

Legislation Text

File #: 21-61, Version: 1

Presenter/Contact
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SUBJECT:

Approval of a contract with the Bojorquez Law Firm, P.C., for legal services related to the 2020 Census and possible redistricting.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

With the 2020 federal census completed, the City of New Braunfels must begin the analysis for redistricting. The proposed law firm has successfully guided several cities, counties, and special districts through the process following the 2000 and 2010 censuses. It is reasonable to anticipate that modifications will need to be made to the city's single-member districts if the new census reveals population shifts, migration influxes, or diminishment in certain areas or neighborhoods. Typically, the process of redistricting involves addressing concerns regarding racial and ethnic demographics, politics, the law, and often competing community interests.

In addition to achieving proportional balance under the ***One Person / One Vote*** standard, this firm will ensure the City's continued compliance with the ***U.S. Voting Rights Act, Texas law***, and the ***Home Rule Charter***. The firm will follow its standard procedure which will involve the:

- Analysis of the census results
 - Determination by the City Council
 - Establishment of City Council criteria
 - Exploration of options for district lines
 - Educating the public on the process
 - Engagement of the citizenry
 - Consultations with special interests
- Consideration of alternative plans
- Providing public notifications
 - Publishing public notices
 - Conducting public hearings
 - Legal assessment of options
 - Recommendations by my firm
- Adoption of a plan by the City Council

If retained, Mr. Bojorquez plans to hold a City Council workshop that will assist City Council and the public in understanding this endeavor. The firm will utilize a GIS/Mapping/Demographic specialist, Jeremy McMahan, who has prior experience with the 2010 Census and has helped Mr. Bojorquez

achieve solid results in the past for clients. They have arranged for updated software, new online engagement tools, and options for creating draft plans with city officials and constituents.

This firm will bill on an hourly basis as set forth in the attached agreement. The cost estimate depends on the amount of changes in the 2020 Census from the 2010 Census, and the resulting redistricting that may be required. Depending on the changes and complexities, the final cost could fall within a range of \$20,000-\$90,000. Once the work is underway, the firm will have a better cost estimate.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

N/A

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is currently funding allocated for outside legal services in the FY 2021 City Attorney's Office General Fund budget. In the event that the total legal services budget needs to be amended, a budget amendment will be brought forward for City Council consideration. However, there are currently funds available to support the purchase as described above.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the contract.