



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 30, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager
Submitted by: Savita Chaudhary, Director, Information Technology
Subject: Contract No. 32000177 Amendment: NextRequest for Public Records Act (PRA) Response Software

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to amend Contract No. 32000177 with NextRequest for software hosting, implementation, maintenance and related services for a Public Records Act Response Software System, for an additional amount not to exceed \$76,906, for a total not to exceed value of \$141,906, for the period commencing on July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Funding for the additional software license term in the amount of \$76,906 is available in the Department of Information Technology’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and 2023 IT Cost Allocation Fund as itemized below. Spending for this contract and related amendments in future fiscal years is subject to Council’s approval of the proposed citywide budget and annual appropriation ordinances.

FY 2022: Software Maintenance
\$37,515 Budget Code: 680-35-364-000-0000-000-472-613130
(IT Cost Allocation, 311 Customer Service, Software Maintenance)

FY 2023: Software Maintenance
\$39,391 Budget Code: 680-35-364-000-0000-000-472-613130
(IT Cost Allocation, 311 Customer Service, Software Maintenance)

\$76,906 Total FY 2022-2023: Software Maintenance and Professional Services

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City completed implementation of the NextRequest platform in November 2020. Staff use the NextRequest platform to receive and track public records requests, and communicate with the requestors. Community members, who issue public records requests, receive automatic email confirmations from NextRequest and can track the status of their request through the NextRequest portal.

Since November 2020, NextRequest has facilitated 230 public records requests for the City. Of these 230 requests, 193 have been closed, and 37 remain open. The average time to respond to these requests is nine days, and the average time to fulfillment is fourteen days.

The Public Records Act Response Software System is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing the city's goal to be a customer-focused organization that provides excellent, timely, easily accessible service and information to the community.

BACKGROUND

The City receives approximately 5,500 Public Record Act (PRA) requests a year. The majority (75%) of the requests are for copies of Police records. The majority of police PRA requests are for copies of incidents and accident reports. Community members submit requests by email, US Mail, in person through the City Clerk's office, or directly to City departments. PRA requests completed using the on-line form posted on the City Clerk's website get entered by City Clerk staff and are allocated to the responsive division to take action.

In 2011, the City adapted the case forms in the Lagan CRM system, a case management system used by 311 Customer Service Call Center, to capture requests for public records. Lagan CRM captures case information but the system lacks the capability to capture the requirements needed to fulfill PRA requests. In addition, the Lagan CRM is not easily searchable by "key words", and staff responding to a PRA cannot access report information on notes, attachments or case description. This limitation makes searching for past responsive documents challenging. As a result, departments such as, Planning and Public Works who routinely receive multiple requests for the same information are forced to duplicate work that has already been performed in order to full a PRA request.

The Open Government Ordinance requires the City of Berkeley to report annually on the number of PRA's processed. The report is processed by City Attorney's office, and requirements include quantity of PRA's responded to on time, the number of PRA's where primary fulfillment date is beyond the required ten days, and the total number of days to fulfill a PRA. In order to produce this report, the City Attorney's office must work closely with the 311 Customer Service Manager and it can take weeks to prepare. The existing system does not produce the level of detail needed to respond to the Open Government Commission.

Given the challenges of the existing system, on November 14, 2018, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) #19-11255-C for an improved Public Records Act Response System, including a redaction module to enable better management of redacting the sensitive information.

The City received two (2) responses to the Public Records Act Response System RFP by the December 13, 2018 deadline. A committee of 7+ staff from the City Clerk, City Attorney, Planning, Fire, Police, and Information Technology departments conducted a

comprehensive evaluation process that included proposal reviews, vendor demonstrations, and reference checks. NextRequest was selected because they offered the most comprehensive and user-friendly solution to meet the City's needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

NextRequest provides an improved system with a secure customer-facing portal to allow individuals to conduct self-service searches for public record requests, and receive City generated documents systematically, reducing paper, use of copy equipment and trips to City Clerk's office to view and retrieve documents. This supports the reduction of carbon footprint and goals of the City's Climate Action Plan. Further public can search, find and retrieve document records stored in the PRA portal, reducing the need to enter a new public records request.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends continuing the use of the NextRequest PRA processing software as it best meets City needs and they scored the highest in the evaluation performed by City staff. NextRequest excelled at meeting the City's requirements for a secure public facing portal to provide customers with self-service (24/7/365) technology to make requests and to check the status of PRA requests. Publishing common documents to the portal will streamline service delivery for customers and eliminate publishing duplicate requests. Both City staff and the community will greatly benefit from the functionality offered by NextRequest.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternatives were considered as this is a recently implemented system.

CONTACT PERSON

Savita Chaudhary, Director, Information Technology, 510-981-6541

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT NO. 32000177 AMENDMENT: NEXTREQUEST FOR PUBLIC RECORDS
ACT RESPONSE SOFTWARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley has identified the need to improve the efficiency of its management of Public Records Act requests; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley desires to procure a Commercial Off-the-Shelf “turnkey” system to handle Public Records Requests through a customer facing and internal facing portal; and

WHEREAS, on November 14, 2018, the City of Berkeley issued a Request for Proposal No.19-11255-C for an improved Public Records Request Response Software System and received two responding bidders; and

WHEREAS, in response to the City’s Request for Proposal, NextRequest responded with a proposal that received the highest rating among those submitted by competing vendors; and

WHEREAS, funding for the additional software license term in the amount of \$76,906 is available in the Department of Information Technology’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 and 2023 IT Cost Allocation Fund, and spending for this contract and related amendments in future fiscal years is subject to Council’s approval of the proposed citywide budget and annual appropriation ordinances.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is hereby authorized to amend Contract No. 32000177 with NextRequest for software hosting, implementation, maintenance and related services for a Public Records Act Response Software System, for an additional amount not to exceed \$76,906, for a total not to exceed value of \$141,906, for the period commencing on July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023.