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HOUSE BILL NO. 964

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 12, 2022

A BILL to amend and reenact § 2.2-4303 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Public Procurement Act; methods of procurement; submitting bids electronically.

Patron—Subramanyam

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 2.2-4303 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 2.2-4303. Methods of procurement.**

A. All public contracts with nongovernmental contractors for the purchase or lease of goods, or for the purchase of services, insurance, or construction, shall be awarded after competitive sealed bidding, or competitive negotiation as provided in this section, unless otherwise authorized by law. *All state public bodies accepting bids or proposals for contracts pursuant to this chapter shall provide an option to submit bids or proposals through the Commonwealth's statewide electronic procurement system, known as eVA. Local public bodies are encouraged to use eVA to offer an electronic submission option.*

B. Professional services shall be procured by competitive negotiation.

C. Goods, services other than professional services, and insurance may be procured by competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation.

Upon a written determination made in advance by (i) the Governor or his designee in the case of a procurement by the Commonwealth or by a department, agency or institution thereof or (ii) the local governing body in the case of a procurement by a political subdivision of the Commonwealth, that competitive negotiation is either not practicable or not fiscally advantageous, insurance may be procured through a licensed agent or broker selected in the manner provided for the procurement of things other than professional services set forth in § 2.2-4302.2. The basis for this determination shall be documented in writing.

D. Construction may be procured only by competitive sealed bidding, except that competitive negotiation may be used in the following instances:

1. By any public body on a fixed price design-build basis or construction management basis as provided in Chapter 43.1 (§ 2.2-4378 et seq.); or

2. By any public body for the construction of highways and any draining, dredging, excavation, grading or similar work upon real property upon a determination made in advance by the public body and set forth in writing that competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable or not fiscally advantageous to the public, which writing shall document the basis for this determination.

E. Upon a determination in writing that there is only one source practicably available for that which is to be procured, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that source without competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation. The writing shall document the basis for this determination. The public body shall issue a written notice stating that only one source was determined to be practicably available, and identifying that which is being procured, the contractor selected, and the date on which the contract was or will be awarded. This notice shall be posted on the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement website or other appropriate websites, and in addition, public bodies may publish in a newspaper of general circulation on the day the public body awards or announces its decision to award the contract, whichever occurs first. Posting on the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement website shall be required of any state public body. Local public bodies are encouraged to utilize the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement website to provide the public with centralized visibility and access to the Commonwealth's procurement opportunities.

F. In case of emergency, a contract may be awarded without competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation; however, such procurement shall be made with such competition as is practicable under the circumstances. A written determination of the basis for the emergency and for the selection of the particular contractor shall be included in the contract file. The public body shall issue a written notice stating that the contract is being awarded on an emergency basis, and identifying that which is being procured, the contractor selected, and the date on which the contract was or will be awarded. This notice shall be posted on the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement website or other appropriate websites, and in addition, public bodies may publish in a newspaper of general circulation on the day the public body awards or announces its decision to award

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59 the contract, whichever occurs first, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. Posting on the Department of
60 General Services' central electronic procurement website shall be required of any state public body.
61 Local public bodies are encouraged to utilize the Department of General Services' central electronic
62 procurement website to provide the public with centralized visibility and access to the Commonwealth's
63 procurement opportunities.

64 G. A public body may establish purchase procedures, if adopted in writing, not requiring competitive
65 sealed bids or competitive negotiation for single or term contracts for:

66 1. Goods and services other than professional services and non-transportation-related construction, if
67 the aggregate or the sum of all phases is not expected to exceed \$200,000; and

68 2. Transportation-related construction, if the aggregate or sum of all phases is not expected to exceed
69 \$25,000.

70 However, such small purchase procedures shall provide for competition wherever practicable.

71 Such purchase procedures may allow for single or term contracts for professional services without
72 requiring competitive negotiation, provided the aggregate or the sum of all phases is not expected to
73 exceed \$80,000.

74 Where small purchase procedures are adopted for construction, the procedures shall not waive
75 compliance with the Uniform State Building Code.

76 For state public bodies, informal solicitations conducted under this subsection shall require the
77 posting of a public notice on the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement
78 website. Local public bodies are encouraged to utilize the Department of General Services' central
79 electronic procurement website to provide the public with centralized visibility and access to the
80 Commonwealth's procurement opportunities.

81 H. Upon a determination made in advance by a public body and set forth in writing that the purchase
82 of goods, products or commodities from a public auction sale is in the best interests of the public, such
83 items may be purchased at the auction, including online public auctions. Purchase of information
84 technology and telecommunications goods and nonprofessional services from a public auction sale shall
85 be permitted by any authority, department, agency, or institution of the Commonwealth if approved by
86 the Chief Information Officer of the Commonwealth. The writing shall document the basis for this
87 determination. However, bulk purchases of commodities used in road and highway construction and
88 maintenance, and aggregates shall not be made by online public auctions.

89 I. The purchase of goods or nonprofessional services, but not construction or professional services,
90 may be made by reverse auctioning. However, bulk purchases of commodities used in road and highway
91 construction and maintenance, and aggregates shall not be made by reverse auctioning.

92 **2. That the provisions of this act shall become effective on July 1, 2023.**