



Request for Proposals for the Strategic Management of the Town of Middleburg's Various Social Media Assets

Deadline: 4:00 p.m., Friday, April 30, 2021

SECTION 1 **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Synopsis

The Town of Middleburg, Virginia, seeks sealed proposals from experienced and qualified firms that wish to serve as an independent consultant for the creation and execution of a comprehensive strategy focused on utilizing social media platforms for marketing, visitor outreach and public education.

Background

In an effort to effectively differentiate itself from other communities both in Virginia and across the region, the Town has recently developed a new set of branding materials, inclusive of logos and a style guide, and specific messaging, and has started to implement said brand to a variety of external audiences. Although these initial efforts have been very well received, the Town recognizes that there are additional opportunities via social media that are not being realized and that would benefit from an expertise not currently held by Town staff. In addition to the Town's newly improved website, the Town of Middleburg maintains a Facebook page, a Twitter account, an Instagram account, and a YouTube channel. An integrated and coordinated approach to the utilization of all of these assets will allow the Town to maximize its reach and digital impact.

The "Middleburg Business and Professional Association" (MBPA) is a separate entity that serves as a Chamber of Commerce for Middleburg, providing business resources and hosting networking events. In addition, the MBPA owns and manages the "Visit Middleburg" social media handles and webpage. It is the Town of Middleburg's intention to enter into a partnership with MBPA to run and manage the Visit Middleburg handles through the contractor selected in this RFP process. Should a partnership agreement not come to fruition, the Town will run all social media through its Town-controlled handles/pages.

Project Overview

The Town is seeking a contractor team with sufficient experience to work effectively in a collaborative framework with elected officials, Town staff and community stakeholders to develop and execute a social media campaign strategy lasting no less than 24 months.

A. Develop Social Media Campaign Strategy

Develop a social media strategy to promote the Middleburg community and attract additional visitors to Town. The Town wishes to increase general knowledge of and participation in the community by residents and visitors. The consultant will co-manage the existing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts (along with Town staff) with the goals of increasing the following for each account as well as the level of engagement on each platform. The Contractor will seek to increase the digital presence of the Middleburg community as well as research, manage, plan and implement the most effective methods of digital promotion.

1. Participate in at marketing strategy sessions with Town staff and elected officials to develop strategy and messaging.
2. Calendarize social media postings leveraging local events, activities, holidays, and trending topics.
3. Set engagement milestones for the Town's social media platforms at 6-month increments.
4. Create content database for use in promoting the Town by agency or Town entities.

B. Execute the Social Media Campaign Strategy

Implement the strategy developed in Task A as well as the following:

1. Post content in accordance with best practices, with a focus on engagement with followers and enhancement of number of followers.
2. Monitor and report quarterly on digital metrics including how visitors arrive at the various accounts/pages/websites, individual pages that were visited, and where visitors were located (geographic locations), and how long they stayed on the site.
3. Recommend paid media strategies on social platforms and provide PAID performance metrics on such campaigns.
4. Present annually to the Town Council the results of campaigns.

SECTION 2
PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Please provide the following information about your firm or team. Proposals should respond to all requirements of this RFP to the maximum extent possible. However, brevity and clarity of Proposals are expected. In order to assist the selection committee, proposals from Offerors must be submitted in the same sequence shown below.

Tab 1: Introductory Letter

The introductory letter shall name the person or persons authorized to sign contracts and represent the firm or team in any negotiations and provide a very general overview of the firm and the firm's relevant expertise and experience.

Tab 2: Relevant Project Experience/References

- a. This section should provide information regarding the firm's or team's qualifications and experience in relation to the subjects the RFP is intended to cover.
- b. Discuss firm's or team's qualifications to perform the work of the size and nature described in this RFP.
- c. A statement indicating whether your organization maintains a national, regional or local footprint.
- d. Provide specific qualifications to perform the general work described in this request. Include examples of increasing the social media following of current or past clients and engagement with followers.
- e. Discuss experience with similar properties or projects and provide references.
- f. Discuss the firm's or team's familiarity with the Town of Middleburg.
- g. Discuss avoidance of conflict of interest, including any business, familial, or personal connections with Town Council members or Town staff.

Tab 3: Approach to Addressing the Opportunity

- a. Provide a written work plan outlining in detail how the Offeror proposes to perform the services required.
- b. Outline how the Offeror proposes to capture relevant and pertinent content (including use of local photography and covering local events in person, etc.).
- c. Address how the Offeror will coordinate and partner with major stakeholders to create organic growth of the Town's social media presence.
- d. Provide an estimate of the number of hours that will be dedicated to the Town of Middleburg each week, along with a proposed monthly price for ongoing services.

SECTION 3:
SELECTION
PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria

Responses to the Town's Request for Proposals will be ranked out of 100 points. The ranking will be based upon the following criteria:

1. Experience and Knowledge: Success history; experience with government/tourism organizations. (40 points)
2. Proposed Work Program and Pricing: Clarity and feasibility of strategic approach; likelihood of success; proposed cost structure. (30 points)
3. Understanding of Middleburg: Active knowledge of the Town's history and current challenges and opportunities, with a focus on its key qualities. (20 points)
4. Administrative Skills: Qualifications of contractor/organization; proven effectiveness; and communication skills. (10 points)

A committee consisting of members of the Town staff, at least one elected official and industry experts will evaluate all eligible qualifications according to the criteria. Scores of the evaluation committee members will be totaled to determine the top-rated firms.

After evaluation of the Proposals, Middleburg may engage in individual discussions and interviews with two or more Offerors deemed fully qualified, responsible and suitable on the basis of initial responses, and with professional competence to acquire and maintain the property. Repetitive informal interviews are permitted. Proposers shall be encouraged to elaborate on their qualifications, performance data, and staff expertise relevant to the proposed opportunity. At this time, the Town may additional information as it relates to cost proposals and monthly fees.

At the conclusion of the informal interviews and on the basis of evaluation factors set forth herein and the information provided and developed in the selection process to this point, Middleburg shall rank, in the order of preference, the interviewed proposers whose professional qualifications and proposed intentions are deemed most meritorious.

Negotiations shall then be conducted with top ranked Offeror(s) and if a contract or contracts satisfactory and advantageous to the Offeror can be negotiated at fees considered fair and reasonable, then Middleburg Town Staff shall make a recommendation to the Middleburg Town Council with regard to a contract(s) with that Offeror(s). Middleburg reserves the right to invite firms and teams to submit a *Best and Final Offer*, (BAFO), if, in the Town's determination, such action is warranted. The Middleburg Town Council shall retain final approval of any/all contracts generated as a result, from this RFP.

Pre-Proposal Meeting

No pre-proposal meeting will be held, unless determined to be necessary at a later date.

Submittal Deadline

The deadline for submittal of proposals in response to this RFP is **Friday, April 30, 2021 at 4:00pm**

Proposals should be delivered as follows:

In person or via courier (UPS, FedEx, etc.):

Danny Davis
Town of Middleburg
10 West Marshall St.
Middleburg, VA 20117

Via mail (USPS):

Danny Davis
Town of Middleburg
P.O. Box 187
Middleburg, VA 20118

Please provide one (1) original. Please also submit an electronic version of the proposal to the ddavis@middleburgva.gov email address.

Proprietary and Confidential Information

The Town promises to keep confidential, subject to the terms of this paragraph and to the extent permitted by law, Proprietary Information submitted in response to this Request for Proposal. For purposes of this paragraph, "Proprietary Information" means all confidential and/or proprietary knowledge, data or information in which the Offeror has a protectable interest, including: (a) trade secrets, inventions, ideas, know-how, improvements, discoveries, developments, designs and techniques; (b) information regarding research and development, new products marketing and selling, business plans, licenses, records, facility locations, documentation, software programs, price lists, contract prices for purchase and sale of the Offeror's services, customer lists, prospect lists, pricing on business proposals to new and existing customers, supplier pricing, equipment configurations, ledgers and general information, employee records, mailing lists, accounts receivable and payable ledgers, budgets, financial and other records of the Offeror; and (c) information regarding the skills and compensation of other employees of the Offeror. "Proprietary Information" does not include, however, information that is publicly available or readily ascertainable by independent investigation. To qualify Proprietary Information for protection from disclosure, the Offeror must: 1) request protection of the Proprietary Information before, or contemporaneously with, submission of the Proposal; 2) identify the Proprietary Information to be protected; and 3) state the reasons why the information is proprietary. The Offeror cannot designate as Proprietary Information a) an entire proposal; b) any portion of a proposal that does not contain Proprietary Information; c) line-item prices; or d) the total proposal price. The Town may decline to defend against a lawsuit filed against it to compel release of information designated as proprietary, but in that event the Town will provide reasonable notice to the Offeror regarding its decision to defend pending lawsuits.

Questions/Additional Information

All questions or clarifications related to this RFP must be submitted to Danny Davis via email at ddavis@middleburgva.gov. **All questions must be submitted before the close of business on Friday, April 16, 2021.** All questions and Middleburg's response will be posted on the Middleburg Web site: www.middleburgva.gov no later than 4:00pm Friday, April 23, 2021. It is the responsibility of those submitting questions and those interested in responding to this RFP to review any/all questions and responses.

Cancellation

Middleburg reserves the right to cancel this Request for Proposals at any time. Middleburg reserves the right to waive minor informalities or discrepancies contained in any Proposal.

