



Valley Transit

CONNECTING THE FOX CITIES

Memorandum

TO: Fox Cities Transit Commission

FROM: Ron McDonald, General Manager

DATE: April 24, 2020

RE: Award Recommendation for Marketing & Public Relations Services

BACKGROUND

Valley Transit utilizes a contractor to develop and execute strategies in support of its overall marketing program. This includes assistance with crisis communication, social media management, public relations, media buys, advertising/creative materials, market research, strategy and other related support. The primary goals of Valley Transit's marketing program are to increase ridership, improve the public's perception of transit and increase brand awareness. The current contractor for this service is Red Shoes, Inc.

Valley Transit staff drafted a request for proposal (RFP) document to solicit proposals from marketing and PR service vendors. The final RFP document was posted to the public on March 1, 2020. It was sent directly to known vendors; posted on Valley Transit's website; posted on the State of Wisconsin's Vendornet system; and advertised in the *Post-Crescent*. Proposals were due on April 1, 2020. Six proposals were received: Affirm (Pewaukee, WI); Red Shoes, Inc. (Appleton, WI); Amperage (Wausau, WI); 2 Story (Milwaukee, WI); The Quotient Group, LLC/Coalesce Marketing & Design, Inc. (Greenville & Appleton, WI); and The Evoke Agency (Madison, WI).

ANALYSIS

An evaluation team was assembled to review the written proposals. Each proposal was evaluated based on the vendor's experience/qualifications, successful implementation of previous marketing strategies, methodology/approach to this project and cost. The RFP established an annual budget of \$50,000 for this service. All proposers submitted a summary of services that would utilize this annual budget. Proposers also provided rates for services beyond the annual budget for any work that would result from unexpected projects or events.

The evaluation team decided to request an interview from the top two vendors. An interview was held with Red Shoes, Inc and Affirm on April 22nd and 23rd. Each vendor was asked to provide a brief 20-minute presentation and address any follow-up questions from the evaluation committee.

After considering the written proposal and oral presentation, the evaluation committee unanimously concluded that Red Shoes, Inc. had proposed the best service for Valley Transit.

In summary, it was noted that Red Shoes, Inc. had experience providing similar services for Valley Transit over the past 2 years and has additional experience successfully working with several organizations and businesses in the Fox Cities. Red Shoes, Inc's oral presentation was well-organized and clearly showed their

company's strengths (responsive crisis management, strong relationships within the Fox Cities, and understanding of Valley Transit's core marketing needs).

FISCAL IMPACT

Valley Transit's 2020 budget includes \$50,000 for contracted marketing and public relations services. The project will have a total year-one fiscal impact of \$50,000.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends authorization for Valley Transit to enter into a 3-year contract with two 1-year optional extensions with Red Shoes, Inc. to provide marketing and public relations services.