



Staff Report

File #: 24-0090

**REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL AND
CORONA UTILITY AUTHORITY ACTION**

DATE: 02/07/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
Honorable President and Board Members

FROM: Utilities Department

SUBJECT:
MASTER SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENT WITH N. HARRIS COMPUTER CORPORATION FOR THE
UTILITY BILLING SOFTWARE SYSTEM UPGRADE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to approve a Master Subscription Agreement with N. Harris Computer Corporation through its Advanced Utility Systems division to upgrade the Utility Billing Software System from the existing CIS Infinity Version 3 to CIS Infinity Version 5 and add additional licenses for the software.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve the Master Subscription Agreement for the CIS Infinity Version 5 software upgrade with N. Harris Computer Corporation through its Advanced Utility Systems division in the amount of \$474,916.
- b. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute the Master Subscription Agreement with N. Harris Computer Corporation through its Advanced Utility Systems division in the amount of \$474,916, including any non-substantive extensions, change orders, purchase orders, and amendments up to the amount authorized by Corona Municipal Code [Section 3.08.070\(I\)](#), which is equivalent to 10% or \$47,491.
- c. Authorize an appropriation in the amount of \$214,408 to the Utility Billing Software System Upgrade Capital Improvement Project TC-2022-03 and increase estimated revenue by the same amount in the Information Technology Fund 681.

- d. Authorize an appropriation in the amount of \$214,408 to the Utilities Department's operating budget for additional allocation costs incurred as a result of an increase to the Information Technology Fund 681, an Internal Service Fund.
- e. Decide under Corona Municipal Code [Section 3.08.140\(E\)](#) that competitive bidding has been satisfied for the reasons provided in the "Basis of Determination that Purpose of Bidding is Otherwise Accomplished" section of this report.

That the Corona Utility Authority review, ratify, and to the extent necessary, direct that the City Council take the above actions.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The Utilities Department conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for utility billing and account management software in 2000 and received 45 responses. N. Harris Computer Corporation, through its Advanced Utility Systems division (AUS), had the best solution to meet the department's needs with CIS Infinity (CIS) and their proposal scored the highest. The RFP was awarded by the City Council on April 18, 2001.

On February 20, 2013, the City Council approved a re-implementation of the CIS software to expand the functionality of the software and better serve customers. During this re-implementation, the software was also updated to Version 3, which is the current version in which the Utilities Department is operating. Version 3 of the CIS software system has reached the end of its useful life and support will be discontinued.

Running Version 3 is currently impacting the Utilities Department Customer Care Division's ability to conduct its daily functions efficiently. The software is built on antiquated architecture and is leading to slower processing and other issues. These issues within the software often take a long time to be resolved by AUS because the company has a limited number of support staff that are familiar with this older software version.

ANALYSIS:

Infinity CIS Version 5 is built on modern architecture, 3-tier, 64-bit application, ensuring a futureproof system and reducing concerns about obsolete systems and processes.

The upgraded Version 5 of CIS will provide improved functionality and added security including:

- The future environment will be cloud hosted by AUS, which will ensure the software is readily available and regular enhancements and upgrades in the future are applied by AUS, and done at no additional cost, offering new functionality for continuous improvement and expansion over the life of the system as utility requirements grow and change.
- Improve and simplify integration with other systems via current API (Advanced Programming Interface) standards, an update from file-based integrations and legacy API standards.
- Ability to run multiple CIS browser tabs concurrently to run multiple billing processes at once,

which will improve staff efficiency. Currently, only one screen can be used at a time and the process can be slow and laborious.

- Easy-to-navigate and highly customizable dashboard that allows easy navigation and quick access to key information to address customer inquiries during calls.
- Schedule and automate repetitive customer service and billing functions.
- Perform processes faster and more efficiently which will enhance staff's productivity.
- Improved reporting capabilities.

AUS has provided a quote for \$474,916 to upgrade CIS from Version 3 to Version 5. To do this upgrade successfully, AUS will need to:

- Run the Version 3 data integrity check to identify any data fixes that must be applied prior to the upgrade. AUS will analyze any issues and prepare Structure Query Language (SQL) scripts as required to resolve them.
- Historical data will need to be extracted from Version 3 and converted for version 5. Retaining our data is critical and AUS has a team of seven data scientists specializing in extraction/conversion that have been with AUS for an average of 15 years.
- Integrate with software for meter reading, payment processing, Advanced Metering Infrastructure meter data, customer portal, payment plans, and bill prints.
- Convert billing formulas and rate structures.
- Convert bill prints, notices, and receipts from Crystal Reports XI to Crystal Reports 2013.
- Convert standard and customized AUS reports from Crystal Reports XI to Crystal Reports 2013.
- Support all software testing in three test cycles: functional testing, integration testing, and user acceptance testing.
- Train staff to use the upgraded software as it is a pivotal step in ensuring successful implementation, end-user adoption, and the realization of maximum benefits.

BASIS FOR EXCEPTION TO COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Staff believes that an exception to competitive bidding is warranted for this purchase pursuant to Corona Municipal Code (CMC) Section [3.08.140\(E\)](#), which states as follows:

"Purpose of bidding is otherwise accomplished. When the purchasing agent and the authorized contracting party, with the approval of the City Manager, determine that it is in the best interest of the city and its administrative operations to dispense with public bidding for non-public projects under this chapter."

Over the last two years, AUS has been awarded competitively bid contracts for CIS with City of Sarasota, Florida; San Gabriel Valley Water Company, California; Cucamonga Valley Water District,

California; City of Surprise, Arizona; and Town of Gilbert, Arizona. Additionally, these neighboring utilities also utilize AUS' CIS: Western Water, City of Pomona, City of Ontario, City of Colton, and City of Huntington Beach amongst others.

A new CIS deployment can often cost between \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000. By leveraging the AUS CIS foundation already in place, the marginal effort and costs associated with upgrading the core CIS system offers an easier, faster, and less expensive solution than the consideration of new systems from outside vendors. In terms of a deployment timeline, the duration associated with the upgrade project will be 13 months, compared to a new CIS implementation of 18 months or even longer with a new vendor that is not familiar with our system and operations. Since Corona utility billing staff is already familiar with AUS' CIS and has developed a working relationship with the vendor, the knowledge and established relationship provide some cost savings over other new utility billing software.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Partial funding in the amount of \$308,000 is available in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Utility Billing Software System Upgrade Capital Improvement Project (CIP) No. TC-2022-03. Approval of the recommended actions will result in an additional appropriation in the amount of \$214,408 to the existing Utility Billing Software System Upgrade CIP No. TC-2022-03 and an estimated revenue increase by the same amount in the Information Technology Fund 681.

Additionally, because the Information Technology Fund is an Internal Service Fund, a fund used to improve the management of resources and generally provide goods and services to departments on a cost reimbursement basis, approval of the recommended actions will also result in a total appropriation in the amount of \$214,408 (\$2,509 from the Reclaimed Water Utility Fund 567, \$106,198 from the Water Utility Fund 570, \$83,834 from the Sewer Utility Fund 572, \$9,185 from the Direct Access Electric Utility Fund 576, and \$12,682 from the Greenfield Electric Utility Fund 578).

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action is to upgrade the utility billing software to a new version and there is no possibility that approving this Master Subscription Agreement will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: JACQUELINE ZUKERAN, UTILITY BILLING AND ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: TOM MOODY, DIRECTOR OF UTILITIES

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - CIS Version 5 Upgrade Scope of Work
2. Exhibit 2 - Master Subscription Agreement