TOWN OF TRUCKEE

Date: Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: Cindy Peterson, Finance Manager and Nicole Casey, Administrative Services Director

Title: **Award Contract for Budget Software to ClearGov**

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

Recommended Action: That Council authorizes the Town Manager to enter into a five-year contract with ClearGov in the amount of $228,293.

Background: The Town's budget is currently developed in a series of Excel workbooks. Excel is no longer sufficient to accommodate the Town's budgeting needs. Due to the level of workbook connections needed to assimilate the budget data, the Excel files are quite large and running the workbooks takes up a significant amount of CPU and computer processing. This results in frequent Excel file crashes, lost data, and lost work time. By moving out of Excel, staff intends to reduce the possibility of errors due to broken or misconnected Excel links. On more than one occasion, one of the files crashed during the budget process and had to be created from scratch from paper copies, costing the Town significant staff time. Due to these issues, staff embarked on a process to select and implement a full-service budget software for the creation of the Town's budget.

In October of 2023, Town Staff contracted with Avero Advisors (Avero) to assist the Town in a selection process for budget software. Avero completed a multi-day site visit in November of 2023 where Avero met with every Town department and division. Based on these reviews and interviews, Avero developed a requirements matrix with 381 items or needs in a budget software or program. Avero also met with finance staff on multiple occasions to develop a map of the Town's desired future system-based budget process called a future process map.

Using the future process mapping and the requirements matrix, Avero helped the Town develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Budget Software. The RFP was issued in January of 2024 and closed in February of 2024.

The Town received four responses to the RFP. Below is a summary of the responses received with their associated cost proposals. Please note that one of the vendors provided a proposal for a three-year contract versus a five-year contract.

Aclarian, LLC	ClearGov	GovDollars	IGM Technology
Aclarian	ClearGov	Lomali Budget Book	Gravity
$ 190,565.00	$ 228,293.00	$ 208,182.00	$ 201,500.00
3 Years	5 Years	5 Years	5 Years

Finance assembled an internal stakeholder group to help review the RFP's received. This stakeholder group consisted of four representatives from Finance, a representative from IT, an Engineering representative, and a representative from Transit. The group reviewed and scored each proposal. Based on this review, the Town decided to move forward to interview and demo with two vendors.

In March of 2024, the steering committee met virtually with both vendors and was able to view product demonstrations. Finance staff and Avero conducted reference checks with current customers to gain perspective of how these products function in an actual environment.

Based on the initial proposal, the demonstration, customer references, and a review of pricing, the steering committee unanimously selected ClearGov as the preferred vendor to provide the Town's future budget software product.

Discussion: At a base level, ClearGov's budget software meets all best practices and requirements that the Town must comply with in developing a budget including Governmental Accounting Standards Boards, California Society of Municipal Finance Officers best practices, and California state laws. Their product is dedicated to government clients therefore they are currently reviewing new requirements and enhancing their product as needed to meet those requirements.

The Town is also exploring switching to a two-year budget process to align with the Council's two-year workplan model. ClearGov has the ability to accommodate a two-year budget process.

Based on the demonstration they gave the Town, ClearGov offers a product that has an intuitive user interface for the Town's staff to use in developing the budget and their software is completely outside of spreadsheets. Having a user-friendly interface increases the approachability of the budget development process, as Excel can be intimidating for new users. It also reduces the chance of errors in budget development from broken links.

ClearGov also offers a personnel module that staff hope to use for costing out future personnel costs. Staff currently produce all of our staffing projections using a series of complicated and interconnected worksheets. This makes modeling different staffing scenarios difficult and overly time consuming. ClearGov has the capability to project several different models and scenarios simultaneously.

In terms of a final budget product, staff feels that ClearGov will create significant staff time savings once fully implemented. Currently, whenever there is a change to a number in the budget, staff have to open all of our budget files (hoping they do not crash), roll that number through all the sheets, convert the sheets into PDF, upload the PDFs into Adobe's InDesign to create the final budget book, and then export from InDesign (a five minute or more export process due to the size). This process takes over an hour each time there is a change that needs to be incorporated into the budget. ClearGov would allow the Town to make a number change in the budget and simply press export to incorporate the change, potentially saving hours of staff time once the budget template has been developed. This would allow staff to spend more time ensuring accuracy and analyzing the budget.

The customer references that the Town communicated with highlighted ClearGov's great customer support, appropriate customization options, robust training resources, efficient internal workflows for the budget creation process, an intuitive user experience, and a well-trained project management team for the implementation phase.

ClearGov also has a well-developed public interface which features dynamic elements, easier navigation, and interactive graphs. The Town's current budget is only available as a downloadable PDF. ClearGov offers both an online interface and a downloadable version, based on public user preference.

Staff believes that to be leaders in government efficiency, this partnership with ClearGov budget software solution provides the best opportunity to improve the Town's budget development practices while becoming more efficient, productive, informative, and transparent for many years to come.

Below are some example budgets from other cities that are using ClearGov:

City of El Mirage, Arizona: https://city-el-mirage-az-budget-book.cleargov.com/12145/introduction/budget-award

City of Atlas, Oklahoma: https://city-altus-ok-budget-book.cleargov.com/10918/introduction/welcome-overview

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina: https://hiltonheadislandsc.gov/budget/FY2024/

If approved, staff will develop an implementation plan with ClearGov. The plan is to go live with a two-year budget process assembled in ClearGov starting next January for the fiscal year 2025/26.

Priority:

☐ Enhanced Communication	☐ Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	☐ Housing
☐ Infrastructure Investment	☐ Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness	☒ Core Service

Fiscal Impact: There is sufficient budget in C2205 Budget Software to cover the cost of the first-year implementation costs of the contract, with ongoing annual subscription costs being part of the FY2024/25 Administrative Services Finance operating budget.

Public Communication: The Town issued an RFP for this software product.

Attachments: Summary of Evaluation Scores