Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

IT Support and Maintenance

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) posted a request for proposals from qualified individuals or firms to install a new server system and preventative maintenance for our server, desktops and laptops for five years. Here are a list of questions received and CVRPC's responses (in red).

Q. Are all desktops and laptops Windows 7?

A. Yes

Q. What version of Quickbooks do you have? Number of users?

A. We currently have Quickbooks Desktop Pro 2017. We have one user license but need to increase that to 3 or maybe 5.

Q. Are you currently virtualizing your server?

A. No but we would consider this in the future if affordable.

Q. We have been working on our proposal and are zeroing in on a recommended backup solution for CVRPC. Our biggest question to this point concerns how much storage you think you will actually need? The network diagram you gave us shows about 1.3TB worth of files currently, but you mentioned that there were old files on the server that you thought could be archived.

A. We can archive only about 1.5 GB at this point so it won't be much different. Another option is that we have a lot of imagery data on a mapped drive that maybe could be backed up to an external drive and not the cloud since it doesn't really change at all. That takes up approximately 800 GB so perhaps a cloud solution for that data would not be the best. You could give us a cost for both if that helps.

Q. Are you going to replace any computers this year besides the server?

A. We are going to replace a desktop, buy a laptop and perhaps buy another desktop for a new employee (not sure yet about that). You do not need to include those in the bid, but we will need support in purchasing and setting them up.

Q. Would you like the proposal send via us mail or email? I think the RFP says email and I wanted to make sure attachments would be ok to include or if in an envelope mailed to you would be easier?

A. Email only please. If attachments are too large, feel free to use dropbox or something like that.

Q. Do you have any hardware or software specs for the server? Any info on what you need would be great…

A. We need to replace the current server that we have (HP ML350p Gen 8), with something comparable. Would like to go to cloud backup if affordable, and need the following software: ArcGIS, QuickBooks, EPA Tier II & Cameo, Traks Pro, Microsoft office suite of course.

Q. Do you need us to include this software on the new server? ArcGIS, QuickBooks, Hazes, Traks Pro, Microsoft office suite of course.
You said you wanted 3TB of storage- does that include: OS and Data?
Are you using RAID, what level?
A. No to the software on the server. Except for maybe Quickbooks. Yes that would include the OS and Data. That was the capacity we were looking for. We are using RAID but not sure how it is configured exactly. ArcGIS license is also currently on our server.

Q. What is the make and model of the rack enclosure your current server is housed in?
A. It is an HP enclosure, but no idea what the model is. This was donated to our organization, we did not purchase it. The dimensions are 24″ x 38″ x 79″. We will not be purchasing a new rack for this effort.

Q. If feasible, would you consider a rack-mounted server instead of a tower server?
A. As long as it would not significantly increase the cost of the server.

Q. According to the documentation, the UPS battery was slated for replacement last year. Has the battery been replaced and if not, would a new UPS battery (or new UPS) be hardware that needs purchasing and installation during this year?
A. No the battery has not been replaced yet and will need to be replaced this year.
Q. When is your Symantec endpoint protection software subscription up for renewal? We ask this because endpoint security software is included as part of our managed security services and renewal of your existing licenses would not be required if our services are utilized.
A. Our Endpoint Protection SBE expires the end of February 2018.

Q. Do you have the license info (product keys, etc.) for your existing Microsoft Windows Server installation? It is assumed that these licenses will be re-used for the new server.
A. Yes we have those product keys. We would need new Windows Server software since support for Server 2012 will cease in 2023. We qualify for Tech Soup to purchase.

Q. The current server is consuming a significant amount of hard drive space (~1.3TB). Can the server configs we propose be spec'd with options based on whether that data has been archived or not? That is, the configs will have more or less hard drive storage available.
A. A large amount of that data (~1.3 TB) is actually imagery data that we would like to keep on the server, but it would only need to be backed up once since it does not change. It would not need to be part of a monthly backup plan.

Q. It is understood that you want to set up a shared QuickBooks environment. Will you be sharing the company file(s) from a workstation (feasible) on the network or do you need this to be done from a server? Please note that running QuickBooks from an Active Directory domain controller is not best practice and is known to cause security and stability issues; if required to be run from a server, we would recommend a second

Windows server be used to host this service or you move your QuickBooks to a cloud-based service.

A. Our Quickbooks files are on the server, so we could share the files from the server, but the software currently is on one desktop. It is Quickbooks Desktop Pro 2017. We have access to Enterprise, Premier and Accountant if need be. We would look to you to recommend what practice we should use for our needs.

Q. Do any of the following applications run from your existing server:
1. Traks Pro
   A. No it is run on 2 desktops and one laptop, but we store the data on the server
2. Hazes –
   A. This actually was a mistake in the RFP – we now use Tier II and Cameo software from the EPA, not Hazes. It is run only on one desktop and the reports are stored locally on the desktop because EPA software does not allow for copying to the server. We send our reports to the state so there are other copies.
3. ArcGIS
   A. The licensing software is on the server, but we can install it on the new server. The ArcGIS software itself is only on desktops.
4. InDesign
   A. No this is not on the server, just files.
5. Filemaker –
   A. No this is not on the server, just files. We will be migrating away from using this.

Q. Do you currently own Windows Server 2012 licenses or Windows Server 2016 licenses that were downgraded to Windows Server 2012? The answer to this question will impact the next question.

A. We have Windows Server 2012. No it was not downgraded. Our server is 4 years old and came with Server 2012.

Q. Your current server is running Windows Server 2012/2012 R2 and the current end of life for support for those operating systems is currently 10/10/2023. Do you want to continue with this version of the OS knowing it will require replacement in ~5 years or do you want to have the new server installed with Windows Server 2016 (latest version)? Please note that if you choose the latter this may require purchasing Windows Server 2016 licenses (server and CALs) via TechSoup.

A. We need to purchase new software anyway, so 2016 would make sense. We would use Tech Soup to purchase as stated earlier.

Q. Can the timeline for system assessment be lengthened to 4-6 weeks?

A. The RFP provides 6 weeks from contract start to server installation. This is CVRPC's preferred schedule because the server warranty has expired and we need to install the server before our very busy summer field season. Contractors may propose alternate schedules. If an alternate schedule is proposed, contractors must also state whether they could meet the deliverable schedule in the RFP and under what conditions.

Q. What does CVRPC require as "A statement of the firm's financial stability and ability to complete all services?"

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A. CVRPC requests a written statement confirming whether a prospective service provider is financially stable and has the ability to complete all services over a 5-year period. CVRPC is not requesting a copy of the service provider's financial statements.

Q. Do you need the qualifications of all staff?
A. While the staff assigned to a project may change at the time of contract award, CVRPC asks for each firm to supply qualifications of staff that may work on the project.

Q. Can a network assessment be included in the proposal?
A. Yes. Prospective service providers should also request sufficient information during the pre-bid meeting to develop a cost proposal. CVRPC staff is available to meet with all contractors.

Q. Would you like to have your existing tapes backed-up to cold storage, as well?
A. I don't think that is necessary at this point. If you want to include that a line item in your cost estimate, that would be fine.

Q. Would you like additional security in your server rack environment, such as a lock?
A. That would be a good idea, but we would need to have more than one staff have access. Please show what the additional cost would be for that.