ARLIS/NA Board Meeting
Dec. 9, 2008, 3-4 pm EST

Attending: Elizabeth Clarke, Cate Cooney, Amy Lucker, Rebecca Price, Barbara Rominski, Elizabeth Schaub, Ken Soehner, Amy Trendler, Liz Valmestad

Agenda: Review the three finalist RFP Responses
  AMR Management Services
  Assoc. Dir and a team
  Melby, Cameron & Anderson (MCA)
  1.2 FTE equivalent
  Technical Enterprises, Inc. (TEI)
  180 hours/month

Ted Goodman, Ken Soehner, and Amy Lucker went through the twenty responses two weekends ago. Some were too small and others too expensive. Following the Goldie Locks principle, we’re left with three.

Ken asks first for any red flags (glaring omissions or problems) with the three remaining options.

MemberClicks Support
According to the written responses, only one supports MemberClicks. Amy Lucker noted that AMR could support it even though it’s not something they currently work with. For all three the transition assumes database work. The question is how much are we invested in MemberClicks and what would be lost if we went with a company that doesn’t support it. We have invested a fair amount of time/energy into MemberClicks (this was recognized by AMR). There are one or two standard membership software packages that are used by the other companies (iMIS (membership management software) is one of the software used by many of these companies). We haven’t yet had any talks with any of these and we would need to bring this up and hear a response from them.

Staffing
All of the three companies noted that many of their staff would be available to us, not just one person devoted to an association. Elizabeth Clarke cautions against going with a company that has too many staff devoted to an association – you don’t want the tasks spread across too many people. You want someone who is in really close touch with ARLIS/NA. There is a balance between too many staff and too few staff devoted to an association. Elizabeth encourages us to meet them all face-to-face, because anything can be said on paper.

International Organizations
Cate notes that there was little mention of working with international organizations. TEI mentioned working with Mexico. We will need to ask about working with an international membership. We’ll also need to ask about transferring our international banking accounts. Ted notes that we can establish new banking relationships if we have to.

Record Keeping
Liv noted regarding our records: AMR and MCA mention keeping records for 2 years. TEI offered 5-year back-up of records (on DVD). Only TEI mentioned a disaster plan, though we assume the others have one. This would need to be asked of each company.

Conference Planning
All mention in-house conference planning and we may or may not be able to keep our relationship with Sue Rawlyk. We may be able to suggest that the company work with Sue, but depending on how they work and how they price their conference planning services, it may not be possible. TEI, for instance, folds all their conference planning in their services. Elizabeth Clarke notes that we need to be clear about the reservation of hotel rooms and the issue of commissions. We need to put in our contract that the hotel commissions come to ARLIS/NA and not to the management company – otherwise it becomes a hidden fee.

Costs
From the spreadsheet it looks like TEI is much more expensive, but some of the costs for AMR and MCA are not all included in the document. We would need to ask for further clarification of fees and costs. Currently we pay $62,000 for management + travel costs + $20,000 conference management fee + printing, telephone, office supplies.

Ken summarizes – there are red flags with all, but none is out of the running based on their written presentation. It was noted that from the responses, it seemed that TEI is selling a product and that the other two are selling a relationship. But it is also noted that TEI’s technical expertise may be very useful and welcomed by our membership.

Each board member states their preference in 1-2-3 order for the three companies with the aim of perhaps narrowing our invitations to two companies. The polling suggests a preference for AMR and MCA over TEI. Elizabeth Schaub notes that because TEI is a little different from the other two in their perspective, we should invite them to give a contrasting perspective to the process. Ken notes that ARLIS/NA membership is asking for a more technical focus so that offers another argument for listening to them. We decide that it is worth inviting all three for presentations.

Next Steps:
They will come to us (paying their own way) to present their plans for ARLIS/NA. A meeting in NYC would be in order. Ken, Amy Lucker, and Ted will be at the meeting. It is suggested that the meeting include a conference call component (at the very least) so that other board members can participate.

Amy Lucker will contact the management firms to set up a time to visit. We need to come up with a list of questions. Amy Lucker offers to compile the questions and send them to the associations before they visit. **We should compile questions on the blog – aim to have questions ready by Monday, Dec. 15.**

Cate suggested that we compare our contract with Clarke Association Management (it is online at executive board section of members only area of the AWS).

Ken asks that while on the blog, we post agenda items for next week’s meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 3:58 pm EST
Submitted:
Rebecca Price, Secretary