



Title:	Authorization to Extend the Contract with Solution Builders for IT Managed Services
Resolution number:	25-018
Prepared by:	Name: Tessa Vacek Phone: 952.641.4503 tvacek@minnehahacreek.org
Reviewed by:	Name/Title: Brian Beck – Research and Monitoring Manager
Recommended action:	Selection of IT managed service provider and authorization for District Administrator to execute the contract for IT managed services.
Schedule:	March 13, 2025 – Vendor selection and authorization to enter into a contract
Budget considerations:	Fund name and code: Information Technology – Contract Services (1-1003-4320) Fund budget: \$85,000 Expenditures to date: \$6,205.98 Requested amount of funding: not to exceed \$45,240
Past Board Action:	Resolution 24-067 - Authorization to Release RFP for IT Managed Services

Background:

As the District continues to evolve as a data-driven organization, the role of a Managed Services Provider (MSP) has become increasingly vital in ensuring strong technology governance. A well-aligned MSP provides not only technical expertise but also strategic guidance, helping the District leverage technology to improve efficiency, enhance decision-making, and support long-term goals. By understanding the District’s current systems, operational needs, and strategic direction, an MSP ensures that technology investments align with and reinforce the District’s core mission, rather than create inefficiencies or distractions.

Our current MSP, Solution Builders, has consistently delivered high-quality service, demonstrating a strong understanding of the District’s infrastructure and operational needs. Staff feedback has been very positive, with Solution Builders providing responsive support, proactive maintenance, and strategic IT guidance. While all vendor proposals were carefully reviewed, none presented a compelling reason to transition away from them at this time. Extending our contract with Solution Builders offers several advantages, including continuity of service, familiarity with existing systems, and the avoidance of operational disruptions that often accompany a transition to a new provider. Retaining Solution Builders allows the District to build upon an already well-established relationship and continue advancing its technology initiatives with a trusted partner.

The solicitation of proposals was not out of dissatisfaction with our current provider but rather to follow Minnesota Statute 103B.227, which requires a watershed district to solicit interest proposals at least every two years, before contracting for professional or technical consultant services or extending an existing service agreement. On December 19, 2024, the Board of Managers authorized the release of a request for proposals (RFP) for IT managed services. The RFP was posted on the District’s website, and posted on the League of Minnesota Cities website.

In response, the District received ten proposals from IT managed service vendors: Integris, BetterWorld Technology, Metro Sales, Tech Smart Solutions, HB Computers, SoftSages, Solution Builders, Xavier Gold, Consultadd and Xerox.

Under the Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minn. Stat. §13.591), proposals are not-public data until the District has entered into an agreement with the selected vendor. Accordingly, the ten proposals are being transmitted to the Board members separately, along with a table comparing prices relative to existing costs.

Analysis:

Three staff members, independently, conducted a thorough evaluation of all submitted proposals, assessing them based on the following key criteria: Service Delivery, Qualifications & Experience, Transparency & Communication and monthly Cost. The top three highest-ranked proposals advanced to the interview stage. Each of the finalists, SoftSages, Solution Builders and Consultadd, were invited to participate in a 45-minute interview with the District interview team. Interviews were held on, February 24, 25 and 27.

The District interview team included:

- Tessa Vacek – Administrative Services Manager
- Brian Beck – Research and Monitoring Manager

Interviews were conducted virtually, with the option of in-person representation. The vendors were given 10-15 minutes to provide an overview of their proposal, with the remaining time for questions. Following the interviews, the District team met to evaluate the three vendors. The team concluded that Solution Builders is qualified and the best fit to continue to serve as the District's IT MSP. Key considerations are summarized below:

Service Delivery

All three vendors propose providing MCWD with industry-standard IT services, including server, desktop, and network monitoring; on-site support; reactive end-user support; network administration; and proactive technology management, including security services. While all three vendors offer on-site technician support, only Solution Builders provides the flexibility of deploying its entire support team on-site when needed. In contrast, SoftSages and Consultadd operate with a primarily remote support and leadership team, with only technician support available on-site. This difference is significant, as having an entire team available in person allows for more immediate, hands-on problem-solving and faster resolution of complex IT issues.

Solution Builders also brings the advantage of being MCWD's incumbent IT MSP, offering a deep understanding of the District's technology infrastructure, operational needs, and long-term IT strategy. Over the past few years, Solution Builders has successfully executed multiple critical IT projects, enhancing MCWD's technological capabilities and security posture. These projects include fiber internet installation, firewall replacement, wireless network upgrade.

Staff believes that their demonstrated success in executing these projects, combined with their comprehensive on-site support capabilities, positions Solution Builders as a proven and reliable partner for MCWD's ongoing IT management and strategic growth.

Qualifications and Experience

All three finalist proposals demonstrate a solid level of technical proficiency, supported by various industry certifications. Each vendor also outlines relevant experience in serving public sector clients, showcasing their familiarity with government operations. However, Solution Builders has demonstrated experience delivering comprehensive managed IT services specifically for local Minnesota government entities; proving that they possess an understanding of the unique regulatory, operational, and budgetary constraints that public agencies in Minnesota must navigate.

Beyond general public sector experience, Solution Builders offers a dedicated network administrator with over 19 years of industry expertise, who will serve as the lead technician assigned to MCWD. Additionally, a Client Relationship Manager will act as a dedicated liaison, providing seamless communication between MCWD and the Solution Builders technical team.

Over the past several years, the Solution Builders dedicated team has played a pivotal role in transforming MCWD's IT approach. Its proactive strategy has shifted the District away from a reactive stance on IT issues, fostering a holistic, forward-thinking approach to technology management.

Transparency and Communication

All three vendors propose establishing a regular cadence of meetings with a dedicated point person to provide structured oversight and ensure ongoing IT success. These meetings would serve as a forum for reviewing key performance metrics, tracking service level agreements (SLAs), and addressing any emerging technical challenges or inefficiencies. In addition to discussing complex ticket resolutions and assessing the overall health of MCWD's IT infrastructure, all three would also provide cadence of strategic meetings for long-term IT planning.

As MCWD's incumbent IT provider, Solution Builders already possesses an in-depth understanding of the District's organizational vision, mission, and IT strategy. This long-standing familiarity allows them to seamlessly align technology solutions with MCWD's operational goals, ensuring that IT decisions are not only technically sound but also strategically relevant.

By leveraging its existing knowledge of the District's infrastructure, workflows, and operational challenges, staff believes Solution Builders is advantageously positioned to proactively address IT risks, provide recommendations that align with MCWD's long-term technology strategy and enhance collaboration and efficiency by maintaining the established communication channel and leveraging their deep institutional knowledge.

Monthly and Migration/Transition Costs

The monthly costs proposed by each vendor are shown in the table provided separately to the Board of Managers.

The proposed monthly cost for the 2025-2026 service period from Solution Builders remains unchanged from the current rate. Among the proposals reviewed, Consultadd is the only vendor offering a lower monthly rate, while all other proposals include an increase over our current costs.

Among the three finalist vendors, only SoftSages explicitly accounted for a transition or migration cost. This one-time fee is designed to cover essential activities required for a seamless service transfer, including coordination with the current MSP, secure information transfer, comprehensive documentation of the District's IT infrastructure, and the implementation of monitoring software and workflows. In contrast, Consultadd does not charge a transition or migration fee, and since Solution Builders is our existing provider, no transition would be necessary in selecting it.

While Consultadd's proposal offers a lower monthly rate and no transition fee, our recommendation to select Solution Builders is based on more than just cost. We prioritize the feasibility, stability, and long-term sustainability of our IT services, recognizing that maintaining continuity with Solution Builders eliminates the risks and resource demands associated with a complex provider transition.

Recommendation:

After evaluating the three finalist vendors based on service delivery, qualifications & experience, transparency & communication, and cost, Solution Builders emerges as the strongest choice to continue serving as MCWD's IT Managed Service Provider.

Staff finds that considering all factors, Solution Builders is the most qualified vendor to continue as MCWD's IT Managed Service Provider. Its proven service delivery, public sector experience, proactive communication, and cost-effective approach make it the best fit for ensuring the District's IT infrastructure remains secure, efficient, and strategically aligned with its mission. By retaining Solution Builders, MCWD can maintain continuity, leverage existing institutional knowledge, and build upon ongoing IT improvements, positioning the District for long-term success and technological resilience.

Staff recommends that the Board of Managers authorize the District Administrator, on advice of counsel, to negotiate and enter into a two-year agreement with Solution Builders Inc for IT managed services, at a not to exceed monthly cost as stated in Solution Builders' proposal.

Supporting documents:

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes §13.591, the submitted proposals are not a part of the public record until the Board of Managers has selected a vendor. A copy of all submitted proposals will have been distributed to the managers, via email, for review prior to the March 13, 2025, meeting.



RESOLUTION

Resolution number: 25-018

Title: Authorization to Extend the Contract with Solution Builders for IT Managed Services

WHEREAS, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §103B.227, at least every two years a watershed district is to solicit interest proposals for professional or technical consultant services before retaining the services of a consultant or extending an annual services agreement; and

WHEREAS, professional services needed by the District, and subject to §103B.227, include information technology (IT) managed services; and

WHEREAS, the Board authorized the solicitation of proposals for IT managed services on December 19, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the District solicited proposals and received responses from ten IT managed service providers; and

WHEREAS, District staff have reviewed the proposals based on services offered, experience and qualifications, monthly costs, and migration/transition costs; and

WHEREAS, based on this evaluation, staff recommends that the District extend its current services agreement with Solution Builders as the IT managed service provider; and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the submitted proposals and concurs with the recommendation of staff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Board of Managers hereby authorizes the District Administrator to negotiate and execute an extension of the District’s IT managed services contract with Solution Builders, Inc., for a period of two years.

Resolution Number 25-018 was moved by Manager _____, seconded by Manager _____. Motion to adopt the resolution ___ ayes, ___ nays, ___ abstentions. Date: 3/13/2025

Date: _____

Secretary