



Board Report

File #: 2017-0744, File Type: Contract

Agenda Number: 13.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 16, 2017

SUBJECT: DIGITAL MEDIA CONTRACTS

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE the Chief Executive Officer to execute:

- A. Contract Ratification and Modification No. 1 to Contract No. PS71103378 with Steve Hymon (editor of The Source) for writing, editing and supervisory services for the Public Relations Digital Media group, to extend the contract term from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2018 increasing the total authorized not-to-exceed amount by \$398,972.75 from \$145,000 to a new total of \$543,972.75; and
- B. Contract Ratification and Modification No. 1 to Contract No. PS71103377 with Maria Luisa Arredondo-Pagaza (editor of El Pasajero) for editing, writing and translation services for the Public Relations Digital Media group, to extend the Contract term from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2018 increasing the total authorized not-to-exceed amount by \$156,201.25 from \$150,000 to a new total of \$306,201.25.

ISSUE

The Contracts to perform digital media services for Metro's two blogs continued beyond their completion period as a result of inadequate management of the contracts during staff transitions including a lack of documentation. Staff exceeded their authority by continuing to fund the two Contracts in order to pay for the services these two small businesses provided. Staff is requesting modifications in the amount of \$398,972.75 for Contract No. PS71103378, and \$156,201.25 for Contract No. PS71103377, which includes a ratification request of \$271,492.25 for Contract No. PS71103378, and \$93,856 for Contract No. PS71103377.

The Vendor/Contract Management Department and the Communications Department have proceeded to corrective action on these Contracts to ensure such incidents do not occur in the future.

DISCUSSION

Contract with Steve Hymon

Steve Hymon is contracted with Metro to perform editorial oversight and production of the agency's

two blogs and digital media channels managed through the Public Relations Department. Mr. Hymon is an integral part of the Public Relations team as the founder and editor of *The Source*, Metro's award-winning blog. His additional duties include reviewing and editing documents, collaborating with the editor and writer of Metro's Spanish-language blog, *El Pasajero*, guiding the digital media team that handles Metro Service Alerts, and contributing to the agency's social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube and Instagram.

The Source is one of the most heavily visited local government blogs in the United States. Content includes articles, photographs, podcasts and video on agency services, projects and programs - much of which is used by national and local news outlets, on Metro's social media channels and outside websites. *The Source* receives nearly 170,000 views per month and responds to thousands of comments annually.

Steve writes about important and sensitive topics relating to the agency's services, projects and programs. He has excellent judgment as well as research and writing skills. His background in journalism is critical in order to gauge how reporters may react (positively and negatively) to information posted on the blog and Metro's social media channels. With Metro undergoing massive expansion, Steve's deep knowledge of a variety of projects and agency issues, as well as local politics and how they impact and shape Metro and the County is invaluable.

The Source editor must be cognizant that she/he has a voice and point-of-view that many readers will associate with the agency. The editor must have a nuanced understanding of tone and how best to communicate often complex and controversial topics with riders, stakeholders, potential Metro customers, media and agency critics.

Steve also oversees and contributes to the content creation of *El Pasajero* so that it complements articles on *The Source*. He is responsible for hosting monthly editorial meetings and creating the editorial calendar. He is available outside of regular business hours including early mornings, nights and weekends.

Steve moderates 5,000 to 6,000 comments left on the blog each year and to respond when appropriate. He is responsible for answering the approximately 100 emails received from readers each month and to help the social media team respond to comments left on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Still imagery continues to be a critical part of the blog and the agency's PR efforts. Steve has a command of professional grade cameras, lenses and photo processing software - and is able to distribute pro-quality images to media and stakeholders and other websites, sometimes minutes after images are shot. He also helps to oversee video efforts and sometimes shoot and edit short videos.

Beginning in January 2016, Steve increased the level of work hours as part of Metro's rail line extension openings and Measure M public education effort.

As a former transportation reporter at the L.A. Times who covered Metro, and as the editor of Metro's *The Source* for nearly eight years, Steve has extensive knowledge of Metro, the agency's policies, the political environment in Los Angeles County, Measure R and Measure M, and other relevant agency matters. With Metro running around-the-clock operations, Steve is also available 24/7 to write and digitally publish important messages from Metro across a variety of digital platforms as well as

respond to questions from customers and readers on the blog and other social media streams. His service and skillset add great value to Metro, and it would be difficult to replace that by ceasing his Contract.

Steve is in the midst of several important projects for the agency that would be disrupted by making a change at this time. These include a series of videos that we have begun to shoot for a variety of major capital projects, as well as a video to promote the expansion of the Metro system between now and the 2028 Olympics and Paralympics Games that will take place in our region.

Contract with Maria Luisa Arredondo-Pagaza

Maria Luisa Arredondo-Pagaza heads a Metro certified Small Business Enterprise (SBE) that has editorial responsibility for the agency's Spanish language blog, *El Pasajero*, which is managed through the Public Relations Department. *El Pasajero* is designed to increase the awareness of Metro's programs, projects and services through the generation of original content aimed specifically to the Latino community in Los Angeles County.

Ms. Arredondo-Pagaza is an essential part of the Public Relations team. She is the founder, editor and regular contributor of *El Pasajero*. She has taken on additional duties including supervising a new part-time Spanish language writer.

El Pasajero views are measurable and are part of the KPI's reported on by Public Relations. The blog received nearly 40,000 unique page views in FY18 Q1. *El Pasajero* is one of the only Spanish language local government blogs in the United States. Content includes articles, photographs, podcasts and video on agency services, projects and programs - some of which is used by national and local news outlets, on Metro's social media channels and outside websites.

Ms. Arredondo-Pagaza is bi-lingual and able to write about important and sensitive topics relating to the agency's services, projects and programs. She exercises excellent judgment as well as strong research and writing skills. Her background in journalism is critical in order to gauge how reporters may react (positively and negatively) to information posted on *El Pasajero*. With Metro undergoing massive expansion, Maria Luisa's deep knowledge of a variety of projects and agency issues, as well as local politics and how they impact and shape Metro and the County is invaluable.

Maria Luisa Arredondo-Pagaza is an important asset for Metro because of her extensive and deep knowledge of the Latino community and Los Angeles politics. She has more than 30 years of experience in journalism and translation in Mexico and the United States. She worked 17 years for *La Opinion* newspaper as a reporter and editor of several sections including the front page.

As the editor for *El Pasajero*, Maria Luisa is cognizant that she has a voice and point-of-view that many readers will associate with the agency. She has a nuanced understanding of tone and how best to communicate often complex and controversial topics with riders, stakeholders, potential Metro customers, media and agency critics.

Ms. Arredondo-Pagaza works under the supervision of *The Source* editor, Steve Hymon, to ensure

that the content creation of *El Pasajero* complements articles on *The Source*. She participates in monthly editorial meetings and assists in the creation of the editorial calendar. Additionally, she must frequently be available outside of regular business hours including early mornings, nights and weekends.

Finally, Ms. Arredondo-Pagaza is responsible for coordinating, editing and posting the work of the other writers. She must also moderate comments left on the blog and respond when appropriate. In addition, she also answers mail messages received from readers and helps the social media team respond to comments left on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The approval of this recommended action will not have any direct impact on the safety of our customers and employees.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Public Relations Department has budgeted funds in the amount of: \$181,440 for The Source - Contract No. PS71103378, and \$93,170 for The El Pasajero - Contract No. PS71103377 in its FY18 budget to accommodate this ongoing work effort for Digital Media Services.

Impact to Budget

Funding for digital media services costs will parallel allocated project funding and may include sources like fares, transportation sales taxes, and federal and state funds. The impact will vary year-to-year based on project and digital media to support Metro programs and initiatives.

In FY18, Public Relations have allocated \$181,440 for The Source - Contract No. PS71103378, and \$93,170 for The El Pasajero - Contract No. PS71103377 for Digital Media Services within its digital media services budget (Public Relations: Project 306005 (Public Affairs Project), Task 01.001, Account 50316 Professional and Technical Services).

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

An alternative is ceasing the Contracts and performing these services using other Metro staff. This is not recommended because of the volume of work currently in process. A change at this time would disrupt the work load distribution in the department and create a backlog of writing and editorial assignments at a time when other staff are focused on communications for day-to-day operations, planning and construction projects, media requests, and other major policy matters or agency initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval of the requested recommendations, staff will execute the Contract ratifications

and modifications and staff will continue to monitor contract services.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A-1 - Procurement Summary Contract No. PS71103377

Attachment A-2 - Procurement Summary Contract No. PS71103378

Attachment B1 - Contract Modification/Change Order Log Contract No. PS71103377

Attachment B-2 - Contract Modification/Change Order Log Contract No. PS71103378

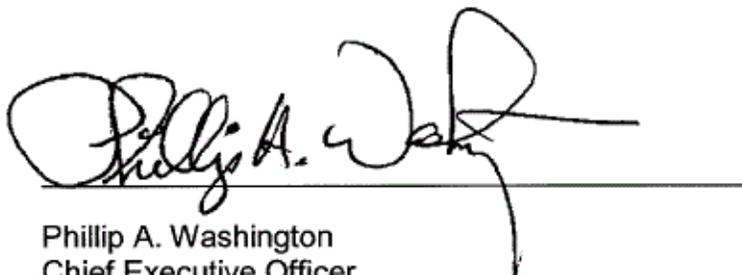
Attachment C-1 - DEOD Summary Contract No. PS71103377

Attachment C-2 - DEOD Summary Contract No. PS71103378

Prepared by: Joni Goheen, Deputy Executive Officer Public Relations
(213) 922-6931

Reviewed by: Pauletta Tonilas, Chief Communications Officer
(213) 922-3777

Debra Avila, Chief Vendor/Contract Management Officer
(213) 418-3051



Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer