Mid Coast Heritage Railroad Trust

Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad

Request for Proposal (RFP)

**Rail Bike Operations – Belfast Branch, Belfast ME**

**ISSUE DATE: 11 April 2025**

**RFP SUBMISSION DUE: 11 June 2025**

**REPLY TO:**

Joe Feero

212 Depot Street, PO Box 326

Unity, ME 04915

jfeero@maineswitching.com

# OVERVIEW

MidCoast Railroad Heritage Railroad Trust/Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad (MCRHT/BML) is seeking proposals from qualified businesses to provide rail bike tours to visitors on a section of the Belfast branch from City Point Depot (outside of Belfast, ME) to Waldo, ME.

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the Documents and Requirements as set forth in this formal "Request for Proposal" (RFP). The Contract that will result from this RFP will include the scope of work outlined in Section 4.1.

* 1. MCHRT/BML desires to lease railroad track, parking lot and facilities and station to a qualified rail bike business for the purpose of providing tours to visitors. The lease will be located at the City Point Depot, 13 Oak Hill Road, Belfast ME 04915.
  2. MCRHT/BML offers train rides and events.
  3. MCHRT/BML is soliciting proposals for a lease. MCHRT/BML may issue one lease to a successful bidder resulting from this RFP. The lease will include the use of the track, parking lot and parking space as well as the depot. If interested MCHRT/BML has seven railbikes that can be made available. The lease is anticipated to begin in 2025. The lease will have an initial term of ONE (1) year, with an option to renew for TWO (2) additional THREE (3) year terms.
  4. The Lessee must be able to begin its onsite business operations upon approval of the contract. Responses to this RFP should carefully evaluate market and Depot conditions and respond accordingly.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to provide MCHRT/BML with railbike operation services, including but not limited to operations, ticketing, marketing and railbike maintenance. Railbike operations have historically operated in the months of April through October each year departing from various points on the rail corridor, most recently from the City Point Depot to Waldo Siding and back. This contract works in conjunction with the BML Operational Team, ultimately reporting to BML Operations. The BML has operated railbikes on the Belfast branch since 2008, thus the railroad is already established as a railbike destination.

# PROCEDURE

* 1. A Selection Committee will evaluate the proposals submitted. There is no guarantee that the MCRHT/BML will select any of the proposals and any proposals shall be submitted at a proposer’s sole risk and cost.
  2. The Selection Committee may create a short list of qualified proposals and call for presentations or interviews of those on the short list to present further details and/or respond to questions. The presentations or interviews are anticipated to be held in May 2025. It is the expectation that the vendor will bring the proposed key staff to the presentation/interview.
  3. During the evaluation, the Selection Committee reserves the right, where it may serve the MCRHT/BML best interest, to request additional information or clarification from the person, or to allow corrections of errors or omissions.
  4. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the person of the conditions contained in this RFP, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the resultant Contract(s) between MCHRT/BML and the successful bidder.
  5. The use of the term "person" herein refers to an individual, or a company or independent contractor/consultant firm with certified personnel doing business in the United States and duly registered in the State of Maine, any of which will need to hold or obtain a business license from Carson City if they are selected as the successful vendor.
  6. There is no expressed or implied intent or obligation for MCHRT/BML to reimburse responding people for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals or any travel expenses during presentations/interviews in response to this RFP.
  7. MCHRT/BML shall reserve the right to terminate any contract or agreement resulting from this solicitation and subsequent action for cause, including but not limited to inadequacy of performance.
  8. MCRHT/BML reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to award a contract to the proposer the MCRHT/BML deems most qualified and whose award will accrue to the best interests of the MCRHT/BML.
  9. Until the receipt and opening of proposals, the proposers’ principal contact with the MCRHT/BML will be as listed below.

Joe Feero, President

212 Depot Street PO Box 326

Unity, ME 04988

[jfeero@maineswitching.com](mailto:jfeero@maineswitching.com)

* 1. All contacts regarding the proposal should be with the above-named individual only. Proposers contacting other MCRHT/BML staff or MCRHT/BML officials may be disqualified for doing so.

# SCOPE OF WORK

* 1. The scope of work for Rail Bike Operations will cover the following:

Submit a narrative description of your rail bike tour business. Ensure the following factors are included:

## Company History

* + 1. Company history, background, and why your company is qualified to provide the services described in this RFP.
    2. Describe whether your company operates services on other state-owned or federally- owned property.
    3. The length of time your company has been in business providing rail bike tour services described in this RFP.
    4. Regional knowledge. Describe your understanding of the regional market for a rail bike tour business.

## Safety

* + 1. Safety record. Describe your company’s safety record operating a rail bike tour business. Describe how you will promote a safe, enjoyable, and high-quality experience for a variety of visitors to the Museum. Describe your proposed or current operational policies.
    2. Rail bike safety features. Describe your company’s rail bike equipment. Confirm whether your company currently utilizes rail bikes and any possible additional modifications you will implement by the time the lease is approved.
    3. High quality, reliable, and safe equipment. Identify other equipment your company utilizes, including its reliability and quality. Describe where and how rail bike batteries will be charged.
    4. Safety plan. Discuss the safety plan your company will implement. A safety lesson for every customer must be included. The Safety Plan should also include procedures for ensuring the safety of customers and contemplate weather conditions and equipment retrieval.
    5. Working environment. Describe how your company promotes a safe working environment for employees. Describe how your company maintains an awareness of and respect for natural resources and the environment.

## Business Operations

* + 1. Coordination. Describe how your company will coordinate with the MCRHT/BML to ensure a quality experience for visitors while honoring the mission and upholding the rules, policies, and overall objective of the MCRHT/BML.
    2. Customer service. Describe how your company ensures a knowledgeable and friendly staff. Discuss your methods of resolving customer services issues as they arise.
    3. Accounting. Describe what systems your company uses for accurate accounting of customers, rental fees, and tracking of equipment.

# DURATION OF SERVICE

The resulting contract(s) from this RFP shall be for an initial contract term effective upon approval by the MCRHT/BML, anticipated to be May 26, 2025, through December 21, 2025, and with an option to renew up to THREE (3) additional years. Options will be exercised only if agreed upon by both parties and in the best interests of the MCRHT/BML. Start up dates for 2025 are negiotable.

# SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

* 1. A copy of this RFP may be requested from Joe Feero at the address below, electronically at [jfeero@maineswitching.com](mailto:jfeero@maineswitching.com) .
  2. All proposals must be **received** by the MCRHT/BML no later than 2:00 p.m., May 17, 2025. Submit proposal in a **sealed envelope**, labeled **Submittal for RFP MCRHT/BML** to one of the following:

**Mail or Email To:**

Joe Feero

212 Depot Street PO Box 326

Unity, ME 04988

[jfeero@maineswitching.com](mailto:team@a-typical.com)

* 1. Submissions must include a master copy (so marked) of the Proposal and one electronic copy (Adobe Acrobat format) saved onto a PC readable medium (flash drive), to include a title page showing the RFP subject; the firm's name, address, telephone number and email address of a contact person. The Proposal must be received on or before the date and time set forth in Section 6.2 of this RFP. Proposals shall be clear, straightforward, and not exceed 30 single-sided pages or 15 double-sided pages in length not including company brochures. Company brochures may be provided.

**Final Date for Submittal of Questions:** Questions regarding this RFP will be accepted through 12:00 p.m. on May 10, 2025. Questions shall be submitted in writing via e- mail or mail to:

Joe Feero

212 Depot Street PO Box 326

Unity, ME 04988

jfeero@maineswitching.com

* 1. **LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** Prospective proposers are responsible for ensuring their proposals arrive on or before the designated time and date to the address provided in Section 6.2.
  2. All questions in the questionnaire must be completed. All requested documents must be provided.

# EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

* 1. The MCRHT/BML shall use its best judgment in conducting a comparative assessment of the proposals.
  2. The MCRHT/BML shall select a finalist which possesses the ability to service the MCRHT/BML’s needs based on the recommendation of the Selection Committee.
  3. Notifications will be sent to all people submitting proposals after the contract(s) have been awarded by the MCRHT/BML.
  4. The MCRHT/BML reserves the right to terminate the contract(s) with at least 30 days prior written notice, or to terminate with cause at any time.
  5. No oral explanation regarding the meaning of the specifications will be made, and no oral interpretation will be given before the award of the contract(s). If any person contemplating

submitting a bid for the contract(s) is in doubt as to the true meaning of any part of the specifications or any other proposed contract documents, the person may submit to the MCRHT/BML a written request for an interpretation thereof. The person submitting the request will be responsible for its prompt delivery. Any interpretation of the proposed documents will be made by addendum duly issued or delivered to each person receiving a set of such documents. MCRHT/BML will not be responsible for any other explanation or interpretations of the proposed documents.

* 1. MCRHT/BML reserves the right to reject all bids and to waive any informality in bids.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD** will be made based on the evaluation results of the Selection Committee.

**FINAL SELECTION** will be made by the MCRHT/BML anticipated to be May 18, 2025. Should it become necessary to reschedule the date set for the award, notice will be provided to those finalists selected. In all instances, a decision rendered by the MCRHT/BML shall be deemed final.

# RFP REQUIREMENTS

* 1. Respondents should submit some information which documents successful and reliable experience in past performance like those of the requirements of this proposal.

# REQUIRED INFORMATION

The factors listed in this section will weigh heavily into the MCRHT/BML’s decision-making process on this RFP. These evaluation requirements are minimum requirements.

## A Statement of Project Understanding

* + 1. Describe your experience with rail bike operations.

## Key Personnel Information:

* + 1. Identify the personnel you plan to assign to the project. Provide a brief resume for these individuals detailing the experience, qualifications, and certifications they possess.

## Project Approach

* + 1. Identify how you will approach the task of initiating and fully implementing these services and identify the equipment and resources your firm will provide for the project.

## Cost Proposal for Basic & Special Services

* + 1. Complete the attached “Cost Proposal Form” and include it with your response to the RFP.

# EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Having determined that a proposal meets the basic requirements, the Selection Committee will then evaluate it with respect to each of the following elements (a total of 100 points possible):

* 1. **Qualifications** (Maximum 40 points). The Selection Committee will consider:
* length of time in business,
* past performances,
* apparent capabilities to perform well in the execution of its obligations under a contract as evidenced by an individual or a corporation’s or firm’s leadership and management personnel,
* size of organization,
* project manager,
* support staff, and
* any other pertinent information submitted by the proposer.
  1. **Personnel** (Maximum 15 points). The Selection Committee will consider the staffing method of providing coverage proposed in the response. The Selection Committee will also consider the level of capabilities of the individual or personnel and their ability to communicate effectively and in a timely manner.
  2. **Capacity** (Maximum 15 points). The Selection Committee will review the proposal for its completeness and evaluate how the proposer will approach the task of initiating and fully implementing these services including identification of the equipment and resources the proposer will provide. The demonstration of assurance of performance as to quality and efficiency will be weighed when scoring.
  3. **Cost Proposal** (Maximum 30 points). The cost proposal for full performance in meeting the requirements of the RFP will be of major consideration under this category. The Selection Committee may also refer to the line-item information that has been provided.
  4. **In-Person Presentation Evaluation Criteria** (a total of 100 points possible):

1. Did the presenting person prove expertise in theater production services? (Maximum 50 points)
2. Did the presenting person adequately identify the personnel and equipment necessary to provide the Polar Express theater production services? (Maximum 30 points)
3. How well did the presenting person address evaluators’ questions? (Maximum 20 points)

# OBJECTION BY UNSUCCESSFUL PROPOSER:

* 1. Any unsuccessful proposer may file an objection to the MCRHT/BML regarding the selection made by the Selection Committee by following the procedure

outlined in paragraph below. Information on the results of the Selection Committee's aggregate evaluation may be obtained upon request and will be emailed to each respondent.

* 1. Any objection shall be written and submitted to the MCRHT/BML Board of Directors at the address identified in Section 6.3 within five (5) calendar days after a recommendation to award a contract has been posted to the MCRHT/BML Website. The MCRHT/BML Selection Committee will stay any award actions until after the MCRHT/BML Selection Committee has responded in writing to the protest. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, appellant may then protest to the MCRHT/BML Board of Directors, who will render a final decision. No protests will be heard by the MCRHT/BML unless the proposer has followed the appeal process. The MCRHT/BML is not liable for any costs, expenses, attorney’s fees, and loss of income or other damage sustained by the appellant in the process.

# LIST OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

* 1. Maine Business License
  2. Proof of Insurance Coverage
  3. Organizational chart, if the proposer is a company or firm
  4. Resume Form: Complete a resume form, including, for corporations or firms, one form for each person employed by or contracted with your company or firm which will assist with the completion of the scope of work for this RFP.
  5. Cost Proposal Form

# COST PROPOSAL

* 1. The cost proposal shall not be marked “confidential”. Only information that is deemed proprietary may be marked as “confidential”.
  2. Proposers shall provide one (1) PDF Cost Form.

# WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS:

Proposals may be withdrawn at any time upon written notice to MCRHT/BML.

# CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:

Any information deemed confidential or proprietary should be clearly identified by the proposer as such. It may then be protected and treated with confidentiality only to the extent permitted by state law. Otherwise, the information shall be considered a public record. The information of data submitted with this proposal will not be returned.

# CONTRACT TERMINATION:

The MCRHT/BML reserves the right to terminate the contract if the Consultant does not perform as required by the terms of the contract. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited, to the following:

* 1. Failure to provide sufficient personnel as identified in response to the RFP.
  2. Failure to provide the key personnel as identified in response to the RFP.
  3. Substitution of key personnel without prior approval of the MCRHT/BML.

# INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS/HOLD HARMLESS CLAUSE:

Proposer’s attention is directed to the insurance requirements as delineated in Exhibit A. It is highly recommended that proposers confer with their insurance carriers or brokers to determine in advance of proposal submission the availability of insurance certificates and endorsements as prescribed and provided herein. If a proposer fails to comply strictly with the insurance requirements, the proposal may be disqualified.

# FUNDING OUT CLAUSE:

Proposers shall be aware that any contract(s) resulting from this RFP shall be subject to cancellation without penalty in the event that MCRHT/BML’s funding authority fails to obligate funds requisite for its continued operations.

# STATUS OF SUCCESSFUL PROPOSERS:

The successful proposer will be an “Independent Contractor” and shall not be entitled to any of the rights, privileges, benefits, and emoluments of either an officer or employee of the MCRHT/BML.

# COMPLIANCE WITH IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION LAWS:

Successful proposer shall always be in compliance with immigration and naturalization laws regarding the eligibility of their employees or subcontractors to work in the United States.

# ATTACHMENTS:

1. Cost Proposal Form

END OF DOCUMENT