

COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AGENDA TITLE: Access Albemarle Status Report	AGENDA DATE: December 15, 2010
SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Update on the status of the Access Albemarle Project	ACTION: INFORMATION: X
STAFF CONTACT(S): Messrs. Tucker, Foley, Davis, Culp, Wiggans, and Henry	CONSENT AGENDA: ACTION: INFORMATION:
LEGAL REVIEW: No	ATTACHMENTS: No
	REVIEWED BY:

BACKGROUND:

Albemarle County entered into a multi-year partnership with Microsoft Corporation several years ago to develop an integrated local government/school business management system to improve many of the County's key business systems. These improvements were designed to help the County meet its strategic objective of efficiency and effectiveness in county government operations. The partnership with Microsoft was developed to capitalize on the County's current use of Microsoft products and the County's existing enterprise agreement with Microsoft. The project's initial phases involved extensive analysis of existing business processes across local government and school division departments, requiring significant research and assessment of numerous functions related to the County's financial and human resources activities.

When completed, *Access Albemarle* will provide the County with an integrated public sector solution that combines and streamlines operations that are currently provided through separate mainframe systems that are not integrated. This integrated system will allow the County's existing business functions, which include financial management, purchasing, human resources, payroll, budgeting, and tax collection, to work together and will allow County leadership to better identify and track County financial and human resource operations.

DISCUSSION:

The County first started working towards this integrated application in 2006, knowing that although the end result would be very beneficial, it would be a long and complex process to analyze and integrate numerous functions related to our financial and human resources activities. It has proven to be challenging and we have encountered some setbacks as we have worked with Microsoft and several other vendors to develop this integrated business management system. In spite of these setbacks, staff has continued in this effort to protect the County's previous investment in the development of the system and has successfully negotiated a no additional cost agreement with Microsoft to move the project forward.

Thanks to the hard work and persistence of staff and the successful partnership with our implementer, Avastone (formerly Anderson Tackman Company), Phase 1 of the project became operational centrally in the Finance Department on July 1, 2010. This phase includes General Ledger/Financial Management System, Procurement and Accounts Payable, Fixed Assets, Miscellaneous Billings and Receivables Management and the integration of the Financial Management System (FMS) with Enterprise Reporting. In addition, the *basic* Budgeting and Reporting components of the new system for local government have been successfully implemented and are currently in use. Remaining steps to achieve full implementation of *enhanced* budgeting and reporting for local government will continue in preparation for the coming fiscal year. With the exception of these *enhanced* budgeting and reporting items, the final step for implementation of the core business systems of the County, which was the primary objective of Phase 1, will be the distribution of the new system to departments for their use, beginning with the IT Department this month. Due to some of the unique budgeting and tracking needs of the school system, the decision was made to focus attention on implementation of the core needs of the Financial Management System and local government budgeting and complete school budgeting for utilization for FY 2012-13, after those components had become operational.

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System Benefits:

There were a number of critical organizational benefits that motivated the County to undertake this significant effort several years ago. These benefits are especially important now in providing opportunities for increased efficiencies and streamlined processes across the organization:

- Improves access to data - providing decision-makers with real time information and increasing the County's ability to make data driven decisions
- Standardizes business operations in a server based environment - improving operational flexibility
- Provides integrated business systems and processes:
 - o reducing paper flow
 - o eliminating duplicate data entry
 - o removing/reducing redundant systems and process steps
 - o reducing time to process reports
- Improves data transparency and clarity of County operations
- Results in a more modern and user friendly system interface
- Supports the County's efforts in performance management
- Will create more customer focused government operations

How the Project Scope has evolved:

The project scope evolved over time as county staff worked with Microsoft and other vendors to focus specifically on meeting the County's core business needs and developing a reasonable and supportable approach to implementing the various phases of the system. The following are key adjustments that have allowed Phase 1 of the Access Albemarle project to successfully become operational in July, 2010:

Original Project

- Software development effort - new product with considerable effort to develop
- Large, complex, all or nothing effort designed to be implemented all at one time
- Run by consultants from various companies with varying degrees of local government experience
- *Focused on development*

Revised Project

- Utilizes maturing set of existing Microsoft products which are the core of the system
- Focused on meeting the County's basic business needs first, with the potential for future enhancements
- Phased approach to implementation
- Standardization - Part of larger potential Virginia local government client base
- Run by experienced government consultants
- Stronger County project management focus - Measured approach with phases and milestones
- *Focused on implementation*

Project Milestones:

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|-----------------|--|
| Phase 1: | <i>Fixed Assets, Financial Management & Reporting, Procurement – Currently operational centrally
Distribution to departments beginning with IT in progress
Local Government Budgeting – Department input and utilization by OMB for FY 2011-12 Budget preparation
School Budgeting – Planned to be operational for FY 2012-13 Budget</i> |
| Phase 2: | <i>Payroll (and required Human Resources modules) – Planned to be operational by April, 2011
Human Resources (remaining functionality) – Planned to be operational on July, 2011</i> |
| Phase 3: | <i>Revenue & Tax Collections – Planned to be operational by December 31, 2011</i> |

BUDGET IMPACT:

The County has expended approximately \$4 million to date for all software, hardware and consulting service through the arrangement with Microsoft, though no funds have been expended for the past two years while implementation has continued. The County will incur no additional project costs through the Microsoft agreement, with the exception of \$88,000 for non-Microsoft software needed for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

No action is requested by the Board at this time.