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**County OKs imaging system; Software, training**

included in \$91K

document project

By Talibah Chikwendu, Daily Banner

CAMBRIDGE — Dorchester County Council approved the purchase of a document imaging systems for the county during the regular meeting on Monday. The system from MEDI Total Document Management Solutions was included in the fiscal year 2008 budget at a cost of \$91,541.25.

The Technology Department and County Councils office asked the council members to approve a bid waiver, allowing the county to contract with MEDI. Jane Baynard, county manager, said it was the company that best met the county’s needs by being able to provide a turnkey solution that included hardware, software and training.

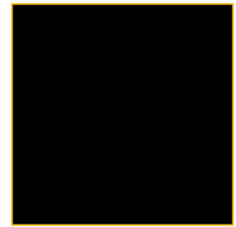
Council’s approval allowed the county to sign the contract and get the equipment in and training started before the new fiscal year begins. Ms. Baynard said the vendor was aware that no payments would be made before July 1.

Ms. Baynard said the need for document imaging is something the county has been looking at for the last five years, but in the past it had been bumped for other priorities. “We are at a point in the current office that we are out of space for people because of our space for storage,” she said.

This system, according to Ms. Baynard, will allow the county to more easily meet document retention requirements for several county departments, will help avoid document loss (when paper is damaged due to dampness or other storage concerns), will assist productivity by making research more effective and will provide for continuity of government in the event of a disaster that devastated the building because the redundant systems and off-site storage functionality. “We would be able to recreate our government in a lot more complete and efficient manner.”

The document retention software will be integrated with all existing software, to allow the transfer of documents easily between departments and into storage. “Theoretically,” said Ms. Baynard, “we won’t have to print that piece of paper.”

In addition to the productivity savings, there are environmental and real-dollar savings that will be realized, she said. She added that fulfilling the requests of the public for information will also be easier when the system is completely installed.





The process for implementation is still being worked out, but in general terms, there will be a date selected, once all the software and hardware is installed, where no more paper filing will occur. At that point, starting with key departments, the existing paper documents, for a to be determined time period, will be scanned into the electronic filing system. "When the first benchmark is met," Ms Baynard said, "that will make us pretty operational, day-to-day."

Once all departments have digital filing updated for the first time period, archived documents for an additional time period, for all departments, will be added. Ms. Baynard does not see this project as one that will drag on for an long time. "The vendor is enthusiastic that project is not a 'forever' project," she said.

The process will get started at the end of June. "We're really excited about it," she said.

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