

RICHARDSON'S BAY REGIONAL AGENCY

STAFF REPORT

For the meeting of February 10, 2022

To: Board of Directors
From: Steve McGrath, Interim Executive Director
Subject: Outreach and Education; Contract with Lighthouse Public Affairs

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

After Board discussion and public input, approve Lighthouse Public Affairs as consultant to Richardson's Bay Regional Agency for public outreach and education.

Motion: Approve Lighthouse Public Affairs as consultant to Richardson's Bay Regional Agency for public outreach and education, and, after due diligence, authorize the Interim Executive Director to execute a contract for said services in the amount of \$7,500 per month. Additionally authorize Interim Executive Director to approve change orders in a total amount not to exceed 10% of contract cost.

SUMMARY:

As a public agency, the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) has an obligation to communicate effectively with the public not just how tax payer dollars are spent, but why. This communication should be pro-active, clear and transparent.

Richardson's Bay is a rich and diverse ecosystem. This has been recognized by both the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Both OPC and NOAA have recently provided grants (managed for the RBRA by Ocean Policy Solutions, OPS). BCDC in the Settlement Agreement (SA) with the Richardson's Bay Regional Agency (RBRA) emphasized the necessary work to protect eelgrass by requiring the RBRA to develop an Eelgrass Protection and Management Plan (EPMP), establish an Eelgrass Protection Zone (EPZ), and to develop an Eelgrass Adaptive Management Plan (EAMP) that will outline the process for restoration of damaged eelgrass areas.

Both the OPC and NOAA grants have an 'Outreach and Education' line item. RBRA will rely on Coastal Policy Solutions for all technical components of grant performance and the Outreach and Education plan.

Additionally, the SA requires certain tasks of, and places certain responsibilities on the RBRA. As we move through this process over the next five years, it is imperative that we

proactively communicate with all taxpayers and stake holders about the what and why of the implementation of the SA.

Staff contacted several Bay Area firms in an informal process to gauge interest in helping RBRA to communicate effectively with the public and develop a program for effective outreach and education about the Richardson's Bay environment and manage all communications as RBRA faces challenges in executing the requirements of the Settlement Agreement with BCDC.

After conversations with three firms (Singer, Full Court Press and Lighthouse Public Relations) that followed the same pattern (see attached interview notes) staff met with the Communications ad-hoc committee (Chair Moulton-Peters, Vice Chair Block). While all three firms are competent and capable of performing the work, the Committee felt that the local knowledge and cost effectiveness of working with Lighthouse tips the balance, and recommends this Board approve a contract with Lighthouse Public Relations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

After the interview, Lighthouse suggested a retainer of \$7,500 per month.

Through the remainder of FY 22, costs would be \$30,000. Following that, and unless the proposal is amended to decrease or increase the services provided, costs would be \$90,000 annually. The contract will stipulate that it may be cancelled by either party on thirty days notice.

It should be noted that both the OPC and NOAA grants have funds dedicated to this purpose, and certain of the costs incurred will be reimbursable by the grants. Combined, the grants allocate \$91,800 to 'Outreach and Education'. This will significantly reduce the cost of this contract to RBRA. At this point it is not possible to determine the exact amount, as staff and our grant consultant, Coastal Policy Solutions, are working with the granting agencies to re-allocate funds within the funding structure (from Personnel to Subcontractors). As there is no request to change the total amount of the grants, staff is optimistic of the success of this request.

Attachments:

Attachment: Interview questions and responses