

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CONTRACTS COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 28, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Matthew McCarthy, Co-chair; Jorge Cruz, Ernest Newton, Dasha Spell, Scott Burns (6:03), Richard Ortiz (6:05 p.m.)

OTHERS: Council Member E. Martinez, Thomas Gaudett, Chief Administrative Officer; Curtis Denton, ITS Director; Kevin Price, Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker, LLC

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

56-23 Proposed Professional Services Agreement with Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker, LLC to perform a Permitting Process Study for City Departments.

Mr. Denton greeted the committee and said that this study would help to analyze the various systems coming into the City. The study has an ambitious timeline, but depends on the City providing the information. There will be focus groups and talk to staff to identify systems that will enhance and improve the system. He said that they hope to implement these improvements to meet both the staff and residents' need.

Council Member McCarthy asked how they intended to meet such a tight timeline. Mr. Price said that they had responded to the RFP and explained that if the process drags on too long, the recommendation become forgotten or ineffective. He said that he would welcome input from the Committee.

Council Member McCarthy said that it would be important to have the developers included in the focus groups.

Council Member Newton said there had been a program where the staff was supposed to switch from paper to computers. However, there were many people who did not buy into the new system. Mr. Denton said that Intergov was introduced three years ago and had linked a number of departments such as the building department, Engineering, and Zoning. About 90% of the revenue generating permits go through that portal and there have been over 600 permits issued through this. The study will help with that area.

Council Member Newton asked what the price was on this. Mr. Denton said it was \$84,620.

Council Member Ortiz asked about the staff shortage in the Building Department and there were a number of developers that he knew that were frustrated

Mr. Gaudett apologized for scheduling the meeting on such short notice. He said that they needed to have an outside review of what the problems are and how to resolve them.

Mr. Price is an expert and is familiar with Intergov. The RFP was done a long time ago and the contract was sent to the Council in October. However, it is important to move forward and address the issues.

Council Member Ortiz said that the developers need to move ahead with their project. Mr. Gaudett said that Mr. Price would not be able to solve all the problems with the report, but it will help with the solutions. He added that Mr. Denton has taken on so many more responsibilities. There is a backlog in the Fire Marshal's office and there will be overtime from the Fire Marshal to move the plans forward.

Council Member McCarthy expressed concerns that the report would not be complete since it was such as short timeline. Mr. Price said that since they have a short time, they may a two week review if they find issues.

Council Member Spell asked about another study that another group was doing. Mr. Gaudett said that the other study was much more comprehensive and involved reviewing all the purchasing invoice and other documents.

Council Member Newton said that he felt this would be a great thing for Bridgeport, but expressed concerns about the timeline and asked Mr. Gaudett if they could expand the scope of the project. Mr. Gaudett said that Mr. Price was ready to go and expected that the delays would be on the City's part. Council Member Newton asked Mr. Gaudett to send out a memo to all the departments to cooperate with Mr. Price.

Council Member Herron said she was concerned because they had implemented the program originally, there had been resistance from staff in terms of their reluctance to learn the technology. While this is a great step, she felt that they would have staff members reluctant to work on the programs. Mr. Gaudett said that when new employees and others who transfer to Bridgeport come on board, they have no problem. It's the long term employees. Mr. Gaudett said that they had come a long way because they can collect payments online and the processes have been digitalized. There are other problems that technology will never address. He added that there were some modules that can automate some processes, but Bridgeport does not use them as of now.

Mr. Denton said that the City owns the technology and they are becoming more familiar with the internal processes. He felt that the staff has gotten past the hurdle of using paper. Developers can now sign in and see where the permit is in the approval process. This is an independent analysis of the process. The company works with municipalities all over the country and cities of all sizes. The staff is in a much better place now than they were three years ago.

Council Member Burns said that he appreciated Mr. Denton being involved in this and asked if other departments were involved in this. Mr. Denton said that the process was initiated by Ms. Hawkins, who was the CAO at the time. There were staff from OPED, Facilities and IT on the selection panel. They should have people involved from all the key stakeholders as the process moves forward.

Council Member Burns asked if the company analyzed the permit fees in terms of other municipalities. Mr. Price said that they would note any red flags when they reviewed the information.

Council Member Martinez said that this was great and felt that \$84,000 was a significant amount of money. She wished to know who would be following through after the report is submitted. She said that there were old school employees who were not following through. Mr. Gaudett said that this was why they were asking for the report and Mr. Denton had promised that there would be no secrets. If there are IT issues, Mr. Denton will work on it. If it is personnel, it will go to him and they will work on it together.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER MCCARTHY TO APPROVE 56-23 PROPOSED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH BERRY, DUNN, MCNEIL & PARKER, LLC TO PERFORM A PERMITTING PROCESS STUDY FOR CITY DEPARTMENTS.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER CRUZ SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL MEMBER NEWTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER SPELL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services.