Office of the Internal Auditor

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Date: November 18, 2016

To: Robert Sellers, VP, IT Infrastructure and Operations

From: Gary Sharrock, Manager IT Audit

Subject: IT Disaster Recovery Strategic Plan Project and IT Disaster Recovery Strategy Transition Program

Background

A project was initiated in 2014 in recognition of the need to address the location of the Citizens Disaster Recovery (DR) recovery site due to facility lease implications, as well as to investigate newer technologies and recovery services available in the market. IT initiated the IT Disaster Recovery Strategic Project in 2014 with the objectives of assessing current IT disaster recovery capabilities, envisioning future organizational needs and forward-looking technologies and creating an IT disaster recovery strategic plan deliverable. OIA was asked to participate in the project in an advisory role and has been monitoring the project since inception due to the significant role the DR program has in risk management within the organization.

A disaster recovery (DR) program is a formal and approved set of processes and related procedures to recover and protect an organization's IT infrastructure in the event of a significant event which negatively impacts business operations. The role of IT in DR is to provide restoration and recovery of technology systems and services required to ensure the desired level of business operations is maintained during that event.

In 2015, IT migrated critical infrastructure and services to a hardened co-location facility in Jacksonville. The systems that remained within a Citizens business facility were the duplicated recovery platforms in Tampa, which serves as the DR recovery site. Recommendations such as a hybrid "cloud" and "on premises" solution, service oriented solutions, and re-aligning principles and governance of disaster recovery to address a broader enterprise level responsibility, were included in the strategic plan for which executive management approval was obtained in December 2015.

A subsequent related transition project was started in early 2016 with the objective to implement the recommendations of the predecessor project:
- Conduct a Request for Information (RFI) activity of current market offerings for colocation data center services and ancillary vendor offerings
- Determine technology platform strategies
- Develop procurement (solicitation) requirements for future state disaster recovery data center services
- Complete associated procurement activities
- Procure appropriate data center services

Scope and Objectives

IT Management requested participation by the Office of the Internal Auditor (OIA) in the IT Disaster Recovery Strategic Plan Project as an observer from 2014 to current time.

As part of project monitoring, the following components were identified as integral to project governance/success:

- A project governance structure has been established (project team and stakeholders group), objectives have been clearly defined and communicated and a clear escalation path was implemented.
- Scheduled meetings and associated project documentation are completed.
- Tasks, resources and target dates are being maintained up to date, and periodically reported to the project sponsor.
- Project risks are being identified as part of project progression.
- Execution of the disaster recovery exercise in July 2016.
- Project objectives are met.

Results

We concluded that adequate processes are in place to support and ensure the effective and efficient management of the IT Disaster Recovery Strategic Plan Project, the Disaster Recovery Exercise and the IT Disaster Recovery Strategy Transition Program. OIA provided some informal recommendations associated with the projects which have been addressed. Specifically we noted:

- The project governance structure provides effective team participation and escalation to the project sponsor as required.
- Documentation is maintained up to date including task and resource management.
- Project risks are discussed and formalized for follow-up.
- The IT Disaster Recovery Strategic Plan Project was successfully completed and delivered recommendations for a disaster recovery plan that met the objectives of the project and were approved by the President/CEO/Executive Director.
- The management and performance of the disaster recovery exercise was executed well and effectively dealt with issues encountered during the exercise.
- The IT Disaster Recovery Transition Program developed recommendations regarding disaster recovery colocation services. However, the project was temporarily suspended in order to further consider the emergence of multiple vendor "cloud" based solutions and the potential impact they may have on the Citizens IT systems landscape, along with budget implications.

We will continue to monitor the project to completion. We would like to thank IT management for the utilization of OIA Advisory Services.

Distribution

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