

TOWN *Of* **PARADISE VALLEY**



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Bien-Willner and Town Council Members

FROM: Jill Keimach, Town Manager
Deborah Robberson, Acting Town Attorney

DATE: February 11, 2021

DEPARTMENT: Town Manager
Jill Keimach, 480.348.3533

AGENDA TITLE:

Public Relations Professional Services Contract with S+C Communications for one-year with 4 one-year extensions for an annual amount not to exceed \$30,000

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Given its limited government model, the Town of Paradise Valley does not have permanent staff with the capacity to respond effectively and efficiently to requests from the media and/or proactively send out information on social media or create press releases on PV activities and topics of interest to our residents and businesses. As one example, the Town currently needs assistance in distributing a video produced in-house by the PVPD Community Resource Officer Steven McGhee. The video demonstrates the need to change current State legislation to return local control in order to mitigate neighborhood impacts of Short Term Rentals and Party Houses in Paradise Valley and throughout the State.

The competitive procurement process sought Request for Quotations (RFQ) from qualified firms interested in providing public relations services to the Town. Specifically, it sought a PR consultant to develop a strategic communications plan to educate the public about high-profile development projects and other Town issues. Services would include distilling Town regulations, responsibilities, and obligations, public sector procedures, and other information into clear press releases, website information and other media formats. Services would be requested on an as-needed basis, for an hourly rate (rather than monthly stipend) and the Town made no guarantee as to the amount of services the consultant(s) would be asked to provide.

Pursuant to Council direction to obtain recommendations, written quotations were solicited from three firms based on recommendations through Council direction by Vice-Mayor Mark Stanton and Legislative Lobbyist Doug Cole. Quotations were requested on August 24, 2020, with proposals due to the Town by January 4, 2021. Two firms submitted proposals: S+C Communications and Gordon C. James. Both firms were determined to be highly qualified and were interviewed on January 13, 2021. The

interview and evaluation committee included four staff members most likely to work directly with a PR consultant: Town Manager Jill Keimach, Town Clerk Duncan Miller, Manager and Council Executive Assistant Sarah Meland, and the Town Procurement Coordinator Peggy Ferrin.

Each firm was asked to address the following information in their submittal:

1. Firm's management and Organization Capabilities
2. Qualifications and Experience of their Firm, key people who will be responsible for performing the work under the contract
3. List 3 specific references that may be contacted
4. Provide a sample of written work similar to the requested Scope of Services
5. Provide a website link with sample of content Firm has created
6. Provide a price proposal. Offerors were asked to provide fully loaded hourly labor rates for positions identified.

In response to potential conflicts of interest, Gordon C. James did not have a legal conflict but did have a current client who is a developer in Paradise Valley. S+C Communications had no legal conflict of interest, although previously worked in Paradise Valley for Fire Services, and has worked previously with Doug Cole on State legislative matters. The review committee felt this would be a positive relationship to further enhance the communication and coordination on the Town's high priority legislative efforts, such as STRs, Photo Enforcement, and Tourism activities in support of our resorts.

BACKGROUND:

The solicitation process utilized would be appropriate for Public Relations Services up to \$50,000. The draft contract limits expenditures to \$30,000, although staff anticipates the first-year will be even less. This level of proposal review and evaluation was preferred for this type of professional service. Consequently, staff used the following procurement policy for solicitation, evaluation and selection of the successful proposer.

SECTION 1.3 PURCHASES OF TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND (\$25,000) BUT LESS THAN \$50,000

A. Purchases of **twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) but less than fifty thousand (\$50,000)** shall be made in accordance with the following procedures:

1. The Requesting Department shall solicit at least three (3) written Quotations or proposals, which may be received by mail, facsimile or e-mail provided it bears the signature of an authorized agent of the bidder or proposer. Whenever practicable, the Town's standard Request for Quotations (RFQ) or Request for Proposals (RFP) document shall be utilized; at a minimum, all bids or proposals should be submitted on the vendor's letterhead or official documentation. If a contract is required for the procurement, either a standard contract shall be attached or the Town Procurement Officer and the Town Attorney's Office shall review the solicitation prior to issuance. Written Quotations or proposals shall be documented in the procurement file.
2. The Requesting Department may solicit Quotations or proposals from all vendors on the bidder's list maintained by the State of Arizona through ProcureAZ, if any, but at a minimum, those bidders or proposers who have

specifically requested an opportunity to submit a Quotation or proposal for the specific material, service or construction being requested at that time.

3. Award shall be made to the lowest cost Responsive and Responsible bidder or highest scoring Responsive and Responsible proposer. The amount of any applicable transaction privilege or use tax, and shipping or freight cost shall be a factor in determining the cost of the bid or proposal.
4. Whenever required, bidders or proposers shall submit Quotations or proposals on the form issued with the Request for Quotation or Proposal, and the Quotations and proposals shall be recorded and placed in the procurement file.
5. If only one Responsive and Responsible Quotation or proposal is received, a statement shall be included in the procurement file explaining the basis for determining that the price and/or proposal is fair and reasonable.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The submitted proposals were evaluated and the committee found both firms to be qualified. S+C proposed an hourly rate of \$200 for both partners and Gordon C. James had a fee of \$250 for main partner and \$150 for support staff, with a minimum fee of \$2,000 per project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends Council approve a contract with S+C Communications (Scutari and Cieslak, Inc.) for one-year and providing for up to four one-year extensions at an hourly rate of \$200/hour, not to exceed \$30,000 annually.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- A. Staff Report
- B. Services Agreement
- C. Procurement Summary