

RE: PURCHASE OF CONSULTING SERVICES FOR
COMPUTER SYSTEM START-UP ASSISTANCE PROJECT

ITEM "SUPPL." 9
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 29
COUNCIL MEETING 85/04/22

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendation of the Director Administrative & Community Services be adopted.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1985 April 17

FROM: DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF CONSULTING SERVICES FOR
COMPUTER SYSTEM START-UP ASSISTANCE PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a contract for consulting services to be employed on the system start-up project be executed with Digital Equipment Corporation in accordance with the terms as noted in this report.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In introducing a tool as sophisticated as our new computer system (the VAXcluster) to a new environment, it is imperative that all staff be adequately trained in its use. This training is mostly in the form of lecture lab work at the Digital Equipment Corporation offices in Richmond. However, this training to be effective must be supplemented by expert advice available on-site.

THE START-UP PROJECT

The start-up project has two main objectives:

1. Firstly, to provide this expert on-site assistance to Burnaby staff in the use of the VAXcluster hardware and software.
2. And secondly, to prepare detailed procedures and routines that will be of value for the life-time of the system.

The project will produce software specifically designed for Burnaby's use, manual procedures written to describe the operation of the Information Services Department, training and consulting for Information Services staff, and assistance with problem resolution with other hardware and software vendors.

The project is beyond the scope of what is normally provided by the vendor in installing a new computer system. Those normal installation activities, which cover the basics required for system acceptance, have now been completed by the vendor.

The consultant must provide expert knowledge in the use of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) hardware and software installed at Burnaby, a thorough knowledge of software available through other sources which may be of value to the start-up project, considerable knowledge of the communications network installed, and the ability to measure and adjust hardware and software performance.

The project has been outlined in summary form and is estimated at a six month duration. Digital Equipment Corporation have quoted \$77,760 for the project. The terms of the proposed agreement with DEC have been checked by the Municipal Solicitor. The end product from the project is potentially marketable to other DEC users, particularly municipalities. While it is difficult to place a value on it at this time, it would not be unreasonable to assume that \$10,000 per copy is possible.

As this project is vital to the successful implementation of the new system the Information Services Director will manage it himself and ensure that the plan is worked such that all items in the project outline are completed within the six month period. The alternative of completing the project using our staff is not feasible without some consulting assistance given the experience level required. Given the lack of experience, the project, if done in-house, would likely take from one year to 18 months to complete at an estimated cost of \$140,000. This would also mean considerable delay to all application development work.

Funding for this project is included in the 1985 budget. As this is a one-time expense, related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Information Management, it will be funded from the reserve established for that purpose.

ACTION PLAN

The use of Digital Equipment Corporation is recommended for this project for several reasons:

1. We have installed several pieces of hardware and software that are very new and still not in common use. Experience in these products is not readily available except from the vendor.
2. We need expert assistance in communicating with other software vendors on the use of their software on Digital Equipment hardware.
3. We can greatly benefit from the use of the consultant who understands the Burnaby system and its objectives. The consultant DEC have proposed worked with us throughout the equipment selection and implementation planning phases and is thoroughly familiar with all components of our system.
4. It is important that the individual assigned to this project be supported by an organization thoroughly familiar with DEC hardware and software. We will need to consult with DEC specialists on certain technical matters throughout the project.
5. DEC have assured us that adequate backup will be provided for the individual assigned to the project. A replacement with similar skills will be readily available in the event of illness, accident, or other event that may force the individual to resign from the project.
6. DEC has considerable experience in similar implementation projects.

It is recommended that we proceed as follows:

1. The Information Services Director to work with the Purchasing Department in raising the purchase order to cover the cost of the project.
2. The detailed project plan be completed within one week of the project start; the plan to include detailed specifications and identified deliverables with expected delivery dates.
3. The Information Services Director to provide you and the Management Committee with regular monthly progress reports in the same way as we will do for any major development project.

CONCLUSION:

This project is vital to the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan for information management. The Strategic Plan itself recognized the need for expert assistance in system implementation. It is the recommendation of this report that this project proceed as outlined above.