



DISCUSSION

During the last four years of operating the AMI and its related systems, AMP has found several opportunities in areas for advancement. One of these key areas for advancement is in the way customers engage, interact, self-serve, and access data from and with the utility. This area is largely managed by the customer portal, the payment processing platform, and its integration to the Customer Information System (CIS) which manages customer related processes including billing. The customer portal platform serves as a user-friendly front-end interface that integrates to complex backend systems such as the CIS, MDMS, and payment processing platform. Robust integration to these systems is essential to providing accurate and timely data as well as practical self-service options.

Based on customer and staff feedback, there are opportunities to build upon AMP's most used customer portal functions in the areas of bill payment features and options, interval and billing data display and accessibility, and self-service functionality. Staff is recommending implementing the NorthStar Utilities Solution's SilverBlaze customer portal platform along with the Paymentus payment processing platform in order to establish enhanced integration to AMP's current NorthStar CIS, as all three platforms are exclusive and experienced integration partners with a strong record of working with AMP. Paymentus currently provides AMP telephone Interactive Voice Response (IVR) payment services and has proven to be a reliable and well-integrated service. Benefits of an established and enhanced integration include:

- 1) Ability for the customer portal to leverage the CIS to provide expanded billing options, functionality, and self-service options such as managing deposits, payment plans, and automatic service order creation directly from the customer portal.
- 2) Near real-time access to billing and usage data resulting in increased accuracy and up-to-date information.
- 3) Offer customers more payment type options while reducing administrative processing overhead.
- 4) Lower systems integration risk and complexity, resulting in faster implementation and less integration issues.
- 5) Increased reliability and assurance of continued support for the integrated platforms as these products evolve.

AMP is recommending to sole source the procurement of the SilverBlaze customer portal and Paymentus payment processing platform for its unique and preferred pre-integrated relationship with AMP's current NorthStar CIS.

AMP is recommending a 5-year agreement with an option to mutually extend on a year-by-year basis, for up to five (5) additional years at the sole discretion of the General Manager, at a minimum, upon satisfactory performance of all aspects of this agreement. The total 5-year agreement amount for NorthStar Utilities Solutions is \$427,090 with the first-year service and implementation costs set at \$160,290 and the following years at an annual cost of \$66,700. The total 5-year not-to-exceed amount for Paymentus is \$1,077,498 a baseline annual cost of \$195,000 based on our current transactions volumes and then accounting for modest annual volume increases through the remainder of the 5-year term.

<b>NorthStar / SilverBlaze</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	\$ 160,290
2	\$ 66,700
3	\$ 66,700
4	\$ 66,700
5	\$ 66,700

Table 1

<b>Paymentus</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1	\$ 195,000
2	\$ 204,750
3	\$ 214,988
4	\$ 225,737
5	\$ 237,024

Table 2

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

AMP has sufficient funds in its FY 2022 budget for implementation costs and first year of services. Annual service costs will be budgeted annually through the term of the agreement.

**LINKS TO AMP STRATEGIC PLAN**

- Customer Service
  - Strategy 3: AMP will maximize opportunities to meet customer needs and improve engagement.
- Technology
  - Strategy 2: AMP will leverage its AMI system to enhance the customer experience, operations, financial forecasting, and marketing.

**EXHIBITS**

None