

Valley Municipal Utility District No. 2  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
For  
**UTILITY BILLING SOFTWARE**

Valley Municipal Utility District No. 2

Rancho Viejo, Texas 78575

956-350-4136

May 11, 2020

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
UTILITY BILLING SOFTWARE  
Rancho Viejo, Texas

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** July 1, 2020

**QUESTION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** July 1, 2020

Please submit any questions to:

**RFP Contact Name:** Rebecca Martinez

**Contact Address:** 100 Hidalgo Avenue  
Rancho Viejo, Texas 78575

**Phone:** 956-350-4136

**Email:** [rmartinez@vmud2.org](mailto:rmartinez@vmud2.org)

## INTRODUCTION

Valley Municipal Utility District No.2 invites and welcomes proposals for their Financial & Utility Billing Software project. Your firm has been selected to receive this RFP and is invited to submit a proposal. Please take the time to carefully read and become familiar with the proposal requirements. All proposals submitted for consideration must be received by the time as specified above under the "SUBMISSION DEADLINE."

## PROJECT AND LOCATION

The bid proposal is being requested for the Utility Billing Software which is located at 100 Hidalgo Street, Rancho Viejo, Texas 78575.

## PROJECT MANAGER CONTACT INFORMATION

The following individuals are assigned contacts:

For questions or information regarding the Utility Billing and contract, please contact:

**Name:** Scott Fry  
**Title:** General Manager  
**Phone:** 956-350-4136  
**Fax:** 956-350-4575  
**Email:** [sfry@vmud2.org](mailto:sfry@vmud2.org)

For questions or information regarding Submission and deadlines, contact:

**Name:** Gloria Sanchez  
**Title:** Billing Clerk  
**Phone:** 956-350-4136  
**Fax:** 956-350-4575  
**Email:** [gsanchez@vmud2.org](mailto:gsanchez@vmud2.org)

## **BACKGROUND**

Valley Municipal Utility District No. 2 (District) was established in 1972 and serves the Town of Rancho Viejo and a small portion of the City of Brownsville at the southern tip of Texas. The District, which is governed by Chapter 54 of the Texas Water Code, is a tax-exempt entity that serves approximately 1,300 connections with potable water and wastewater collection services. The District also serves several raw water customers for both agricultural and recreational purposes. The District is currently transitioning from manually read meters to Kamstrup AMR meters.

Customer accounts are maintained through this office, with accounts assigned to only one billing cycle. Meters are read from the 28<sup>th</sup> thru the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the Month and the bills mailed out by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following Month through the United States Postal Service. The District currently outsources its customer bill printing and mailing service to the same company that provides our Billing Software. This company allows District customers to access their accounts thru an internet website to view, print, and pay their bills online.

Current payment options include over the counter payments thru the cash collections software in the office, a payment drop box located outside the office, mail payments, home banking payment, over the phone payments, and online payments.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this project is to transition the District from its current billing software to a newer, more responsive and user friendly billing software. The new billing software should contain a work order module that will allow the District to track District work activities related to both customer sites, as well as along District facilities, where no address is available. The District currently maintains a GIS database and map of its assets. The Request for Proposals should cover the following items:

- Utility Billing Software product description
- Gap Study
- Installation of Software
- Conversion of Existing Data
- Training
- Support
- Maintenance

The District desires to contract with a single company for all hardware and software, including installation, existing data conversion, support, and ongoing maintenance. The District, however, reserves the right to evaluate each component (modules) on its own standard of performance, regardless of whether or not remaining components of the vendor are considered by the District. The District reserves the right to award the system to any one vendor or a combination of vendors. In addition, the District reserves the right to purchase any personal computers, or other hardware which may be needed, from an alternate vendor.

One original and six copies of the proposal will be accepted until July 1, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. CST. The proposal must be binding for no less than 120 calendar days after the acceptance date. The District will accept the proposal, or combination of proposals, that in its opinion is in its best interest. The District

reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or portions of a proposal. The District also reserves the right to waive minor technicalities in a proposal. The District not only reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any or all proposals and to waive technicalities, but also reserves the right of evaluation and the right to determine the methodology for evaluation of the proposals to determine the best proposal. In addition, to accept the proposal (or proposals) deemed to be in the best interest of the District, i.e., the most qualified proposal will not necessarily be the proposal with the lowest cost. Further, the District reserves the right to accept a proposal (or proposals) for any or all items separately or together.

Vendor inquiries are to be directed to Rebecca Martinez, Finance Officer. One original and six copies of the proposal clearly marked "**Proposal for Utility Billing Software**", signed by an officer of the company, are to be submitted in a sealed envelope and addressed on the outside as follows:

**Scott Fry, General Manager  
Valley Municipal Utility District No. 2  
Proposal for Utility Billing Software**

**100 Hidalgo Avenue  
Rancho Viejo, Texas 78570**

Proposals may also be hand-delivered to the above address by the date and time specified. It is the responsibility of the vendor to deliver the proposal in accordance with these instructions contained above and/or elsewhere in the RFP. Proposals dispatched, but not received by the Client by proposal closing time, will be returned, after receipt, unopened to the vendor.

## **PROJECT SCOPE AND SPECIFICATIONS**

The District is looking for a utility billing software that offers ease of use for staff and customers. The solution should contain modules for cash collections and utility billing which includes but not limited to the following features:

- Importing or entering meter reads
- Integration with automatic meter readers (AMRs).
- Accommodation of 1500 customer accounts with ability for growth
- Setting up all usage and flat fee rates. We should have the ability to handle the changes.
- Reviewing meter reads for high/low variances and managing re-reads via work orders or requests
- Bill Printing Options and provide a Bill Register Review Report prior to sending the bills
- Sending e-bills to customers who prefer electronic billing
- Posting payments and reconciliations
- Ability to export general ledger for importing data to our accounting system
- Should be able to make updates in real-time
- Perform most activities with just a couple of mouse clicks and by using only one or two screens.
- Limiting access to access to different users (administrators, inquiry users, billing clerk, etc.)
- Easily accommodate new accounts, service transfers, cancellations, and disconnections.
- Consolidated billing for customers with more than one account.

- Reporting Modules including:
  - 1) Management reports – Bill Summary, AR Aging, Deposits, Overpayments, and Meter Readers
  - 2) Payment reports - daily, weekly, monthly, etc.
  - 3) Payments by payment options- in office payment reports, online payment reports, phone payments and mail payment reports as well as all together in one report.
  - 4) Payments by payment type- cash only, checks only, credit cards only.
  - 5) Reports that provide an accurate daily accounts receivable balance at the end of the day for each individual customer account and a grand total account.
  - 6) Daily accounts receivable reports showing individual balances for Water Income, Sewer Income, Raw Water Income, Resaca Pumps Income, New Accounts Fees, Reconnect fees, permit fees, and other miscellaneous items.
  - 7) Print accurate and daily liability accounts – Customer Overpayments, Deposit Balances, State Water Tax Assessments and customer donations.
  - 8) Print disconnection reports for delinquent customers.
  - 9) Print reports for adjustments (error, misread meters, penalty waivers, etc.)

Should include Other Billing Features such as

- email a single bill using a single function key when accessing account information
- exporting bills & reports to excel, pdf, or word
- Access and view customer online accounts from our computer system to be able to troubleshoot when they have problems.
- Customer should be able to access their account online to make payments even after they have moved out and their account is inactive.
- Post cash, online, and mail payments daily and show up to date (real-time) balances when customers access their online account.
- Import daily payments, billing, and adjustments into accounting program with a journal entry transaction
- Bill flat rate customers on a yearly basis through billing software.

## **SCHEDULED TIMELINE**

The following timeline has been established to ensure that our project objective is achieved; however, the following project timeline shall be subject to change when deemed necessary by management.

## **MILESTONE DATE**

Start of Project Implementation: September 1, 2020

Only those proposals received by the stated deadline will be considered. All proposals, submitted by the deadline, will be reviewed and evaluated based upon information provided in the submitted proposal. In addition, consideration will be given to cost and performance projections.

## **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

Proposal should contain the following information:

- A cover letter introducing the company and the individual who will be the contact person. This letter shall briefly state the work to be performed and a statement why the company is the best qualified to perform this contract.
- A written statement of the services proposed as well as an implementation plan.
- One or more bill samples displaying attractive and modern bill layout option(s) to be implemented as part of the project.
- The required hardware and software necessary for the new billing software to function.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

The selected contractor must have the ability to meet each of the requirements below. If a requirement cannot be met, provide an alternative approach for consideration by District staff. The contractor will be responsible for providing all labor, materials, equipment, supplies, transportation and pay all required taxes and fees to complete the tasks outlined in the scope of services.

### **VENDOR EXPERIENCE**

- A. Vendor must have been in continuous business for a minimum of 5 years and under the same principal ownership for the same period.
- B. Vendor must provide a minimum of 3 client references in the government/utilities sector of comparable size and scope to Valley Municipal Utility District No.2.
- C. Vendor must be fully integrated with Customers EBPP provider. Integration must include API into EBPP providers system at no charge. Vendor must provide endorsement letter from EBPP provider.

### **SECURITY, COMPLIANCE, AND DISASTER RECOVERY REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Vendor must have a comprehensive Information Security policy and complete set of procedures. Vendor must provide details on policies and procedures in the response.
- B. Vendor must operate at least one disaster recovery facility. Vendor must have a disaster recovery plan to process billing if the main facility become inoperable.

### **FILE TRANSFER, DATA PROCESSING, PRINTING, QUALITY CONTROL REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Vendor must have the ability to accept weekly (large) and daily (small) bill extract files uploaded to an SFTP or FTPS server. Agency must be able to transmit these files at any time.

- B. Vendor must have full-time programmers on staff who can transform bill data into attractive and modern-looking bills.
- C. Vendor must backup all client documents processing programs a minimum of once a day and perform weekly backups. Vendor must be able to restore a backup copy if a live document processing application has any issues that make restoring to backup necessary.
- D. Vendor must provide the District with the ability to view and approve sample bills online before they are printed and mailed. Included with the sample bills must be a summary of the total counts of printed bills.
- E. Vendor must mail documents within one business day of receipt of file transfer. The District prefers that vendor delivers the mail no later than one business day.
- F. Vendor must have the capability to suppress the printing of bills and/or inserting of envelopes for certain customers (paperless billing).
- G. Vendor must propose one or more attractive and modern bill layout option (s) to be implemented as part of the project.
- H. Vendor must have the capability to print bill messages, logos, and usage history graphs.
- I. Vendor must be capable of presorting documents and include an intelligent mail barcode.
- J. Vendor must allow District to include/exclude inserts and messages.
- K. Vendor must have procedures for ensuring that the bill file transmissions are completed successfully. Vendor must provide in the response details on what happens if a file transfer “error out”.

#### **CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

- A. The vendor must provide unlimited customer support to the District’s personnel during vendor’s business hours.
- B. Provide procedures for after-hours support.
- C. Provide a list of company holidays.
- D. Provide contact points for customer service
- E. The District currently manually adjusts and re-prints bills for customers for various reasons, such as leaks and misread meters. Please address how this process would continue to be available for customer assistance and support.
- F. Vendor must provide weekly status updates during all project implementations.