

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

Inter-Office Communication

Date: 10/30/2019

To: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman – Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
James “Luigi” Schmitt – Chair Finance Committee

From: Israel Ramón, Milwaukee County Register of Deeds

Subject: Fund Transfer Request of 09/03/2019 (Media Conversion Agreement - 600 Books Project)

Background

I was appointed as the Milwaukee County Register of Deeds (hereinafter ROD) by Governor Tony Evers on 05/10/2019 and took my oath of office on 05/21/2019. Given the events preceding my appointment, I met with my leadership team and a representative of Fidler Technologies, Inc. (hereinafter, Fidler) on 06/03/2019 and requested the following: 1) Copies of all current Fidler contracts with the Milwaukee County ROD Office; 2) An itemization/accounting of all charges, payments, credits, and distributions; 3) and, that Fidler cease its practice of holding monies (credit balances) due and owing to the County through the use of Tapestry and Monarch.

I reviewed all contracts with my leadership team and forwarded those contracts to IMSD and Corporation Council for their review and redrafting. While I believed that we had received all current contracts with Fidler, on 07/08/2019, I discovered a Media Conversion Agreement (600 Books Project) which was active and had not been previously sent to me.

Discussion

On 08/02/2018, ROD John La Fave entered into the Media Conversion Agreement (600 Books Project) to digitalize, name, mask and index real estate records (Deed Books and Corporation Books) which were on microfilm and/or contained in Deed volume books from the 1800's to 1960. In short, it appears that this project would substantially digitalize 100% Deeds Books at the Milwaukee County ROD Office. I requested that Fidler immediately send me information regarding this project. I was emailed the Media Conversion Agreement with addendums #1 and #2. The total cost of the project per the Agreement is \$256,328.00. Credit balances from revenue which the County was due through Tapestry and/or Monarch was used to pay the Agreement cost. Various credit transfers payments were made through March of 2019, but no additional payments were made after that. These Agreements were shared with IMSD and Corporation counsel.

On 07/18/2019, I was advised by Fidler that 85% of the 600 Books Project had been completed, but that the remainder of the project or 15% was unfinished. I am told by Fidler that all Deeds

have been digitalized, but that naming, masking and indexing remain to be completed at a cost to Milwaukee County of approximately \$51,000.

While this is a project that I may not have entered in its form or under its current terms, the fact remains that it has been substantially completed and it is in the best interest of the ROD Office and the Residents of Milwaukee County that it be completed. Should there be an event in the ROD Office that damages or destroys our deeds books, the remaining deeds to be processed under the Agreement will be lost. Moreover, if the project is deferred, it will likely be more expensive to complete in the future with a different vendor because of the small amount remaining.

Given this, I met with the IMSD contract management team and discussed the importance of completing the project. With the assistance of IMSD, Corporation Counsel, Procurement and the Comptroller's Office, the Media Conversation Project Agreement (600 Books Project) as well as all other Fidler contracts have been rewritten to conform to County ordinances and rules so as to safeguard the interests and data of the Milwaukee County ROD Office and Milwaukee County residents.

I consulted with the ROD Coordinator and determined that the ROD budget allowed for the payment and completion of the project. On 09/03/2019 a fund transfer request was made to use the digital images account to cover the cost of the 600 Books Project. On 09/24/2019, I met with J. Scott and M. Yatchak, budget analysts, to discuss the details of the Agreement, the project and the need to get the project completed. I understand that they had no objections to this request and that County Executive Chris Abele approves of the fund transfer request to complete the project.

Request

I respectfully request that the Funds transfer be approved so that the 600 Books Project can be completed no later than 06/01/2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Israel Ramón
Milwaukee County Register of Deeds

Cc: County Executive Chris Abele
Supervisor Eddie Cullen
Supervisor Jason Haas
Supervisor Willie Johnson, Jr.
Supervisor Supreme Moore Omokunde
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor
Supervisor Sheldon A. Wasserman