



# Peace River Regional District REPORT

To: Regional Board

Date: July 2, 2015

From: Bruce Simard General Manager of Development Services

**Subject: Computer Network and Workstation Service Agreements**

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## RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Regional Board authorize extension of the computer network and workstation service agreements with Nortech Business Solutions until March 31, 2017 (end of first quarter), subject to existing contract conditions.

## BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

In 2010, the Regional District undertook a substantial upgrade to the computer network infrastructure. Equipment and support services were obtained through an RFP process. External support services are essential because sufficient internal resources are not available and an outside contractor has the additional personnel and variety of skill sets needed. Nortech Business Solutions (Fort St John) were the successful contractor and a five year contract was established, pursuant to Regional District purchasing policy.

4. Greater than \$50,001 value; or  
Multi-year: more than a 3-year term (to a maximum of a 5-year term) and more than \$50,001 total value

To be acquired by way of public tender process.

- a. Advertising for public tender to be placed in the appropriate newspaper(s), the PRRD Website, BC Bid and other applicable mediums to solicit the best responses.
- b. Approval of bids/tenders and awarding of contracts is authorized by Board resolution.

Nortech supplied and installed new equipment and has been providing the following services:

1. Hassle Free Server Service Contract - support, monitoring maintenance, backup and repair for a monthly fee.
2. Premium Virtual System Administration (VSA) Workstation Service Contract – security protection, OS patch updates, helpdesk, remote support
3. Hourly support for services not included in the above contracts

The contracts with Nortech are due to expire August 1, 2015.

The equipment installed in 2010 is running very well. There are no chronic equipment failures, and the equipment has not yet been surpassed by software requirements. Best practice is to plan for a 5 year replacement cycle for network server equipment, particularly if there are

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critical business requirements, system operations changes, software and hardware challenges that have inevitably developed over time. While the system previous to the current network just barely made the 5 years, discussions with Nortech, the generally good service to users, and no foreseen challenges to the system in the immediate future, suggests that replacement of the network equipment could wait until 2017. (an extra 18-20 months)

Also, the next generation of server software is not expected to be released until 2016. New workstation software (Windows 10) is being released later in 2015. So far, all major enterprise software (financial, solid waste, mapping, fire dept. records), is happily working with our current system and does not need an upgrade in server software. This could change over the next couple years as programs are upgraded.

In responding to increasing service demands resulting from expansion in the resource sectors and community growth, it is anticipated that the regional district office requirements may likely require an in depth review and reconfiguration in the near term. It would seem more prudent to also consider network upgrades at the same time as this. It is also an opportunity (and time) to review and consider how the IT services are provided for the corporation. The last major review of IT services was done in 2003.

Finally, when considering both a network service provider and a major equipment upgrade, it is more practical and provides better continuity to have the same contractor that installed and set-up new equipment to also be engaged for support. Thus, it would be more prudent to consider an RFP for both at the same time.

Subject to Board approval, Nortech has agreed to a contract extension under the existing terms.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:**

The computer infrastructure is essential to the efficient delivery of services and responsible financial management of resources is a guiding principle.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):**

Since 2011 annual reserves have been set aside for eventual upgrade of the network. There is currently \$268,000 in reserve for the network which can be raised to a maximum of \$350,000. Waiting over two more budget cycles will provide additional time to increase the reserve and reduce the shock of a large balloon payment in a single year. While the equipment continues to work well and has not become obsolete, the longer it can be used means the annualized purchase costs are reduced.

#### **OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):**