



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0288, **Version:** 2

Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board authorize the Purchasing Agent to negotiate and execute Amendment I to the Agreement (FENIX 4555) with NEO Fiber, Inc, dba Neo Connect, increasing the not-to-exceed amount from \$15,000 to \$50,882, for as-needed, on-going staffing support and consulting services related to pre-grant Broadband efforts, including researching what areas of the County would qualify for upcoming grant opportunities. (Cont. 2/25/2020, Item 3) (Est. Time: 10 mins)

FUNDING: General Fund/TOT

DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

On December 17, 2019, NEO Connect presented their final report on Broadband planning in the County to the Board of Supervisors (Legistar 19-1821, December 17, 2019). At this time the Board authorized and approved the Purchasing Agent to negotiate an agreement with NEO Connect for as-needed consulting on various Broadband topics, including policy and ordinance implementation, coordination with other agencies and developers on future projects. Agreement #4555 for \$15,000 was executed on January 30, 2020, for a term of two years.

Staff was also directed to continue to look for grant opportunities and investors/partnerships to further Broadband efforts in the County, as well as to research smaller areas of the County in which to implement a pilot program for Broadband implementation. Two grant opportunities have been identified, which the County may wish to pursue, that could help implement Broadband in a project area within El Dorado County. The maximum award under each grant is \$3 million for one and \$25 million for another. Each will require a County match, which staff will ask the Board to consider once additional information is developed. The Board will also be asked to approve the project area(s). Each grant application will be due later in 2020.

This contract amendment with NEO Connect will provide funding for the next step in the grant preparation process, researching what areas within the County would qualify for known upcoming grant opportunities. This amendment is recommended at this time due to the timing of the potential grant submittals and the time required to prepare the grant application(s). Additionally, at a later date, a new contract will be brought to the Board for consideration and approval, related to additional next steps in the broader Broadband planning effort, to cover such activities as community outreach, financial planning, and actual grant submittals.

It should be noted that the existing agreement also covers costs for NeoConnect to assist with implementation of the Dig Once policy, and in discussions with other service providers for potential joint projects.

By way of background, NEO Connect was awarded a contract in April 2017 to complete the County's Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study. This effort was completed in June 2019 and included community outreach, dig-once and shadow conduit policy support, and Broadband analysis

and planning including several options for funding Broadband implementation. A high-level ride-out of the terrain in El Dorado County was also performed to further verify financial assumptions and projected capital costs. Findings and various reports were presented to the Board in 2018 and 2019.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could decline this amendment, thereby not authorizing the additional research and analysis required to assess what priority areas would qualify for upcoming grant opportunities.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

16-0006 9/27/16 EDA Grant Acceptance for Feasibility Study
17-0442 4/25/17 RFP Award to NEO Connect
18-0077 1/23/18 Broadband Update
18-0950 6/26/18 Broadband Update
18-1289 9/18/18 Broadband Update
18-1889 12/18/18 Broadband Update-Next Steps
19-1821 12/17/19 Broadband Update-Final Presentation and Report

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The increased cost is \$35,882. Sufficient appropriations exist in the Non-Departmental Expense budget unit for FY 2019-20 to cover the cost of this effort.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure

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