TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation

FROM: Finance Committee

SUBJECT: RECREATION SOFTWARE RENEWAL

RECOMMENDATION

> **That the Board receive this report for information.**

BACKGROUND

The Park Board Strategic Plan, under the section Technological Support, sets out the action "to facilitate permit processing and recreation program participation, using internet and telephone technologies."

After an extensive research and selection process involving staff and Association representatives which began in the fall of 2002, a contract was awarded to The Active Network (Safari software package) for a pilot implementation.

The Board received information reports on this project on March 10, 2003 and July 21, 2003, and requested a post-pilot information report.

DISCUSSION

The pilot ran from December 2003 until May 2004, and included two full seasons (Winter 2004 and Spring 2004) at Kerrisdale and Trout Lake community centres and the Special Events / Field Allocation office in Stanley District. Internet picnic bookings and program registrations were included for the Spring season, beginning in March 2004.

The software meets our needs well, is a large improvement over the previous recreation systems, and includes a number of features which enhance its usability for staff. Specifically, the pilot allowed us to evaluate 484 feature requirements from our Request for Proposal (RFP). The current version of the software we are using successfully addresses 460 of those features, or 95%. None of the remaining 24 items are considered significant. However, staff have determined that two additional features are essential for our needs, and the vendor has committed to including them in the next release of their software, due in December 2004. These features are related to setting site level restrictions for certain reports and functions. The vendor has also demonstrated flexibility, cooperation, and commitment to make the system work for us.

The Gross Pay Profit Loss module, which was the key custom programming enhancement in the contract, was delivered on time, and very complete (97%).

Internet registrations and picnic bookings were made available in the beginning of March. Two full monthly cycles have been completed, including reconciliation and payment to Associations. Parks staff will continue to manage the disbursement for the near future. While the initial volume of internet registrations has been low, most of the customer feedback on this aspect has been positive. A few responses indicated concerns, which has helped us make changes to improve this process. Our research has indicated that internet registration volumes typically start low and then grow over time, as public awareness increases, and as more sites implement the system.

The largest issues during the pilot related to network performance and connection problems at Kerrisdale. Some of these problems were attributed to the communications carrier providing the connection, while some were as a result of a mixture of communications equipment at the centre. Both of these issues have been recently resolved. One of our recommendations for moving forward is to run a network analyzer tool at each site prior to implementation of Safari.

There have also been software or database performance issues when running some key reports and when the program initially loads. A recent move of the database to an upgraded server has made significant improvements in the performance of the reports. Performance of the system will be monitored as more sites are added. Regarding the initial program load time, the vendor reports that they are testing some changes to this aspect that they believe will resolve the issue.

Based on these results of the detailed evaluation, the pilot project steering committee (comprised of staff and Association representatives) considers the pilot successful and is recommending that we proceed with the rollout.

Initial Rollout Phase

Six Community Associations have already submitted letters of intent indicating their desire to be among the first group of sites to implement the software after the pilot. They are False Creek, Killarney, Kitsilano, Riley Park, Roundhouse and West End. Installation and training can begin at these sites in July, in order to capture their membership renewals, and prepare for going live for winter registration.

SUMMARY

After thorough testing in three pilot sites over two seasons, the project is now ready to proceed to the rollout phase. The Safari software from the Active Network will enable the Park Board and its partner Community Associations to begin offering internet registration and standardize on a single, integrated system, using up-to-date supported software technology.

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