there's an account manager that's sending stuff back and forth. This is time and materials. We don't expect there to be lots of contract amendments and things like that on something of this nature.

MR. ZERNHELT: Okay. So then the staff that would be involved really just would be our people. You won't provide anybody as far as assistants. Like there won't be any other agency staff working on this?

MR. GREENSTEIN: We obviously need to have staff familiar with the outcome, and the code, and things like that. But that is not the way this is being designed. This RFP was to do the redesign and the development. We'll have agency staff involved in testing. We will have agency staff inheriting this. So there will be some side-by-side that will be involved in this. But again, it's time and materials, and we will, you know, we obviously, you know, the cost of any inefficiency of having our person involved in the discussion --

MR. ZERNHELT: But you guys do the testing?

MR. GREENSTEIN: We will. We will have to do testing. Absolutely. We wouldn't expect to be doing the primary testing. We expect that when it gets delivered here it is a workable, you know, functioning, at least a functioning prototype, depending on the approach that's taken, whatever. We do see that there are probably several iterations of this that will go back and forth, possibly with several functions like, here's something. Do you like the way this works before I go an incorporate a whole bunch of stuff under it? You know, and that will just be the normal iterative process.

MR. ZERNHELT: Okay. Regarding the CMS system. Obviously, because of public -- there's so many out there that are open source the people utilize them proprietary, developer, you know. Are you completely opposed to open source other organizations utilizing --

MR. GREENSTEIN: We are not opposed to open source. We are also aware that open source sometimes is a little more rudimentary perhaps than some of the more polished, you know, commercial offerings. And, therefore, there might be with open source add ons and things like that that will make it easier to, for example, upload content within, you know, not using the core open source code but rather as an add on. That is why we provided for the pricing of not only the CMS, but also any add ins that make it work. We are not opposed though to an open source solution. Assuming that, you know, there are obvious constraints in terms of is it a secure solution or things like that. But we are -- our peer organizations have used that. This is a public website. It is not our secure member site, which we would probably be a little bit more cautious about.

MR. ZERNHELT: Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Does that make sense?

MR. ZERNHELT: Yeah. Absolutely. Next question. Move to subcontracting. My question was set on partnership. If we wanted -- so partnerships are allowed, perhaps with a company that does specialize in the CMS system or pension plans. So that would be --

MS. GORDON: They would be considered subcontracting, yes. But as I said, the prime contractor, like your company, would be responsible for that subcontractor.

MR. ZERNHELT: So with the development and everything, would we be responsible to set up like a sand box and we would work on our development and then give you access to reviews, or would you want the development to be done, you know, -- here?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Open minded on that?

MR. MONTANYE: Yeah. Open minded on that.

MR. ZERNHELT: And then one more. State import via SBR. Is that your agency or the State, or just the role of the small business reserve?

MR. GREENSTEIN: I defer to Margie on that.

MS. GORDON: I'm sorry?

MR. ZERNHELT: For this to be designated as an SBR, was it the agency's decision or was it just that it was, you know, -- again, I'm just kind of curious whether this --

MS. GORDON: In the -- we'll ask for SBR only. And if we can comply with it, we will go along with it. If we feel that it's not within our best interest, we will go to all master contractors. But this case my Department decided, made the determining factor making it a small business reserve.

MR. PAPA: Ira, you mentioned something that I apologize asking this question that made me think that it is in here and I didn't understand it.

MR. GREENSTEIN: That's fine.

MR. PAPA: I apologize. But when you say that this is more -- and I just naturally assumed that the public would have access to this, or already have an account. But this is still more publicly -- you're not utilizing this so people can get their account information --

MR. GREENSTEIN: No. Let me qualify that. There is a part of the website currently which there are several secure web pages for people to be able to go in and reprint their 1099R statements for retirees or their personal statement of benefits for actives. That function exists today. It is a separate branch, if you will, off of the public website, and it is not part of the redevelopment here. So the public website will be a launching point to go to those secure functions that we currently have. And in the long run those secure functions which we ultimately add. But the site that's being developed is not in and of itself the secure site. Am I clear on that?

MR. PAPA: Oh, yeah.

MR. GREENSTEIN: We do have very strong intention, and it is not a secret in any way, shape or form, to be able to have a secure member site and a secure employer site in the long run. This would be – - there would be some, you know, space, some real estate taken up on the public website to be able to, you know, to do that similar to the way banks have, you know, personal banking sites that are secure. But this is the public side of it.

MR. PAPA: Yeah. Because it does talk about –- it mentions that and it mentions space. But I was curious is this like a single sign on thing where you –- so in other words, users would not log into this site that we're building?

MR. GREENSTEIN: No.

MR. PAPA: Oh, okay. Good. Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: No. Users do not log into this site.

MR. PAPA: Okay.

MR. GREENSTEIN: It is a public website in every way. However, the typical people who come to a site like ours are not necessarily, you know, we don't have fishing licenses, we don’t do driver’s licenses, you know, a lot of state functions the general public is involved with. People who come to our site our feeling is that it is not one of these things that is just logically browsed just for entertainment purposes or whatever. The people who come to our site largely come to it with something very specific in mind, which is why we phrased this that, you know, this is really not a general public kind of site. We do have employers that come to our site who get information on, you know, what their roles are and all of that. But that’s not secured information. The same as members come to look at what the terms and conditions are of the retirement programs that we have. That is not secure information. That’s available in general. So there are -- there are also investment managers who come to our site in order to look at what kind of, to look at our comprehensive financial report, to look at who other, you know, investment managers are who we use in the agency that are disclosed there. Those are all -- you know, there are various constituencies that come, but they are generally coming with a very specific purpose in mind, to get information that will help them in their lives or in their specific very targeted businesses.

MR. GOLDEN: We also --

MR. GREENSTEIN: Legislators.

MR. GOLDEN: Yeah. Well, I was going to say policy makers, policy wonks and members of the media also access our website to try to get information that, unfortunately, a lot of times does not post it. And that's another thing that, you know, we want to look at is, you know, what else can we populate on our website. And that's something, whoever the -- whoever is chosen here, you know, will be working with the different divisions, especially the investment division because there's a lot of information that is published monthly that we don't post and we could and should I think, speaking as the public relations guy here. And it would make my job a lot easier, because I get calls all the time from the media, you know, can I have the latest copy of your performance report? And, you know, I can make that available but, you know, I have to get it from investments and then I have to email it to them. Rather than, it would be just much simpler if we had it posted on our website as a regular function and then they just get it themselves. Anyway --

MR. GREENSTEIN: But they're coming with something very specific in mind.

MR. BLACK: Jim Black, ITNOVA. I have a quick follow up on the experience with peer organizations that's part of the, specified as part of the analyst role. If other members of the team have experience with peer organizations, you know, in addition to the experience as its analyst will you consider that upon reviewing a proposal?

MR. GREENSTEIN: The State rules are that we can only evaluate the credentials of key personnel. Okay. And we can only ask for two key personnel in this proposal. If there is a credential of someone that you think is really critical you might consider making them key personnel. I can't tell you how to decide how to strategize on this.

MR. BLACK: Uh-huh.

MR. GREENSTEIN: And this is a constraint that we are, we operate under.

MR. BLACK: Gotcha. Gotcha.

MR. PAPA: In addition to the two key personnel you're saying that -- not to replace a key personnel, but it's defined, but just to add another one?

MS. GORDON: No. You have two key personnel. How you route it, how you specify it on here is what you will be paid for, funded for in this contract.

MR. GREENSTEIN: But there is a provision to add personnel. We can’t evaluate those credentials as part of the proposal submission.

MS. GORDON: Right.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Similarly, you know, the organizational experience does matter, and what you say as part of what the organization’s experience is will certainly be considered. And I don’t know what else I can really say.

MR. BLACK: That’s very clear. Thank you.

MR. GREENSTEIN: That particular aspect of this document is not something which the agency imposed on you. Didn’t you have something else?

MR. ZERNHELT: Yeah, I did. With the way you, Ira, you spoke about the business analyst, you really, really want this individual to come with many, many suggestions to make this better and not really coming to you to look at the pile and reorganize your pile and say, okay, this is how we’re going to make it work?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Correct. We do -- we want the value ad from the proposing organization. Again, if we knew exactly what it is we wanted we wouldn't be putting this out. We'd probably just be doing it. And particularly when it comes down to the analyst, there's a fair amount of time spent in working with someone who comes onsite, and we want them to at least be, you know, familiar with the kind of organization that we are and the kinds of functions that we do. There is an arcane aspect of, you know, our terminology that we use and all of that, and when we talk about a member or a participant, when we talk about, you know, actuaries or, you know, plans or average compensation, or average, you know, service credits, or things like that, or eligibility, or whatever. This is, you know, there is a certain unique aspect to what we do within State government. It's not unique to other organizations, but it is within State government. And so -- and the notion of what -- the notion that we have investments and that we are only I think one of two, you know, us and the treasurer are the two groups that use investment vehicles to make money for the State. I mean, so there is a parallel in treasury operations.

MR. GOLDEN: There is the Lottery though.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Comptroller operated. If you look at what we are as an agency, half of us is an investment house and the other half is like a payroll company. And so there are similarities between us and, for example, the State Comptroller where we make payments every month, they make payments. And that’s why we did what we did here.

MS. GORDON: Any other questions? I have a few questions that a vendor has submitted. I’m going to share it with you, even though we might have already answered.

Are there any incumbents for this position?

If yes, how many? There are no incumbents.

What will be the interview type of the selected candidate, skype, telephonic, or in person? Answer: We greatly prefer in person since this procurement vehicle is CATS+ and thus it only has gone out to parties who specifically applied and were approved by the State.

How many candidates can we submit? The quantities of personnel are specific in this TORFP, as we talked about.

What is the weightage for the evaluation criteria? We do not disclose evaluation of disclosed weighting factors. All we can say is the technical proposal has more weight than the financial.

And the last thing I have to say that if any other questions you have in mind that you want to ask after this pre-proposal conference, they are due to me at the address procurement@sra.state.md.us by April 28, 2:00 p.m.

MR. ZERNHELT: Any extension for any -- any opportunity of it being extended, the due date?

MS. GORDON: There will be no extensions granted.

MR. ZERNHELT: No need to ask.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Come up with a good reason and we might consider it. But --

MR. ZERNHELT: Fair enough. That's fine.

MR. GREENSTEIN: We actually put a little extra time in this than we normally do, just because of the logistics of this time of year.

MR. PAPA: I think it is kind of important to get on the same page with you guys about how big of a thing -- because, I mean, I can look at this document and envision like 10 people coming here to work for six months. You know, just using my imagination about what's possible. You know, I mean, you know, read this document and you're on the hook for this. How many people do you need to do it? So, I mean, you know, I could see three people working hard and doing what you want and it ends however it ends based on, you know, what you want to make of it or staff this up and, you know, go nuts, you know, make it into all kinds of things. I think it's helpful to get a sense of how far you all want to go with it. And it sounds like what you have in mind is probably smaller scale than what I envisioned, you know, reading this maybe. I don't know. I'm just trying to get some sense of being in the ballpark of what you guys are trying to make of this. I don't know how you accomplish something like that. But --

MR. GREENSTEIN: We -- I mean, we don't think this is a 10-people, one year kind of job. We deliberately made it a six-month kind of job. And the fact that there are two key personnel I think, you know, you can read into that however you want to read into that. Again, we have a sense of what our peers have paid. There is a certain range to it, depending on how radical the whole thing was. But I don't think any of the organizations that I've talked to have seen this as a, you know, 10-person, year kind of thing. It's just not in --

MR. PAPA: Right.

MR. GREENSTEIN: -- you know, in the scope of this.

MR. PAPA: Right.

MR. ZERNHELT: So the way it states, we're probably looking at mid August to start, September?

MR. GREENSTEIN: Up for discussion. Once we make a selection of who we would like, that --

MR. ZERNHELT: That probably --

MR. GREENSTEIN: That becomes a recommendation to the Department of IT in Annapolis. That has to be reviewed. There are typically best and finals, possibly two best and finals, and we have to -- this agency won't slow the process down. That's probably the best I can say.

MR. ZERNHELT: Yeah. I know it's not on you. You guys will be done by the middle of June probably.

MR. GREENSTEIN: We had hoped to have this site up and running before the end of this fiscal year. It's, obviously, not going to happen.

MR. ZERNHELT: Okay.

MR. GOLDEN: Next fiscal year.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Oh, is that it?

MR. GOLDEN: Yeah. It was '18, not '17.

MR. GREENSTEIN: Oh, '18. I got the number wrong. Okay.

MR. PAPA: So we don't in fact know at this point when this is going to start and end, we don't know when the period of performance is going to be exactly?

MR. GREENSTEIN: I couldn't give you any precision on that at all. All I can say is that this agency is not going to hold this thing up.

MS. GORDON: We do the -- we'll do the orals. We've already estimated doing the orals in June, beginning of June.

MR. GREENSTEIN: The due date on this is May 9. It won't take us all that long, we don't think, to go through and down select or select or, you know, look at who meets qualifications on the thing. So we're probably talking orals, late May is difficult because of Memorial Day and things like that. But in that kind of time frame beginning of June. It does not take long for this. There aren't that many people involved in the discussions here to make a decision on what to do based on the proposals that come in.

MS. GORDON: Right. Once the orals are done, then they will evaluate, evaluations -- a team will evaluate everything for the technicals. Once we have a ranking as far as technicals are concerned, then we'll open up the financials. I will send out a BAFO request for the financials. And then that's when

-- when the BAFO comes forward and it’s feasible to everyone as far as that is concerned, then that will be ranked. They will then submit a recommendation to the Department of IT. Once they go over everything, it could take them a couple of weeks to go through everything. They’re a little backed up because -- and so that might take a little longer because of the fact that it’s near the end of the year, that will be near the end of the year. So as I said, that may, you know, it might not be awarded until sometime in July, late July I would propose, estimate. So once it’s like, say it’s awarded near the end of July and you guys get started August. That’s my -- that’s an estimate, a guesstimate because it’s a lot of detail as far as DOIT is concerned. And they are quite backed up. They’ve got like a revolving door going.

If there are no more questions, any other questions? We thank you for coming. Any other questions submit them to me and we will get you an answer. And we will email all the minutes and everything, questions and answers out to all the vendors that have responded. All right. Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, at 11:15 a.m., the meeting was adjourned.)

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY

I, KATHLEEN A. COYLE, Notary Public, before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the witness was duly sworn by me; that said testimony is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action; and that the testimony was reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction.

This certification is expressly withdrawn upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript, including exhibits, unless disassembly or photocopying is done under the auspices of Hunt Reporting Company, and the signature and original seal is attached thereto.

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KATHLEEN A. COYLE

Notary Public in and for

the State of Maryland

My Commission Expires:

April 30, 2018