



Kris Moen
Deputy Finance Director
Finance Department
kmoen@westalliswi.gov
414.302.8251

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Common Council
Administration and Finance Committee
West Allis, WI

Dear Council Members:

I'm writing to provide additional information regarding the proposal from Central Square for Analytics Now software on the September 15, 2020 Council agenda. This software was included in the 2020 Finance Department budget during the budget planning process in the fall of 2019. It is a replacement for our existing ad hoc report writing tool (Qrep), which is used to report against the data housed in the City's ERP system, known as Naviline/HTE. Support for Qrep was discontinued as of December 31, 2019.

We use the current tool for critical financial reporting functions, including the preparation of the annual budget, as well as budget vs. actual expense reports that departments use to monitor their budgets throughout the year. Other departments like the Water Utility, Human Resources, and Clerk's office have relied on Qrep over the years for reporting against the Utility Billing system, Payroll and HRIS systems, and the Business Licenses system as well. The Analytics Now software will replace Qrep as the reporting tool used to provide information from these systems to support decision-making at the City. It's a significant upgrade over the existing product. In short, it's a robust analytics tool, not just a report writer. Analytics Now includes simple time-saving functionality to schedule and email reports automatically to department heads and other users, as well as more complex data visualization tools that will allow us to create dashboards to support analysis and drive decision-making at the City.

The quote from Central Square includes the first year of hosting fees, which eliminates the need for City IT staff to support it, plus the necessary professional services fees to install and configure the software, and train city staff on the techniques to build reports, dashboards, and additional analytical tools. With approval, the goal is to schedule and complete training before the end of the year so power users can begin converting existing reports to the new tool or even better, replacing existing reports with upgraded data visualizations and dashboards to enhance the way data is communicated and used to support decision making. If needed, additional services can be purchased from Central Square to assist in converting or upgrading existing reports. The determination on whether additional services will be needed will be made once training has been completed and city staff begin using the new tools. If deemed necessary, a separate request will be submitted for those services.

If there are any questions regarding this proposal, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Kris Moen

Kris Moen, CPA
Interim Finance Director | Finance Department