



Legislation Text

File #: 17-508, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Mike Conway, Assistant to the City Manager

SUBJECT: Contract for Advocacy Services With Townsend Public Affairs, Inc. for Legislative Affairs Advocacy and Consulting Services

REPORT IN BRIEF

Considers approving a contract with Townsend Public Affairs, Inc. for Legislative Affairs Advocacy and Consulting Services.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion approving the contract for legislative affairs advocacy and consulting services with Townsend Public Affairs, Inc., appropriating \$20,000 from unappropriated, unreserved fund balance of the General Fund and authorizing the City Manager or Assistant City Manager to execute the necessary documents.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve, subject to other than recommended by staff (identify specific findings and/or conditions amended to be addressed in the motion); or,
3. Deny; or,
4. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items (specific items to be addressed in the motion); or,
5. Continue to a future meeting (date and time to be specified in the motion).

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2017-18 Adopted Budget.

DISCUSSION

During the discussions for the 2017-18 Budget, the need for having legislative advocacy and consulting services was brought before the City Council. The services would provide additional access to elected officials, regulators, and other administrators who would be able to help staff advocate for legislation and actively seek grants that advance the Council's goals.

It has become apparent there is a need to intensify the City's role of advocating on its behalf and to seek additional funding to oppose legislation that is detrimental to the City, its residents, and its operations. There also is a desire to pursue funding opportunities through grants and legislation that

will benefit the City's residents, programs, and services. The firm desired would have offices in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C., because of the City's state and federal needs. The advocacy firm would work closely under the direction of the Legislative Director to achieve the desired results.

A Request for Proposals was posted on the City's website on August 10, 2017, and proposals were due by 5 p.m., Sept. 8, 2017. There were four proposals received. Those submitting proposals were required to meet with a City panel September 21, 2017, and three proposers agreed to the meeting. The proposers were:

- California Consulting, El Segundo, CA
- Cherif & Associates, Brunswick, Ohio
- Townsend Public Affairs, Inc., Newport Beach, CA

After the interviews, it became clear that Townsend Public Affairs, Inc. was the only candidate that offered the full range of services that the City was seeking. California Consulting is strictly a grant-writing firm, while Cherif & Associates only provides federal representation at this time.

Townsend Public Affairs, Inc., has offices in Sacramento, Washington, D.C., Fresno, Oakland, and Newport Beach. It provides legislative advocacy services and grant writing capabilities. Townsend Public Affairs, Inc., is familiar with the City of Merced, having provided advocacy services from 2007 through 2012.

Townsend Public Affairs, Inc., worked with the City on the "G" Street Underpass Project, the Merced Theatre Renovation Project, and other projects in the past. They also worked with City staff in Washington, D.C. on COPS funding, Federal Aviation Administration issues, and Black Rascal Creek flooding assistance.

The contract is for 20 months, ending June 30, 2019. This gives the City and the firm time to get through an entire Legislative year in Sacramento, which lasts from January into October. In addition, Townsend Public Affairs, Inc., will be able to provide year-round assistance with federal legislation, along with year-round assistance with grant-writing and regulatory inquiries.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

There was \$20,000 appropriated in the 2017-18 budget for advocacy services. An additional \$20,000 will need to be appropriated from unappropriated, unreserved fund balance for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Funding for subsequent years is subject to budget approval.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Contract with Townsend Public Affairs, Inc.
2. Request for Proposals for Advocacy Services