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Northwest **Power** and **Conservation** Council

June 2, 2021

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: Council members

FROM: Mark Walker, Director of Public Affairs
Chad Madron, Project Manager

SUBJECT: Authorization to Enter into a Contract to Migrate the Council's Website

PROPOSED ACTION: Staff recommends authorization to contract with Parthenon Software Group, Inc. in an amount not to exceed $130,000 to support migration of the Council's website to a Django/Python platform.

SIGNIFICANCE: The Council must have a well-functioning, easy to navigate website for internal and external communications and other uses. The Council's current website technology, Drupal 7, will reach the end of its serviceable life in November 2022. This gives us the opportunity to determine the best website platform for both the Council and the Regional Technical Forum going forward.

BUDGETARY/ECONOMIC IMPACTS
Total contract amount not to exceed $130,000. It is anticipated performance of this contract will span fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS
In 2020, the Council's current website vendor notified us that our web technology, Drupal 7, will reach the end of its serviceable life in November 2022. In addition, our vendor said that it will no longer support Drupal platforms and recommended the Council switch to Django/Python technology, which our current vendor can support. Thus, the Council faced three decisions: 1) Continue using Drupal as our platform and

upgrade to Drupal 9; or 2) Switch to a Django/Python platform; and 3) Determine the vendor to perform the work.

Staff researched the pros and cons of continuing with Drupal compared with the Django/Python platform, and researched vendors of both platforms and invited five to deliver a presentation and submit a cost estimate. Three vendors responded and gave comprehensive presentations to staff. Two of the firms specialized in Django/Python and one focused exclusively on Drupal. Staff also contacted one other Django/Python firm as a potential alternative.

Following the vendor presentations and interviews, as well as conducting individual research, staff determined that the Django/Python platform best met the Council's needs for the following reasons:
- It is easier to use
- It is simpler to upgrade
- More programming flexibility
- Staff will be able to do more of its own development work in-house before turning to the vendor
- It is less expensive to maintain
- More conducive to eventually integrate all Council sites to the same platform
- Better for data modeling and showing custom content (e.g., the Council's power plant map)
- The platform is heavily used in the scientific and data community
- More robust ability to connect to databases
- While less common than Drupal, it is becoming more widely adopted

Having determined that the best technology to meet the Council's needs is Django/Python, it came down to a choice between the two firms specializing in that platform. After closely reviewing the bids and checking references, staff recommends proceeding with Parthenon. It is a small firm based in Portland that has been working with the Django platform since 2010. Staff was impressed that Parthenon already had a demo migration of our website as a sample during its presentation. One drawback is that Parthenon is not a design-oriented firm. But, because we are still satisfied with the appearance of our current website, we don't envision a major expenditure if we need to hire a design firm. In addition, Parthenon's bid was lower than the other bids we received. Therefore, staff recommends authorization to contract with Parthenon Software Group, Inc. in an amount not to exceed $130,000 to support migration of the Council's website to a Django/Python platform.

ALTERNATIVES
In the alternative, the Council could maintain Drupal and upgrade to Drupal 9, directing staff to seek another Drupal vendor to provide support beginning in fiscal year 2022, or the Council could direct staff to bring in additional Django/Python vendors through a Request for Proposal process for further consideration. For the reasons detailed above, staff supports migrating the website to the Django/Python platform, and, given staff's research, the vendor discussions, and presentations received, staff supports proceeding

with Parthenon to deliver the website migration and to do so at the quality required, on schedule, and within budget parameters.