



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-1158, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Terri Wright: 565-3775

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Consultant Agreement for Public Outreach and Assistance for a Wildfire Prevention, Emergency Alert, and Response Ballot Measure

Recommended Action:

Authorize the County Administrator to execute a professional services agreement with TBWBH-Props & Measures, to develop and support implementation of a strategic public outreach and engagement plan to consider options and recommendations for a potential revenue measure that supports efficient, effective, and sustainable fire response, emergency alert, and wildfire prevention capabilities, for the period from November 4, 2021 through June 30, 2022, in an amount not-to-exceed \$320,700.

Executive Summary:

The County of Sonoma has been working with local fire service agencies to increase revenue to support wildfire response and prevention services. The Board approved the placement of Measure G on the March 2020 ballot that did not pass by 1.84%. The Board approved funding as a part of the FY 2020-21 budget to explore the pursuit of another sales tax measure.

This item authorizes the County Administrator to execute a professional services agreement with TBWBH-Props and Measures to provide strategic public outreach and engagement to explore a potential measure for the 2022 ballot season.

Discussion:

On September 16, 2021, the County Administrator's Office issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking a qualified consultant to plan and oversee a public engagement and educational plan that expands the awareness of a ballot measure that would generate revenue to provide more efficient, effective, and sustainable fire response, emergency alert, and wildfire prevention capabilities.

The County received five proposals from the following consulting agencies:

- 50+1 Strategies, LLC
- Lew Edwards Group
- Muelrath Public Affairs, Inc.
- TBWBH Props & Measures
- Telegraph, LLC

The proposals were evaluated on October 25, 2021, by a committee consisting of Deputy County Administrator, Christel Querijero, Chief Scott Westrope, representing the Fire Services Work Group (FSWG), and Principal Analyst, Terri Wright. The committee determined that the team from TBWBH-Props and Measures was best suited to support efforts to expand awareness and strategically plan for a potential sales tax measure. Key factors in their selection include:

- The Consultant's team included a wildfire policy advisor that assisted with the Marin County Wildfire Prevention Measure.
- Experience with successful fire-related measures.
- Team members with local community knowledge.
- Recent experience working with the County on Measure O, sales tax measure, which was passed by voters in November of 2020.

The agreement contains a scope of work, timeline, and budget attachment. The agreement budget is included below and includes \$240,000 in optional costs that may be utilized depending upon polling and overall feasibility of the measure.

Budget	Monthly Rate	Est. # of Months	Not-to-Exceed
TBWBH Props and Measures (retainer) - General Consultants	\$12,500	4	\$50,000
Maureen Middlebrook - Outreach Consulting (\$165/hour x. 30 hrs/month)	\$4,950	4	\$19,800
Rich Shortall - Outreach Consulting (\$165/hour est. 15 hrs/month)	\$2,475	4	\$9,900
Expenses (copy, mileage, parking, etc)			\$1,000
Total			\$80,700
Optional add-ons (dependent on polling and budget)			
Countywide informational mailer #1			\$90,000
Countywide informational mailer #2			\$90,000
Countywide informational digital ads			\$40,000
Tracking Poll			\$20,000

The County and the Fire Services Work Group have undertaken the following preliminary activities to explore a potential sales tax measure:

- The Fire Services Ad Hoc comprised of Supervisors Rabbitt and Hopkins held a joint Ad Hoc meeting with the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority Funding for Climate Ad Hoc.
- The FSWG and County staff conducted a vegetation management stakeholders meeting.
- The FSWG has met with representatives from all cities and fire districts to understand needs.
- The polling firm, EMC Research, has conducted a focus group session on November 10 and is planning for a mixed-mode survey of likely voters, via telephone, text messages, and email that will go out in December.

TBWBH Props & Measures was briefed on all preliminary activities and will immediately begin planning for future stakeholder and/or communication engagement and education activities, as well as a feasibility analysis to determine the best strategy to place a Sonoma County Wildfire Prevention, Emergency Alert, and Response Measure on the June or November 2022 ballot.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Prior Board Actions:

7/20/21 - The Board directed staff to work with FSWG to develop a funding and outreach plan that will be used to develop an ordinance and expenditure plan to place a measure on the June 2022 ballot FY 20-21 Budget Hearings authorized \$500,000 to cover costs of a 2022 ballot effort

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	320,700	0	0
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	320,700	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	320,700	0	0
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	320,700	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Following the failure of Measure G on the March 2020 ballot, funding to cover the costs of a potential sales tax measure was earmarked as a part of the FY 2020-21 budget. Appropriations to cover this expense in the current fiscal year have been included in Quarter 1 CBAs.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Agreement with TBWBH Props & Measures

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None