



AGENCY: City Council
MEETING DATE: October 9, 2018
DEPARTMENT: Administrative Services
PRESENTED BY: Scott Schneider
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AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

Receive Report And Consider Adoption Of Fort Bragg City Council Resolution Approving Professional Services Agreement with Cubic, Inc. to Provide Visit Fort Bragg Promotional Activities to Include: (1) Marketing and Advertising Services; (2) Design/Creative Services; (3) Social Media Content Creation; (4) Website Design, Development and Deployment and Authorizing City Manager to Execute Same (Amount Not To Exceed \$182,000; Account No. 110-4321-0319)

ISSUE:

On June 12, 2017, City Council approved the Visit Fort Bragg Marketing & Promotions Action Plan ("VFB Action Plan") which was prepared by City staff with extensive input from hotel operators, community and business groups and Visit Fort Bragg Committee. The first task in the VFB Action Plan was to develop a brand for Visit Fort Bragg. Additional tasks included in the plan were put on hold due a reorganization of the Visit Fort Bragg promotional program.

With the reorganization of the Visit Fort Bragg Committee complete, a Request for Proposals ("RFP") with five major scopes of work was released on July 17, 2018. The scopes of work in the RFP included: (1) marketing/advertising services; (2) design/creative services; (3) social media content creation; (4) public relations services; and (5) Website Design, Development and Deployment. The RFP is included as Attachment 2.

The RFP stipulated respondents could respond to all scopes of work, a single scope of work, or any combination thereof. Regardless of how many individual scopes of work each respondent applied for, each proposal would be given equal consideration. The scopes of work and the RFP were developed to allow for the broadest array of responses from qualified firms, but with enough specificity to ensure quality responses could be properly evaluated. With Fort Bragg just starting a full promotional program, it was important to allow responders to add their own ideas and creativity to their responses.

The distribution list for the RFP included 58 marketing professionals whose contact information was provided by various regional tourism entities, including many local firms, and also included respondents to the branding RFP released in June of 2017. In addition, the RFP was released to interested parties who have registered for notifications from the City's Bids and RFPs page. By the response due date of August 13, 2018, 18 responses were received from 16 different agencies.

A review committee comprised of five individuals – two members of the Visit Fort Bragg Committee and three members representing Fort Bragg's tourism industry – together with the Project Manager and City staff, narrowed the pool to six finalists. These finalists participated in extensive interviews which were conducted on August 27 and 28, 2018. Staff would like to thank the RFP ad hoc review committee for the four days of in-person review and interviews, as well as the dozens of hours of their own review time they put into this exciting project:

- | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Nancy Bennett | - | Visit Fort Bragg Committee member |
| 2. Robert Pinoli | - | Visit Fort Bragg Committee member |
| 3. Molly Barker | - | Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens |

- 4. Alison de Grassi - Visit Mendocino County
- 5. John Scott - Orso Palazzo, LLC

Valuable committee members' time was spent not only interviewing the six finalists, but reading through 18 proposals, many of which were over 50 pages in length.

The job of reviewing and ranking the 18 proposals included a full evaluation of each proposal to help committee members decipher which responses they felt would work best to implement Fort Bragg's new marketing and promotions program. Meetings were held on August 20 and 21 to discuss each of the proposals and come to a decision on those to invite for interviews the following week.

The six responders selected to be interviewed were asked to make a 30-minute presentation to the committee with additional time (30 – 60 minutes) for questions and answers. Respondents were emailed interview details on August 22 which included presentation guidelines which acted as a way to get to know the responders and allow the ad hoc committee to get a feeling of how they would fit with Fort Bragg's new promotional program.

The six finalists selected for interviews include the following (in alphabetical order, with the scopes of work they responded to and their location):

- AMF (all scopes of work – San Luis Obispo, CA)
- Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce (social media content creation; design/creative services – Fort Bragg)
- Crowd (all 5 scopes of work – multiple locations with San Francisco as the point of contact)
- Cubic, Inc. (all scopes of work except public relations – Tulsa, OK)
- Inkfish Design (website design, development & deployment – Fort Bragg)
- The Abbi Agency (all 5 scopes of work – Reno, NV)

All interviews were conducted in person. Respondents were each asked a series of probing questions designed to generate additional information about the consultants' capabilities, qualifications, and experience, with a focus on Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) experience; specifics about their process; and proposed outreach methods.

The review committee was impressed with the qualifications of all finalists and had a difficult time narrowing down the choices. A couple of things became clear to the committee during the interview and selection process:

1. It is in the best interest for the management, execution and overall success of the promotional program to have one consultant, if possible, executing all services outlined in the RFP. This not only helps with coordination and management of the work, but more importantly, it guarantees a program that is cohesive, follows the Marketing Plan and speaks to potential visitors with a single brand strategy and narrative through all of the promotional channels (i.e. website, social media, public relations, collateral material, etc.). This is especially vital as the promotional program and overall brand identity is being developed and executed over the next six to nine months. Moving forward, a program that has been successful for several years will have a much easier time utilizing multiple consultants for different services as strengths, weaknesses, needs, desires and success of the program and activities get established and evolve.
2. It is ideal to have a local individual/business work force chosen by the consultant for social media efforts – specifically content creation – as a person “on the ground” can provide

quick, on-the-fly content to enhance social media efforts. This can include content around local events, conversations with local businesses and personalities and testimonials from current visitors – all of which provide a sense of place to the social media audience.

After extensive discussion and debate, the committee was asked to rank their top three choices in order to evaluate whether a clear “winner” was apparent. The results of the ranking were Cubic, Inc. as the number one choice and The Abbi Agency coming in at a close second.

At its September 4, 2018 meeting, the Visit Fort Bragg Committee along with the Community Development Committee received presentations from both Cubic, Inc. and The Abbi Agency. After lengthy discussion, the Committee(s) directed staff to do the following:

1. Develop a Professional Services Agreement to present to City Council with Cubic, Inc. to perform the four scopes of work in which they responded in their proposal (all except for Public Relations). This agreement is before the Council for consideration.
2. Continue to utilize the Chamber of Commerce in assisting Cubic, Inc. with social media efforts – providing a local, “on the ground” voice to posts, blogs and other relevant social media content. Staff was directed to have Cubic, Inc. subcontract with the Chamber of Commerce for above services in a way that would create as robust and successful a social media program as possible. Cubic has presented the Chamber of Commerce with a subcontract to assist with social media content in the amount of \$1,000 per month.
3. Distribute another Request for Proposals for Public Relations Services and include Cubic, Inc. in the selection process to help ensure a cohesive promotional program for Fort Bragg. Responses for this RFP were due on October 1, 2018 with interviews being held on October 10, 2018. The same review ad hoc committee which reviewed the first group of RFPs is also reviewing and interviewing the responses to the Public Relations RFP. It is staff’s hope to have a proposed Agreement for Council’s consideration at the November 13, 2018 meeting.

Both Aspen Logan, Visit Fort Bragg’s Project Manager, as well as Billy Kulkin, President of Cubic, Inc., are present tonight to answer any questions and provide additional information as requested.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt City Council Resolution Approving a Professional Services Agreement with Cubic, Inc. for Visit Fort Bragg Promotional Activities.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Provide alternate direction to staff.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Sufficient funds are currently allocated in the Professional Services line item for Marketing and Promotional Services (Account #110-4321-0319).

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

Upon adoption of Council Resolution, Cubic, Inc. is ready to get started.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution Approving Professional Services Agreement with Cubic, Inc.
2. Professional Services Agreement with Cubic, Inc.
3. Cubic, Inc. Scope of Work
4. Visit Fort Bragg Promotional Activities Request for Proposal
5. Cubic, Inc. Response

NOTIFICATION:

1. Visit Fort Bragg Committee
2. Billy Kulkin, Cubic, Inc.
3. Economic Development Notify Me Subscriber List
4. Downtown Businesses Notify Me Subscriber List