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Budget & Finance

## MEMORANDUM

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November 26, 2013

**TO:** Board of Mayor and Aldermen

**FROM:** Eric S. Stuckey, City Administrator  
Russell Truell, Assistant City Administrator / CFO  
Brian Wilcox, Purchasing Manager

**SUBJECT:** Consider recommendation to utilize the services of Vendor Registry, LLC of Knoxville, TN as an alternative means for vendors seeking to express interest in doing business with the City

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this memorandum is to present a recommendation to utilize the services of Vendor Registry, LLC of Knoxville, TN as an alternative means for vendors seeking to express interest in doing business with the City.

### **Background**

Vendor Registry is a 2012 start-up located in Knoxville. The co-founders became interested in helping Tennessee local government purchasing agents solve, using web-based technology, a persistent challenge for us: finding qualified vendors, and efficiently maintaining current contact information for those vendors, for the various and sundry products and services needed from time to time, thus improving the competitiveness of our procurement solicitations. What they discovered is that the vendor community also has a persistent challenge: expressing their interest in and learning about opportunities to compete for local government business in a timely and efficient manner. Vendor Registry launched their idea of networking both buyers and sellers to make both parties more efficient and effective at addressing these challenges. The web-based service offered by Vendor Registry is intended to serve as a means for local governments not only to maintain contact information for their own vendors but also to find vendors from neighboring communities, and as a one-stop-shop for vendors to express their interest in doing business with multiple local governments for the products and services they offer and to learn about current opportunities to do business with local governments. Vendor Registry is not involved in the process of collecting quotes, bids, proposals or other submittals – each local government still establishes and controls its own process. Instead, Vendor Registry is trying to make more buyers aware of more vendors, and vice versa. As of three months ago, Vendor Registry had 38 local governments utilizing or beginning to utilize their system.

Vendor Registry is proposing that the City install on its website a link to the Vendor Registry registration process that would be activated for the City of Franklin (<http://vendorregistry.com/franklin-tn-vendor-registration>). Vendor Registry proposes that the City exclusively utilize the Vendor Registry website as the means for collecting and maintaining vendor contact information. According to this vision, the City would remove from service its home-made online vendor registration system (<http://www.franklintn.gov/index.aspx?page=558>). While the Vendor Registry vision of being the exclusive means for the City collecting and maintaining vendor contact information may be something the City would wish to consider in the future, staff is not recommending implementing that vision at this time. Instead, staff recommends that the City post on the City's website a link to the Vendor Registry registration process that would be activated for the City of Franklin and offer the Vendor Registry service as an optional alternative to the City's home-made online vendor registration system.



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### **Financial Impact**

There is no fee to local governments for use of the Vendor Registry service and, while Vendor Registry would be willing to enter into an agreement with the City, it does not do so for most of its client buyers. Further, Vendor Registry is making registrations for a particular local government free for all vendors that access the Vendor Registry registration process by way of that local government's website. If the vendor chooses to do so, it may purchase a subscription for "one-click" registrations for additional local governments and bid notifications. The cost of that subscription currently is \$29 per month, with no contracts or obligation to continue. (Vendors are required to accept Vendor Registry's "Terms of Service" and "Privacy Policy.") The Vendor Registry pricing model is for those businesses that cover a larger territory and want to register in multiple locations without having to fill out registration forms and search for procurement solicitations for each local government they are interested in. Those vendors who think the Vendor Registry subscription option is not worth the asking price will have the option of registering with multiple local governments for free so long as they are willing to go through the Vendor Registry registration process one at a time for each local government of interest to them.

### **Options**

There are other third-party service providers that offer some of the same services, and in some cases among other services, that Vendor Registry offers but none that I am aware of that focus on the vendor registration process like Vendor Registry does.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the City utilize the services of Vendor Registry, LLC of Knoxville, TN as an optional alternative means for vendors seeking to express interest in doing business with the City.