July 2012

Using Technology to Improve Services: BAIS Financials Upgrade

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BAIS financials upgrade to improve business performance and add electronic procurement

An important commitment in the Mayor's recommended FY13 operating budget is the investment in technology to increase efficiencies and deliver improved services. The most comprehensive initiative that will benefit most departments and vendors is the Boston Administrative Information System (BAIS) Financials 9.1 upgrade. The upgrade will improve operational efficiency and effectiveness and introduce electronic procurement. This is a five-phase operation upgrading Oracle PeopleSoft systems that started in January 2011 and went live on July 5, 2012. The financials upgrade is estimated to cost approximately $12M, funded primarily by capital funds over two years.

The goals of the BAIS upgrade are to:

- Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness
- Reengineer and standardize business processes
- Provide a more environmentally friendly operation that eliminates paper processes with improved electronic workflow

Officials prepared for the upgrade by undertaking a comprehensive business process review which identified steps to conduct business better at the transaction level, reduce error and improve time efficiency.

The Auditing Department is the lead business sponsor for the BAIS Financials upgrade, but the project has involved most of the departments within the Administration and Finance Cabinet along with the continued involvement of the Department of Information and Technology (DoIT). Over 1,200 employees are expected to be trained in the new system.

Benefits of the Upgrade

The BAIS Financials 9.1 upgrade will expand the utilization of electronic workflow, online approval procedures and electronic signatures that will contribute to improved efficiency across all financial functional areas. More efficient billing and collection activities will improve management of city receivables and enable more accurate revenue forecasting.

Electronic Purchasing

The City is moving to an electronic process for purchasing, bidding, contracting, vendor registration and payment. The features involve:

- Enter and update vendor information online
- Direct web-based shopping with vendors
- Respond to bidding opportunities online
- Encourage more vendors to compete resulting in better pricing, quality products and services

Vendors have been requested to register online for future communications. Vendor outreach has begun and the City expects to issue its first electronic Bid Event by the end of July. The City of Boston Procurement website can be found at **http://www.cityofboston.gov/procurement/**