



Title: Authorization to Purchase and Install Upgraded Boardroom Technology

Resolution number: 20-065

Prepared by: Name: Tessa Vacek
Phone: 952-641-45036
tvacek @minnehahacreek.org

Reviewed by: Name/Title: James Wisker, Administrator

Recommended action: Staff seeks Board's approval to purchase and install upgraded boardroom technology.

Schedule: Staff will proceed immediately with the purchase once approved and installation will be about 6 weeks after.

Budget considerations: Fund name and code: Information Technology Other/Miscellaneous 1-1003-4295
Fund budget: \$78,850
Expenditures to date: \$7,373.49
Requested amount of funding: \$55,831.21

Past Board action: N/A

Summary:

Background and Need:

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is committed to ensuring transparency for the communities and stakeholders it serves. As part of this commitment, MCWD records and publishes audio and video of meetings of the Board of Managers.

The audio-visual technology in the board room that serves this purpose, originally installed by iSpace Environments in 2013, has reached the end of its useful life. MCWD has experienced recurring issues with the system's functionality in the last 24-months, particularly with regards to reliably recording video for board meetings. This issue has been through repeated trouble shooting efforts with staff and the iSpace technicians. During engagement in 2023 and 2024, iSpace concluded that due to the age of the equipment, software patches could not guarantee a sustainable result and would come with the added risk of a potential system failure.

This fact, coupled with the increased demand for hybrid meeting capabilities since the COVID-19 pandemic, a need currently fulfilled using a parallel laptop with a camera aimed at the presenter and a soundbar for audio, underscores the need for a modern, integrated solution requiring a replacement and retrofit of some of the current AV components.

The existing system was originally installed at a cost of \$107,763.62 and included features and functionalities that were never fully utilized. In evaluating options for modernizing, staff focused on simplifying functionality to meet core needs, including: (1) easily initiating and hosting virtual or hybrid meetings, (2) integration with staff presentations, not currently part of the video recordings, and (3) reliably recording both audio and video for upload to MCWD's website.

Scope of Work and System Components:

Based on an understanding of past challenges, current and future needs, troubleshooting with iSpace, and walkthroughs of the existing system with three vendors, staff have scoped a proposed retrofit and modernizing that includes the following:

1. An integrated video conferencing system and user experience
2. Necessary and accompanying modernizing of audio video components
3. New control panels for one touch meeting management

Below is a more detailed description of which components will be reused from the current system, and which components will require replacement:

Displays:

The existing displays (televisions) will be re-used. The selected vendor will provide and install new video decoders and control boxes at each display. New decoders are needed to support updated video formats and resolutions and to avoid compatibility issues across the new system.

Audio:

The existing ceiling speaker system will be re-used.

Microphones:

The selected vendor will provide and install a new digital signal processing (DSP) with new replacement gooseneck microphones for the dias (x8). Existing microphone bases, wireless access points (WAPs) and charging base stations will be re-used. By replacing the gooseneck microphones and upgrading the DSP, while reusing functional components like bases, WAPs and charging bases, we can achieve a cost-effective yet impactful upgrade that ensures high-quality and reliable audio performance. Two additional wired gooseneck microphones will be installed at the presenter's table.

Video Conferencing:

The selected vendor will provide and install video conferencing hardware for an integrated hybrid meeting experience. Vendor will also provide and install two (2) new video conferencing cameras (to be installed in the same location as the existing cameras at front and rear of room). The side camera will be removed as it wasn't utilized.

Control:

The selected vendor will remove the existing wall mounted touch panel (Creston TSW-1050) and replace it with an updated touch panel. Programming will be updated to include integrated hybrid meeting capabilities and configuration with the appropriate controls to mirror the current functionality on the touch panel, along with updated camera controls as an additional option. Updates will include multiple laptop and PC source selections being routed to the content input, current audio conferencing, and current recording triggers; along with overall system power and volume control options.

Consultant Recommendation

Staff solicited quotes from three vendors: iSpace Environments, Electronic Design Company and HYTE Technology. All three vendors were provided an opportunity to walk through the space and to discuss the current system's failings and our needs in a new system, given a dimensioned drawing of the space and permitted to visit the server room. Staff evaluated the quotes based on cost, system functionality, and alignment with the District's needs. The lowest-cost quote was excluded as it failed to meet essential functionality requirements, such as the ability to record meetings outside of Zoom and lack of one touch meeting management. The remaining two quotes were found to be responsive to the request and are comparable in terms of functionality.

After careful consideration, staff recommends iSpace Environments as the vendor for this project for the following reasons:

- *Cost-Effectiveness:* Among the two finalists, iSpace Environments quote is the most cost-effective.
- *Deep Understanding of Our Systems and Needs:*

- iSpace Environments installed the existing boardroom system.
- iSpace Environments implemented and currently manage the hybrid technology in three other District conference rooms.
- *Established and Trusted Technology Partner:* iSpace Environments has a proven track record and familiarity with our infrastructure, making it uniquely equipped to ensure the success of this project.
- *State Contractor:* Per state statute (Minn. Stat. §471.345) for a contract estimated to exceed \$25,000, a municipality must consider the availability, price and quality of supplies, materials, or equipment available through the state's cooperative purchasing venture before purchasing through another source. iSpace Environments is currently a state contractor.

Recommendation:

To maintain our commitment to full transparency with the communities we serve and to ensure our ability to provide a good user experience for those participating remotely in board meetings, staff is recommending that MCWD authorizes iSpace Environments to purchase and install new boardroom AV equipment as proposed.

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes §13.591, the submitted quotes are not a part of the public record until the Board of Managers has selected a vendor. A copy of all submitted quotes will have been distributed to the managers, via email, for review prior to the December 2, 2024, meeting.



RESOLUTION

Resolution number: 24-065

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- WHEREAS The current boardroom audio-visual equipment is outdated, functioning poorly and not designed for hybrid meetings;
- WHEREAS the District is committed to providing full transparency to the community and stakeholders;
- WHEREAS the District fulfills this commitment by recording both video and audio of all board meetings;
- WHEREAS the District also desires to provide a good user experience for those participating remotely in board meetings;
- WHEREAS the District considered quotes from three vendors – iSpace Environments, Electronic Design Company and HYTE Technology – for upgrading the technology in the boardroom to include integrated hybrid meeting capabilities;
- WHEREAS MCWD staff evaluated provided quotes based on project understanding, methods and approach, experience, and cost;
- WHEREAS on the basis of its evaluation of the provided quotes, staff recommends the selection of iSpace Environments, based on its strong project understanding, detailed approach, and experienced team;
- WHEREAS the Board of Managers finds that the evaluation has been thorough and properly structured, and that the work proposed by iSpace Environments is demonstrated to be competitive and within budget;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator, on advice of legal counsel, to execute an agreement with iSpace Environments in accordance with the quote and associated scope of work as the Administrator may refine it, and in an amount not to exceed \$55,831.21, and authorizes the Administrator to execute contract amendments in his discretion up to an additional five (5) percent, in aggregate, of the quoted amount.

Resolution Number 24-065 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ eyes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 12/02/2024

 Secretary Date: _____