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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Ashley Smith, IT Director & Bob Mullen, Marketing & PR Director
Date: December 9, 2013
Subject: **2014 Website Redesign Contract Award**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Staff recommends awarding the website redesign contract to Jesse James Creative.

BACKGROUND

The City's website is the primary portal and tool for transparent and constant access to City information, news, events, and communications for residents, businesses, visitors, and the media/press.

The City's website is a critical tool in promoting civic engagement and outreach in an efficient and multifaceted manner. This year alone there have been more than 135,000 unique visits total to the current site. Our website receives more than 13,000 unique visits per month and approximately 2,800 unique visitors per week. However, the current site lacks optimization for mobile devices and tablets, has a low "explore" rate with visitors only viewing about 2.76 pages per visit and the current site navigation is less than intuitive.

The purpose of the Website Design and Replacement project is to create a website in which both first time users and regular visitors can quickly find the information they seek. The website should be easy to use, have the technology to support online services, house high quality videos, and integrate with social media tools. The upgraded design and improved back end website content management system (CMS) will help staff meet the expectations of our community for accurate, updated, and easy-to-find information on our website.

To begin the process and address these goals, the City issued a Request for Information (RFI) in July and received nine responses.

ANALYSIS

Proposals were analyzed and scored by staff with a focus on quality of proposed design and previous work, overall innovation, functionality and ease of use, and the proposed content management system. In reviewing the proposals, qualifications were weighted at 90% and cost was weighted at 10%. Although cost is an important factor in decision making, the previous direction received from Council regarding the value of the website led to the focus on quality in the ranking of the proposals.

| <i>Firm</i> | <i>Score</i> | <i>Cost</i> | <i>Annual Costs</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Jesse James Creative | 491 | \$62,060 | \$7,200 |
| CivicLive | 458 | \$32,215 | \$5,500 |
| CivicPlus | 444 | \$44,127 | \$7,386 |
| Civica | 381 | \$68,690 | \$9,110 |

Each of the firms that submitted a proposal could design a website. However, after reviewing sample work products, proposed content management systems, and design methodology, the review committee unanimously recommends moving forward with Jesse



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James Creative for the redesign of our website. Of all the firms, staff believes the Jesse James Creative team will create the highest quality website for the City and their proposal (from content management system to hosting and support) best aligns with our needs for this project.

As compared to the next highest ranked proposal, the review team believes the Jesse James Creative proposal is superior in three main ways – the proposed navigation, the backend content management side, and the mobile aspects.

First, from a navigational perspective, the Jesse James Creative proposal clearly enunciated how the new site will be very intuitive with content clearly grouped by category and type. As demonstrated in their completed sites, Jesse James Creative has an eye toward bringing more information front and center for visitors with select content from interior pages and sections 'boiled up' to the top layers of the site to encourage exploration. The home page, for example, will be able to have multiple dynamic feature 'slots' which we will be able to use to tout important news, alerts, upcoming events, etc. Additionally, wayfinding options will be provided throughout the site from "breadcrumb" navigation to "quick links" and "related content" rather than assuming that all visitors know what section of the website handles what things.

On the backend of the website, Jesse James Creative's proposed database-driven content management system will enable non-technical staff to easily update content and add new content to the site. The administrative side integrates tools designed to streamline and centralize which will empower all departments to keep their content current and push more content to the website. The ease of updates and ability for backend users to keep content fresh was a major issue for the staff review team as each department does not have personnel with expertise in website design and both the Marketing and PR Department and the IT Department are lean teams.

In regards to mobile, Jesse James Creative proposes to rather than develop a standalone mobile site they will create a single responsive site that can work well on all devices. With the use of handheld devices such as smart phones and tablets becoming more and more commonplace, this approach really set Jesse James Creative apart from other firms.

These factors taken together with many other benefits (such as the training, support plan, security, and hosting) make the Jesse James Creative proposal the best choice for Dunwoody. Given that the highest quality proposal is within the project budget, although it is more expensive than the second ranked proposal, in terms of the City's website, staff believes quality is more important than price in this case.

FUNDING

The planned website redesign project will not start until January 2014 when the City's new fiscal year begins. The Council approved 2014 Budget includes a line item of \$65,000 for the website redesign project and the final cost proposal from Jesse James Creative is below the line item budget amount.

UPDATES

As requested by Council, staff re-reviewed the proposals in terms of annual and recurring costs. The chart on the first page has been updated to include the annual costs for each of the four top ranked proposals. The Jesse James Creative 'year two' cost is \$7,200 for hosting and support of the website. They do not charge any annual licensing fees.

Additionally, city staff conducted follow-up with Jesse James Creative and confirmed the potential for future website integration with SIRE as well as expanded indexing and documentation search capabilities. The firm also presented ideas for potential compatibility



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approaches with the Silverlight media player software. City staff also contacted the references the firm provided in its response and each client contact provided positive feedback and affirmative input on the firm's capabilities, quality design, support and professional project management approach.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the firm's submission, previous work, cost proposal and capabilities the City staff evaluation team recommends that Council authorize the City Manager to award Jesse James Creative the 2014 Website Redesign Contract. The staff evaluation team believes Jesse James Creative will provide the best product and highest quality for Dunwoody based on with the quality of their past designs, proposed CMS, demonstrated technical ability and expertise and has established a strong professional viability to perform the work.