

**RFP Addendum  
Voice Communications System  
DRAFT 9/28/2009**

**Baltimore Metropolitan Council**  
2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310  
Baltimore, MD 21224



## **Introduction**

On October 13, 2009, a meeting was held at BMC's offices (2700 Lighthouse Point East, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD 21224) to discuss a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by BMC for a Voice Communications System to be installed at a location to which BMC plans to move.

Potential bidders were encouraged to come to this meeting, in order to have an opportunity to meet BMC decision-makers and ask questions they may have had about the RFP. Bidders were permitted to submit questions after the meeting by telephone or e-mail until October 24, 2009.

This document provides answers to those questions, as well as other information updates.

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## **Requirements Clarification/Modification**

There is an important possible requirements change, following from a difference between some bidders' assumptions, and BMC's assumptions while the RFP was being developed.

BMC, not wishing to be constrained as to the technology for provision of voice services, allowed vendors to design a traditional (e.g. PRI) system, a VOIP system, or both. BMC had been working under the assumption that voice and data networks would be separate (its current PRI service is delivered via a T1 line).

However, many of the bidders' comments and questions appear to come from the assumption that a VOIP system uses an integrated network for both voice and data.

Because of this, we are clarifying and extending requirements to include an integrated voice/data network option. Bidders may design one of three types of voice switching systems:

1. A traditional (PRI) voice switching system. This will require separate services from the service providers.
2. A VOIP voice switching system with separate voice and data networks. The system will require a single IP service or separate IP services for voice and data, If there is a single IP service, equipment to separate voice and data traffic outside the data network must be provided.
3. A VOIP voice switching system with a single IP service and an integrated voice/data network. If this option is chosen, bidders must provide switches and firewall. These additional costs will be weighed against the reduced costs this system (for example, cabling requirements may change, and BMC may not have to purchase the new switches it had been planning to purchase for its data network).

Bidders may implement a voice mail system on top of the switching system by whatever means fits our needs.

The selection of a single IP service for voice and data will change the requirements in the Services contract.

## **Site and construction information**

### **What is the site address?**

A: 1500 Woodall Street – however, the building owner is trying to have the street named "Whetstone Way", so at some point the address may become 1500 Whetstone Way

### **Schedule update**

The building is now scheduled for BMC occupancy during September 2010, meaning that tenant improvements will be underway during the spring and summer months. Builder has letters of intent to lease entire building.

### **Would it be possible to obtain a property management POC for the new location?**

Property management would prefer that any questions come through BMC from the bidders. BMC will provide a POC for the building after award to the successful bidder. Until that time all questions should go through BMC.

## **Current usage at Lighthouse Point**

### **Current system**

Inter-TEL AXXESS system, supported by Maryland Telephone.

Currently using a PRI with 12 lines and 3 analog lines

1. main line
2. 11 direct lines for specific employees
3. 3 analog lines

### **Current Handset inventory**

38x Inter-Tel Basic Digital Terminal, part 520.4300

4x Inter-Tel Standard digital terminal part 550.4400

4x Inter-Tel Executive Digital terminal part 550.4500

### **Call volumes, types of callers**

Most (80%) are local/state government employees, some from private citizens (citizen committees, RIC, Ride Share)

### **Are there any 800 lines?**

Yes, there is a single 800 number for the Ride Share program. 866-645-0032  
(We incorrectly said "no" at the pre-bid meeting)

### **Conferencing**

We have a PolyComm conferencing phone, and Currently using an outside service (per call), which meets our needs and costs \$xxx.xxx/mo.

There is an average of two conference calls per month, usually less than 6 users, and never more than a dozen users. Conferences can last a couple of hours, but usual participant duration 1 hour.

Current phones have an internal conferencing function that allows 3 users. Too limited for normal use.

### **International calls?**

Infrequent

**Does BMC have a disaster recovery plan for communications system?**

Not specifically for voice communications. There are agreements with partner organizations (local governments) for operations after a disaster.

## System Requirements

### Is BMC open to a hosted voice solution?

No.

### Does the phone system make a distinction between regular and analog (e.g. fax) lines?

The service provider will provide 12 regular voice lines and 3 analog lines for devices (one of these lines is shared between a credit card machine and a fax machine).

Bidders should specify if any remote monitoring functionality requires a fourth analog line.

Bidders should describe how analog lines affect voice communication system.

### Are you counting on using existing handsets?

We are not planning on using existing 10-year-old Inter-Tel handsets.

### How may endpoints? What types?

All 50 endpoints should support basic functions:

- Call
- Hold
- Transfer
- Intercom
- Local and remote access to Voice Mail

14 mid-range endpoints for support staff should give caller ID, time, and DND

3 "executive" endpoints for support staff should give access to "standard" endpoint features as well as administrative features (e.g. switch to night service) if this is not done with workstation-based software

Switchboard console goes with one of the "executive" endpoints

2 of the 50 endpoints will be used as "spares"

### Should all changes be "soft changes"?

Yes, other than integrating future additional lines from service provider.

**Is a hard console required?**

Hard console and soft console are equally acceptable. If bidder specifies a soft console that requires a separate monitor, and is not software running on BMC workstations, bidder should include the monitor in the bid.

**Does contractor provide any servers or other equipment?**

Yes, contractor provides all servers used by the phone and voice mail system. Preferred vendor is Dell. BMC will purchase own UPS. Bid should state server models and rack space requirements.

**Is there a requirement to track calls or provide voice documentation?**

No

**Is a Microsoft environment with connection to Active Directory available?**

We currently use an Active Directory environment. Servers integrated into BMC's Active Directory domain must be compatible with BMC standard server software (e.g. Symantec Endpoint Protection, Automatic Updates, and Backup Exec Remote Agents).

**Is there a requirement for Unified Messaging and Unified Communication within the voice communication system?**

No.

**Voice mail comes through Outlook? Are connections to Microsoft Exchange available?**

BMC but does not use Exchange and has no plans to do so with current usage patterns. Bidders are welcome to design a system that uses Exchange and Outlook for voice mail, but they must then provide the Exchange server. Bidders recommending such a system should quote the cost of an Exchange server license for the appropriate number of users. BMC may be able to purchase the Exchange Server license for less, but we will determine that only if such a system is the winning bid.

**Are you looking for workflow efficiencies to be part of integrating phone system with Outlook?**

Bidder may specify workflow analysis and documentation they regard appropriate as an option.

**Are local and long distance part of this RFP?**

These services are part of the separate services RFP, not this RFP.

**Will BMC require cable /satellite TV at the new site?**

Yes, but this is part of the services RFP, not this RFP.

**Does the voice communication system have any requirements to support teleworking?**

No. Teleworking is supported with VPN (ie. data service) and employees use their home phone lines for voice, not routed from BMC.

**Should a specialized voice disaster recovery plan be included?**

Bidder may specify this as an option.

**Conferencing requirements?**

BMC plans to continue using its current outside service for conferencing, so the phone system need not supply conferencing. However, bidders on the Services RFP may recommend a different service as an option, meeting needs for existing usage.

**Perceived negatives over implementing VOIP in our data infrastructure?**

No perceived negatives either way. Cost-effectiveness of the entire system determines VOIP vs. land-line.

Noise suppression systems of VOIP can be jarring, but we don't expect to have any control over that.

VOIP system will be picked with a VOIP service provider specifying adequate bandwidth and land-line system will be picked with a land-line service.

**In a VOIP system, will bidders also need to quote Quality of Service (QoS), Power over Ethernet (PoE) switches? Do you require any specific brand?**

Yes, preferred (but not required) PoE switch brand is Dell.

**Most VOIP systems would cut down on the cabling requirements.**

This is decided by the specification of an integrated voice/data network with a VOIP system. Cabling providers will have to be ready to supply dual Cat6, or single Cat6a.

**Do voice lines and other functions require encryption?**

No

**Does KVM Equip have USB or PS2 connectivity?**

The KVM switch BMC currently uses for its servers is a Dell 8-port 180AS Ethernet KVM that uses server interface pod ("SIP") adapters at the server end of the Ethernet cable. Current servers use USB SIPs.

BMC plans on purchasing a larger Dell KVM switch with the second rack cabinet. If specified servers are not compatible with Dell Ethernet+SIP KVMs, bidder needs to quote a KVM.

## **Initial setup and training requirements**

### **Is BMC porting existing numbers?**

Service providers will determine this based on the address (see first item).

### **Who installs the client equipment, sets up soft ware?**

Contractor installs client equipment and installs software, EXCEPT if software runs on BMC workstations. In this case, BMC prefers that software is installed via Group Policy, and contractor should provide .msi files, document configuration settings, test, and demonstrate initial installation and patches/updates using this method (assume a package assigned to computers in a GPO linked to a site).

### **Is there a storage location?**

BMC will provide a storage location; whether this is at the existing site or the new site will be determined when the time comes to order equipment.

### **Is there a phased approach to setup?**

Most likely, Contractor will make three visits:

1. Install server equipment before BMC occupancy
2. System testing before BMC occupancy
3. Install in cubicles during move, and train employees

### **Will the walls have fire-rated 3/4" plywood installed on them by the GC to mount telecommunications equipment to/on?**

Yes, the back wall of the server room U7.

### **Will the GC install a Telecommunications Grounding Busbar for us to bond equipment to?**

TBD

### **Does Contractor provides training for everyone, or just trainer?**

Contractor trains all employees in use of client equipment and voice mail.

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Contractor will provide additional training for (3 or 4) designated administrators to restart system and operate those administrative features appropriate for customer to have access to.

**Is the main distribution center in room U1?**

This was discussed at services pre-bid meeting, and services RFP bidders prefer to have demarcation between service providers and internal systems in the server room U7.

## **Support**

### **Term of support**

One year, but also specify and commit to pricing for second and third years.

### **Warranties**

If basic warranties are less than a year, extend warranties to one year. Hardware support should be included in extended support.

### **Does support includes Remote adds, moves, and changes?**

Yes, but these functions should also be part of the administrative functions that designated BMC administrators should be trained in.

### **Does BMC require remote monitoring of the voice communications system?**

Detect Up/Down, and restart system. Contractor should specify if remote monitoring adds a requirement for an additional regular line, analog line, or IP address from the service provider.

### **Does BMC require 8x5 coverage or 24x7 coverage?**

8x5

## **Bidding process**

### **What metrics will you use to decide on the winning bid? What makes one bid more attractive than another?**

BMC does not use a "points" system. Cost proposal should include a cost for minimum system, and show separate costs for optional features.

BMC will compare costs of basic system bid and balance costs of optional features with perceived benefit.

However, experience, site support, and service beyond initial warranty period will count towards a final decision.

### **How much of decision is based on cost?**

At least 50%. Cost is not an absolute criterion; contract will be awarded based upon perceived value. BMC needs to build a total package from this RFP and the services RFP, and make a decision on the total cost. Additional costs for BMC purchased hardware and software will be figured into the total cost.

Since BMC may be able to directly purchase some hardware and software at a lower cost than the bidder, the bidder may offer a credit for equipment and software required by the contract but purchased by BMC:

- Exchange Server (if using Exchange for voice mail)
- Server hardware.
- Switches (if required)
- Firewall (if required)

BMC will decide to purchase the equipment and take advantage of the credit only after the contract is awarded. Bidders should count on providing the equipment.

### **Selection process will stay in place regardless of construction schedule?**

Yes.

### **We will be including 1 proposal, but 2 quotes- Digital & VOIP. Will this be ok?**

This is appropriate. However, the proposal should specify Digital and VOIP as mutually exclusive options.

**Should costs versus benefits of various technologies be written or physically demonstrated?**

Written.

**Is there a website associated or information updates bulletin?**

Information updates and RFP addenda will be posted with the RFP announcement at <http://www.baltometro.org/whats-new/requests-for-proposals>

**BMC requires only one affidavit for bundled bids, but has specified that this should be the affidavit in the Site Cabling RFP if the bundle includes a bid on that RFP. However, bids for the cabling RFP are due after bids for the phone system are due. When is the affidavit due?**

Bidders should submit a Proposal Affidavit with the first proposal they submit. If bidders cannot supply the additional responses in the Site Cabling RFP affidavit by the time they submit bids on other RFPs, they should feel free to submit a second affidavit with their bid on the Site Cabling RFP.