

FEATHER RIVER AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM
10/07/2019

TO: FRAQMD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: Christopher D. Brown, AICP, APCO

SUBJECT: Approve the Ad-Hoc Committee recommendation to enter into an agreement with Advanced Database Designs LLC (Permits Pro) for the Grants Tracking and Reporting Module not to exceed \$24,000 and authorize the APCO to execute related documents.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve entering into an agreement with Advanced Database Designs (Permits Pro) for the Grant Administration project not to exceed \$24,000 and authorize the APCO to execute related documents.

ALTERNATIVE:

Do not approve the proposed contract and provide additional direction to staff.

BACKGROUND:

Since fiscal year 2016/17 the District has received increasing amounts of funding from the Air Resources Board (ARB) in the form of Grants. Currently the District has at least seven of the grants. Each one has different reporting requirements, allowable administrative fees, reporting deadlines and geographic spending restrictions. If a mistake is made the District may have to return funds or lose eligibility for future funding. The District currently uses a large white board to track all this information, which is clearly not acceptable.

Staff has identified a clear need for a grants tracking system, which would identify deadlines, track direct and indirect costs, consolidate information on allowable costs and develop simple reports. The District attempted to develop such a system in house last year but did not have the available staff time to make it happen.

The District recently entered into a services contract with Advanced Database Designs (ADD) for technical support of our existing MS Access databases. Staff asked ADD to estimate the cost to develop a Grants Tracking Database and make a recommendation for how it should be developed. Based on advice from Yuba County IT the District is not developing any further MS Access Databases and will be transitioning to another system.

ADD's recommendation is to develop the database inside the "Permits Pro" (ADD is the developer of Permits Pro) system which is used by a number of small Air Districts in California.

Permits Pro has a number of advantages, including it is a fully modern database using a cloud-based SQL server with a web front end. The system would be accessible to District staff in the field using their existing laptops. As a cloud-based system Permits Pro is developed as "Software as a Service" (SAS) model which means that after setup there is an annual fee which includes hosting and technical support. These annual fees are the same if the District is using one module or all the modules.

Staff is expecting to transition all District operations to Permits Pro over the next several years (this would of course require additional contracts and Board action).

One of the major advantages of the SAS licensing model, which the District also uses for Office 365, for the user is there is no requirement for an in-house server and technical support. Which over time should result in savings for the District.

The major downside to consider of an SAS model is the District will not "own" the software that is developed. The code is the property of the vendor and only licensed for use by the District. The District's data input into the system is the District's property and would be returned to District if the contract was terminated. This feature is not unique to Permits Pro but is common to all SAS licenses.

INFORMATION PRESENTED TO ADHOC

At the direction of the Ad-Hoc Committee appointed at the last Board meeting staff surveyed a number of Air Districts and our State Association to see how these agencies are tracking staff time, indirect costs, deadlines and reporting requirements relating to the new grant programs. This information is on the attached table.

In summary of the table, larger agencies are using expensive agency wide IT solutions to do this work, other agencies are using inhouse IT staff (originally attempted by FRAQMD) and many agencies are simply doing the best they can with existing tools. No direct solution is available.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The vendor has estimated the cost for developing this system at \$24,000. The amount has been budgeted in the FY19/20 budget.

ATTACHMENT A - SURVEY OF OTHER AGENCIES

Agency	Agency Size	Tracking System	Type of Software	Fee Model	Required Features	Negative Impacts
San Diego	Large*	Acella/Kronos /Accounting dept.	Agencywide Fiscal	Annual fee + per user	Yes	Yes (major)
Santa Barbara	Medium	Tyler Technologies	Agencywide Fiscal/HR	Annual fee + per user	no	Yes (major)
South Coast	Large	In house system + Peoplesoft	Agencywide Time Tracking	Annual fee + per employee	no	Yes
Monterey	Medium	Accounting department	N/A			
El Dorado	Small*	Kronos	Agencywide Time Tracking	Annual fee + per employee	no	Yes
Sacramento	Large	ADP	Payroll	Annual fee + per employee	no	Yes
San Joaquin	Large	In House System	N/A			
Bay Area	Large	HR and Accounting Department	N/A			
Mohave	Medium	In House System	N/A			
CAPCOA	Small	In House System	N/A			

* Agencies is operated as part of a larger entity - not independent Special Districts.

ATTACHMENT A - SURVEY OF OTHER AGENCIES

The review of information from other Air Districts and the state association uncovered five solutions which are being used statewide

1. ADP (payroll processing) systems¹ – requires a change in payroll processor and extensive changes to District processes.
2. Kronos Time Tracking – An integrated HR software which includes time tracking. This is not needed at the District.
3. Acella – a series of high-level management apps typically used by large jurisdictions.
4. Tyler Technologies – An complete fiscal management solution typically used by medium to large jurisdictions.
5. In house systems – built and maintained by District staff.

Solutions 1-4 would each require changes to existing District processes, which are working smoothly and efficiently, in addition to the District paying more money for tools that are not needed. For example there is no need for a computerized HR system when we have only 11 employees and a historically low level of turnover.

Solution 5 – Is what the District originally attempted, however not enough staff time was available to complete the project.

¹ The District used to use ADP for payroll and had a number problems. Staff is happy with our current payroll provider.