



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 16-1477

Type: Miscellaneous Item

In control: City Council A Session

On agenda: 2/11/2016

Title: An Ordinance authorizing the assignment of the City's federal representation services contract with Venable LLP to Downs Government Affairs for the remainder of the contract term. [Carlos Contreras, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Coyle, Director, Government & Public Affairs]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Venable Assignment Agreement, 2. Draft Ordinance, 3. Venable Assignment Agreement - Updated Feb 9, 2016, 4. Ordinance 2016-02-11-0090

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
2/11/2016	1	City Council A Session	adopted	Pass

DEPARTMENT: Intergovernmental Relations

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S) IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Federal Representation Services Contract Assignment

SUMMARY:

An ordinance authorizing the assignment of the federal representation services contract with Venable LLP, approved in Ord. 2015-05-21-0425, to Downs Government Affairs. Venable has agreed to the assignment due to conflicting interests between municipal clients and for-profit clients. Thomas C. Downs will continue as lead advocate for the City for the remainder of the contract term.

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.

On May 21, 2015, City Council authorized a professional services agreement with Venable LLP, Ordinance 2015-05-21-0425, for an initial term of 2 years, with a two-year performance based extension at the City's option. Thomas C. Downs was the lead consultant on the contract.

Venable recently underwent changes in leadership and strategic direction. The partnership decided that the interests of represented municipal clients are at odds with the interests of other, for-profit, clients. Thomas C. Downs resigned from the Venable partnership effective December 31, 2015 and is taking the municipal

government and public entity government affairs practice to the newly formed Downs Government Affairs. Venable LLP no longer has an interest in representing the City of San Antonio and has agreed to assign the agreement to Downs Government Affairs.

Downs Government Affairs is a firm dedicated to innovative intergovernmental affairs advocacy that promotes agile, efficient client services. Its bipartisan team members have worked together for decades. All team members have previously served on Capitol Hill and have collectively worked in the offices of eleven Representatives and six Senators; the Department of Transportation, Labor, Education, Treasury, Health and Human Services, FEMA, and USAID under the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

ISSUE:

This ordinance will approve the Assignment Agreement between Venable LLP and Downs Government Affairs that transfers the federal representation services contract, without any amendments, for a term effective January 1, 2016, continuing through December 31, 2016, the end of the initial contract term, for a monthly amount not to exceed \$16,667.00. Thomas C. Downs will continue as lead consultant and ensure continuity of the City's Federal Legislative Program. It 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.

ALTERNATIVES:

If the proposed Ordinance authorizing assignment of the professional services contract between the City and Venable LLP is not supported, the likely alternative is the termination of the agreement by Venable through a 10 day written notice that would result in a loss of the City's ability to effectively pursue its adopted Federal Legislative Program until a new Request for Proposals for federal representation services can be carried out.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the assignment of the Venable LLP contract to Downs Government Affairs to ensure continued representation of the City's federal interests in Washington D.C.