



Council Agenda Report

Item 6h

Department: Administration
Cost Center: 1001
For Agenda of: 10/19/2021
Placement: Consent
Estimated Time: N/A

FROM: Greg Hermann, Deputy City Manager

Prepared By: Whitney Szentesi, Public Communications Manager

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve the release of a series of Request for Qualifications to establish an on-call list of contractors to support public information efforts, returning to Council for review every two years; and
2. Authorize the Finance Director to execute and amend Purchase Orders for individual consultant services contracts in an amount not-to-exceed the authorized budget.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the City's Public Communication program is to keep the community informed of and engaged in City services, projects, and programs. To support this effort, the City recently hired a full time Public Communication Manager. Over the last five months, that position has worked to improve communication processes across departments, increase the total amount of outgoing communications provided by the City, and ensure greater consistency in the information provided to the community across a variety of channels. The position has also begun several planning efforts to guide public communications efforts over the next two years.

As a part of the 2021-23 Financial Plan, the City Council also approved funding for communications contract services support. The City has previously used several contractors to support Citywide communications and this item seeks approval to update the current list of qualified vendors and also make that list available for department specific communication efforts such as major capital projects. Contractors are used to supplement the efforts of staff and allow staff to focus on project, program or service operations and delivery. To support these efforts, City staff need a pre-qualified list of on-call contractors to support public information and public education needs related to City programs, services, and projects.

The goal is to streamline and expedite public information services, help control costs, and regularly seek contractors that can provide outstanding services to support our community's needs.

In addition, the Request for Qualifications (RFQs) (Attachments A and B) will foster competition amongst suppliers, put competitive pressure on its current suppliers to perform, and furnish the City with the most competitive prices. The RFQs will also ensure the City can negotiate the most advantageous terms feasible and seek standardized billing rates across the terms of the contracts.

Policy Context

The City's purchasing policy requires competitive bids for a single transaction and cumulative purchases for a fiscal year at Tier 3 through 5 in its purchasing guidelines. See attachment C, Purchasing Policy Tier Approval Guide. Therefore, factoring in the previous two-year spending, the 2021-22 expenditures (including outreach for major planned capital projects) may reach the City's purchasing threshold that requires Council authority.

Municipal Code 3.24.030 (f) states the City Administrative Officer as the purchasing authority shall seek 'to consolidate department orders for like [services] to ensure discount pricing whenever feasible.'

Interpreting the policy and Municipal Code together, the Finance Department recommends establishing RFQs for communications support services. Then, once the contracts are in place, City staff can order against the contracts with negotiated pricing and terms and reduce ad hoc orders.

Public Engagement

This item will be before Council during public session on October 19, 2021. The public can provide comments at or before the meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

By establishing RFQ contracts, the City will reduce off-contract ad-hoc purchases. Ad-hoc purchases put the City at a competitive disadvantage on price negotiation. The RFQ contracts will provide the City with consistent hourly rates and more detailed invoices. Additionally, Departments have budget appropriations per the City's financial plan, which is approved by Council and will work with pre-qualified consultants within that established limit.

Budgeted: Yes

Budget Year: 2021-22

Funding Identified: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Sources	Total Budget Available	Current Funding Request	Remaining Balance	Annual Ongoing Cost
General Fund	\$60,000	\$	\$	\$60,000
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Other:				
Total	\$60,000	\$	\$	\$60,000

As part of the 2021-23 Financial Plan, Council allocated \$60,000 each fiscal year for communications support contracts. However, this funding does not include communications line items in specific capital projects, programs, and services which are included in various department and division budget appropriations. As a result, the total estimated expenditure varies from year to year and may reach the City's purchasing threshold that requires Council approval but will remain within appropriated budget allocations.

ALTERNATIVES

Do not approve the release of an RFQ. The City would continue to issue a Request for Proposal or get quotes from various consultants each time a project, program or service required outside consulting work to support public information and/or public outreach efforts.

ATTACHMENTS

- A – RFQ for Communications Support Services
- B – RFQ for Video Production and Photography Services
- C – Purchasing Policy Tier Approval Guide