



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 15-3338

Agenda Item Number: 6.

Agenda Date: 5/21/2015

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Intergovernmental Relations

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S) IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Federal Representation Services Contract

SUMMARY:

An ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute a federal representation services contract with Venable LLP in an amount not to exceed \$16,667 per month for the term of May 22, 2015 through May 21, 2017 for a total contract amount of \$400,008. The agreement provides that the term may be renewed for up to one two year term through December 31, 2019, upon approval by City Council.

BACKGROUND:

The City of San Antonio has retained consultants to represent its federal interests in Washington, D.C. since 1994. Increasingly challenging budget constraints make it imperative for local communities to have strong advocates at the federal level. Consultants enhance the City's ability to communicate with federal officials on San Antonio's priority issues and communicate regularly with City Council and staff on issues in the City's Federal Legislative Program. Additionally, the consultants coordinate with staff in planning City IGR Council Committee visits to Washington, D.C. and facilitate meetings with the appropriate elected and appointed officials. Finally and most importantly, they provide strategic advice and planning on maximizing our community's efforts to secure federal funding for key priority City projects.

Staff from the Intergovernmental Relations Department and Finance collaborated with the Small Business Office and City Attorney's Office to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for federal representation services, issued December 12, 2014.

Notice of the RFP was published in the San Antonio Express News, the City's webpage and TVSA (Chanel 21). In an effort to increase the number of respondents, notice of the issuance of the RFP and its location on the City's webpage was sent to approximately 41 vendors. The deadline for submission of proposals was January 30, 2015. A total of 5 proposals were received in response to the RFP. Two responses were deemed non responsive due to not meeting the SBEDA subcontracting goal. The Local Preference Program was applied in the evaluation of responses received for this contract; however, none of the respondents is a local business. The Veteran-Owned Small Business Preference Program was applied in the evaluation of responses received for this contract; however, none of the respondents is a veteran-owned small business.

A review panel comprised of the following members was formed to review all proposals: Carlos Contreras, Assistant City Manager, Martha Sepeda, Acting City Attorney, Leilah Powell, Chief of Policy for Mayor Taylor, Tony Leverett, Director Eastside Promise Neighborhood, Jeff Coyle, IGR Director, and Sally Basurto, IGR Assistant Director. On April 9, 2015, the panel met to review and evaluate proposals. All three respondents were invited for interviews.

The review panel interviewed the three respondents in person on April 23, 2015. Venable LLP received the highest score from the Committee.

The following members of the firm will be responsible for the delivery of services through this contract: Thomas C. Downs will be lead consultant on the contract. The Venable team also includes Daris D. Meeks, Chan D. Lieu and Megan Malone in Washington, DC and Baltazar (“Walter”) Serna who will be the local representative on the contract. Tom Downs brings nearly 20 years of experience representing local governments, colleges and universities and other clients on federal funding and policy initiatives. He served as the City’s lead federal consultant from 2009-2014, as part of the Patton Boggs firm. Previously, he spent 10 years on Capitol Hill as legislative assistant, legislative director and chief of staff, serving members of the Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Science, Space & Technology.

The initial contract term will be for 2 years, from May 22, 2015 through May 21, 2017, and will include one, two-year performance based extension at the City’s option.

ISSUE:

This ordinance is consistent with City policy of retaining consultants to supplement the City’s advocacy efforts with Agency personnel, Congressional members of key committees of jurisdiction and the Administration. It is also consistent with the City policy of building strategic alliances with officials in Washington, D.C. to further the City’s interests. Finally, it is consistent with City policy of developing a detailed strategy to further the City’s adopted Federal Legislative Program.

ALTERNATIVES:

If the proposed Ordinance authorizing the execution of a professional services contract between the City and Venable LLP is not supported, the alternative would result in a loss of the City’s ability to effectively pursue its adopted Federal Legislative Program and would likely result in a loss of federal funding for the City.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding for this contract was allocated in the FY 2015 General Fund budget for the corresponding portion of this contract. The remaining amount will be allocated in the FY 2016 and FY 2017 General Fund budget contingent upon City Council approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the contract submitted via this ordinance to retain consultants to insure City representation of its federal interests in Washington D.C. If this contract is not approved the City will forgo representation in Washington D.C. for the City’s community priority issues.