

DATE: October 6, 2022  
TIME: 9:41 AM

**Minutes of the Website Renewal Committee  
May 5, 2022 by Zoom**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Lanza at 5:40pm via Zoom

Members attending: Michael Lanza, Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Kimberley Selness, Dave Petto, Paul Roberts

Members not attending: Jeff Hansell, Mireille Boutin, Todd Consentino

**Agenda**

Vote on minutes: No vote on March 10 committee minutes (no minutes available)

Public feedback: No members of public in attendance.

Other project feedback: Paul reported that he had spoken with members of the Economic Development Committee. In general, ideas for leveraging the website pertain to content development and town processes; not the website platform and scope of the current RFQ.

RFQ document review: Ellen presented the RFQ Working Group's most current version of the document. Each section of the document was shown for feedback with minor edits made in real time. Document attached.

RFQ Document vote: Michael Lanza moved to vote on the RFQ, Ellen O'Brien Cushman seconded: The committee members voted unanimously by roll call in favor of this newly edited/completed document. Michael Lanza, Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Kimberley Selness, Dave Petto, Paul Roberts all voted yes. 5-0-0 in favor.

The Committee must continue to further develop evaluation criteria for responses.

**Recommended Criteria for Evaluation of the Responses to RFQ**

- (Will define what is fair, good, excellent -including assigning values?)
- Project launch timeline(s) or time horizon
- Fees – project fees and ongoing annual fees
- Experience with similar size and scope projects
- Fair = 1-3 Good = 3-10 Excellent= 11+
- Ease of use by permissioned users and by visitors to site
- Aesthetics of design and layout capability as provided to Town
- Ability to provide required content management system components including digital form templates for most commonly requested services
- Migration support
- Poor/Fair = Town decides everything; Good = provides advice, standards; Excellent =
- training opportunities

Next steps: Ellen will send the final version of the document to Dave Petto so he can forward it to Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator for any comment and suggestions for next steps. If Patrice has comments, the Committee will meet to review and consider them for incorporation. Once we hear back from Dave and Patrice and have any required meeting, Ellen will assist Michael in preparing a cover letter to bring the RFQ to the Select Board.

Motion to adjourn the meeting 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen O'Brien Cushman



**WEBSITE HOSTING, DESIGN AND MIGRATION RFQ**  
**Prepared and Approved by Website Renewal Committee**  
**May 5, 2022**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Belmont is issuing a Request for Quote (RFQ) for qualified firms to provide website design, hosting, content management, and related services for an updated municipal website.

Our vision is to improve communication and transparency between The Town and the community at large with accessible, resident-centric content to engage citizens, empower employees, and better reflect Belmont as a great place to live, work, play, and do business.

## **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

Belmont, Massachusetts is located just a few miles from Boston.

The Town consists of just 4.5 square miles with 27,000 residents, including approximately 4,000 children, making it one of the most densely populated suburbs.

According to the 2020 Federal Census, our demographics reveal that 25% of residents are foreign-born and nearly 30% speak a language other than English at home.

Belmont prides itself as the “Town of Homes” with local businesses and a small-town feel, including hundreds of acres of public open space, playgrounds, recreational facilities, and excellent public schools.

Our government is comprised of eight Town-wide elected boards, approximately 1200 compensated employees, a Representative Town Meeting of 300 members and 60+ appointed citizen committees, boards and commissions. As such, residents are extremely active, involved, and curious, utilizing all available avenues – website, social media, telephone, personal visits – to interact with government.

The Town’s current website ([www.belmont-ma.gov](http://www.belmont-ma.gov)) was built in 2014 by Virtual Town and Schools (now CivicPlus) and is managed in a decentralized fashion. Individual department staff members manage page content and calendar events for their department and any committee the department supports. User privileges are distributed throughout Town departments. The main homepage content and visuals are managed by the staff of the Town Administrator’s office.

In November 2020, a Website Renewal Committee was established to 1) identify current website use, challenges, needs, and opportunities; 2) determine what the website should do and be for the Town and visitors; 3) consider and recommend whether to change the website platform, provider, or remain with CivicPlus/CivicEngage; 4) identify requirements for any platform change.

#### Current Use:

Our users are residents, current and potential businesses, employees, committee and board members, and global non-residents such as vendors, contractors, and potential employees.

- In 2021, there were 402,781 unique website sessions with a total of 955,645 pages viewed
- Website content was accessed by 227,214 unique devices: 61% desktops; 37% mobile, 2% tablet
- 70.5% of all sessions begin with a search engine Keyword Search
- 24% of all views are for the top 10 pages, centered on: COVID updates, property taxes and assessments; trash & recycling; job openings; paying bills, online permitting and the All Departments directory page.

#### Current Challenges:

- Dated platform and page templates are difficult for busy department employees to update and maintain page content (creating PDFs instead)
- Posting meeting Agendas and Minutes to committee pages is cumbersome and sometimes backlogged
- Challenging workflow when adding names and contact information leading to obsolete information
- Site organization is based on the structure of municipal departments and committees
- Current Search results (4/13/2022) include more than 12,000 Agendas & Minutes, 4230 Events, and 5,000+ other documents and files, leading to low user satisfaction

## GOALS

The website for the Town of Belmont should serve as the official source for Town-wide information and services for our residents, employees, and the community at large.

As the gateway to our community, goals and guiding principles for the new platform and re-design include:

- **Promote transparency** with easy-to-find content that's relevant, current, and understandable

- **Optimize the customer experience** with user-centric navigation and improved Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- **Connect residents** to the community and promote local businesses
- **Encourage engagement** with the Town with improved communication tools, avenues for feedback, and digital points of contact
- **Foster efficiency** with improved workflows for staff and enhance opportunities for automated processes for municipal services
- **Support all users** with an accessible content regardless of device, language preference, or disability
- **Implement best practices** and the highest level of **security and uptime**
- **Empower users** with self-service transactions, 24/7
- Reflect contemporary culture, diversity, and **Belmont's unique value proposition** within the Greater Boston area.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### SCOPE OF SERVICES - SECTIONS

1. Secure website hosting
2. Website design and customization
3. Content migration from current site (including pages, forms, and documents)
4. Content Management System (CMS)
5. Support and training (pre- and post-launch)

*Overall: The Town has identified the following website requirements. For each of the following sections, please describe how your SaaS offer and organization can address our needs.*

#### **1. Secure Website Hosting**

- A. SOC 2 Compliance
- B. Disaster recovery plan and implementation
  - a. Offsite backup and restore feature, provided by the selected firm
  - b. Disaster recovery services
- C. Uptime and monitoring 24 x 7 x 365
- D. Scheduled down-time frequency
- E. Automatic patches and updates
- F. Easy-to-monitor site analytics for privileged users
- G. Compatibility or integration with existing 3<sup>rd</sup> party systems, including but not limited to NextRequest (Public Record Requests), PeopleGIS (Permits & Licensing, MUNIS (Financial Systems), ReachDeck (Accessibility), Blackboard Connect (Emergency Notification System), and multiple payment systems.

## 2. Website Design & Customization

*Please describe your capabilities and process, including the responsibilities of the Town, for our website development.*

- A. Visual design and assets for customer experience
  - a. Streamlined sitemap for improved Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
  - b. User-centric navigation (menus, submenus, and CTAs) targeting the most common inquiries and tasks
  - c. Vibrant, contemporary design
  - d. Committee and department page templates that are easy to navigate (and simple to update for staff)
  - e. Dynamic Governmental meeting calendar with Month, List, Weekly, Daily display
  - f. Separate Community events calendar
  - g. Predictive internal Search
  - h. News feature and social media integration
  - i. Homepage feature space for Town-wide projects or initiatives
  - j. Ability to include multiple banner images throughout the site
  - k. Topical FAQs that are easy to expand and update
  - l. Customer-centric “How do I...?” or “I want to learn about...” menus that refer directly to the appropriate page(s)
  
- B. Responsive design for desktops, laptops, tablets, mobile phones is quickly loaded on commonly used browsers
  - a. Optimized app-like mobile experience
  - b. Availability of flexible page designs
  
- C. Accessibility & ADA Compliance
  - a. Employs high degree of Section 508 and WCAG compliance
  - b. Site tools for reading and language translation
  - c. Other tools to adhere to usability best practices
  
- D. Additional functions to include:
  - a. Search results that display the item content-type and offer obvious filter options
  - b. Email Subscriptions, Notifications, and Newsletters
  - c. Potential to offer customized department “home page” to absorb an external Town website (e.g. Police Department or other entity) to improve citizen search
  - d. Interactive forms for subscription and self-service transaction fulfillment
  - e. All Department level contacts are easily locatable and clickable

- f. Public-facing form for Staff directory A-Z, not just department-based

### **3. Content Management System (CMS)**

*Please describe your solution and how we can easily upload, create, and manage our content for long-term success, including:*

- A. Security settings and defined roles/levels of permissions
- B. Streamlined process to easily upload files (particularly Agendas & Minutes), add contacts, and update site pages
- C. Easy-to-build Webforms and Webform templates
- D. Opportunity or limitations for the Town to update homepage assets, including banner images, global navigation, hover menus, news, and customizing internal URLs
- E. Internal content management tools for staff, such as:
  - a. Process to easily archive documents and pages
  - b. Report to identify broken links and correct
  - c. Alert function tools or reporting to assist in keeping content current

### **4. Content Migration Services**

*Please describe your organization's overall process, capability, and migration services and the Town's role and responsibilities, including:*

- A. Strategy and guidance on what content to migrate
- B. Document, image, and webpage migration limits & opportunities
- C. Form-building templates and support
- D. Options for migrating current email subscriptions
- E. Other available services

### **5. Support and Training**

*Please describe your organization's training approach, capabilities, and services to support the use of your solution, both pre- and post-launch:*

- A. Training of Town staff – live and on-demand (video, how-to guides, tutorials) resources by user role or task
- B. Technical Support – live and on-demand channels for troubleshooting, 24/7
- C. Other resources or customer support services to optimize success (e.g. running reports, writing for the web, accessibility checks, best practices)

### **Other Requirements**

Vendor Qualifications, Contacts and Information

- A. Proposed Timeline with project milestones
- B. Vendor qualifications to perform the work
  - a) Identify and provide qualifications of the assigned Project Manager
  - b) Provide specific project experience and references of similar size and scope for this project, migration/design/hosting/development
  - c) Provide Illustrative examples
  - d) Provide name and contact information for Key contact person if there are questions on the vendor response
  - e) Qualifications of key personnel who would be assigned to the project

### Fees

- A. Proposed fees/ financial investments for pre-launch, launch, post-launch maintenance and annual website hosting fees for a three-year period
- B. Please itemize any additional service offered and respective fees

