

MEMO

FROM: Chris English

TO: Kathleen Ramsay

DATE: June 6, 2016

RE: Proposal to migrate Town website to new software platform

Background: Over the last several months, Town staff have been investigating options for updating the look & feel and functionality of the Town of Middlebury website. The website has been hosted by GovOffice (an initiative of ICMA, in partnership with a variety of state municipal associations) since its creation nearly 15 years ago, and there is general agreement among Town staff and members of the community who have voiced an opinion that it no longer effectively serves Middlebury's needs. The GovOffice Content Management System (CMS) is somewhat outdated and relatively rigid in comparison to more modern CMS designs, offering website administrators very limited options for configuring and displaying on-screen content for users. Usability is further hampered by the website's cumbersome navigation scheme and a static main page design that severely constrains our ability to reconfigure content to reflect changing priorities or better communicate with the community.

We have explored a number of options for addressing these known issues, including entering into a consulting engagement with GovOffice programmers to create a custom website design that better meets the needs of Town government. While there are advantages to remaining on the GovOffice platform – namely, avoiding the cost of data migration to a new hosting environment - we concluded that a custom website design, in and of itself, would not mitigate the other limitations we have found in the GovOffice CMS.

With this in mind, we have been exploring other potential website development options, with an eye toward finding a solution – specifically designed for municipal governments - that is both cost effective and provides a more flexible, easier-to-use administrative interface for creating and managing content.

Recommendation: After examining a variety of available CMS options from different vendors, Town staff recommend migrating the Town of Middlebury website to a new software platform hosted by Troy, MI-based Revize Software Systems. Revize specializes in government website development projects and, in addition to customized solutions, offers a variety of template-based options (called WEBGENS) that will meet the Town's needs and significantly reduce the cost of implementation.

The Revize CMS is easy to use and will support multiple Content Editors and Administrative Users, making it simpler to upload and update content, as needed, and on-the-fly, if necessary. The Revize user interface is clean and uncomplicated and significantly easier to navigate than the existing website. Revize also offers a variety of add-on apps that we may choose to implement over time, designed to enhance citizen engagement with the Town and make it easier for residents and businesses to contact and work with Town staff.

Revize has prepared a cost proposal for a development engagement, based on using one of the company's WEBGEN templates, summarized as follows:

WEBGEN Website Design & Development Fee – one time charge	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revize Web Calendar and Document Center • Training – Content Editing, Administrative Training – one full day • Set up main website navigation, ready to add web pages and documents • Content migration of up to 50 web pages and 3,000 documents 	\$5,950
Annual Tech Support, Software Subscription and Web Hosting Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revize Web Content Management Software Services • Up to 6 Non-Technical Content Editors and Administrative Users • Technical Support / CMS Software Upgrades / Website Hosting (unlimited storage) 	\$2,700
<hr/>	
Grand Total	\$8,650

Revize offers an interest-free payment option that would allow the Town to spread out the design and development costs over five years. If the Board approves this proposal, the total cost to the Town would be approximately \$3,890 each year over that time period. Please note that we are continuing to work on refining our estimates regarding the number of web pages and documents that will realistically need to be migrated from our existing website to the Revize platform; therefore the final cost, noted above, for website design and development, may ultimately be slightly lower than shown here.

Assuming the Board authorizes you to proceed with a website development engagement, our next step would be to set up an initial meeting with the Revize programmer who will assigned to our project and begin discussions around the information architecture and navigation for the site. Once we've had that meeting we'll be in a good position to report back to you with an estimated timeframe for completion and launch of the new website.