

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Council</b> <b>Communication</b> Office of the City Manager</p>	<b>Date:</b>	August 22, 2016
	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	<b>47I</b>
	<b>Roll Call No.</b>	<b><u>16-1428</u></b>
	<b>Communication No.</b>	<b><u>16-485</u></b>
	<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Carl Metzger, Deputy City Manager</b>

**AGENDA HEADING:**

Resolution authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute the contract for development of a 3-Year Strategic Communications Plan, services and expenses with Ann Appleseth Communications, LLC (5020 Panorama Drive, Panora, IA 5026). The City Manager has determined that good cause exists to forgo procurement procedures and hire Ann Appleseth Communications, LLC.

**SYNOPSIS:**

Creation and implementation of a strategic communications plan is a 2016 Strategic Plan Top Priority of the City Manager. This is the first Strategic Communications Plan for the City of Des Moines and is designed to set out the objectives, messages and strategies that will be used during the 3-year period 2017-2020 to communicate the City programs and policies to various audiences. The City’s strategic communications plan will align with the Mayor and Council’s goals for the future and will provide direction for the City’s reconstituted communications function.

It will describe the City’s current situation, strategic messages, tools and tactics, implementation plan, and measures for assessing outcomes. The City of Des Moines has made communications a strategic priority, with the intent of increasing awareness of the policies and programs of the City and generating enhanced engagement of constituents in the governing process. That communication is a top priority and is a clear sign of the commitment that the Council has to conduct the business of the City in an open and inclusive manner.

The Ann Appleseth Communications, LLC (AAC) team brings more than 20 years of public relations, marketing, communications and strategic planning experience to this project. The team also brings strong community and media relations and governmental affairs experience to the work.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Amount: Not to exceed \$50,000 for consulting services, fees and expenses.

Funding Source: Citywide Training/Benchmarking Fund: ND 4720-409732, page 123

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

The City of Des Moines has communicated with core constituencies in essentially the same manner for many years. Recognizing that how individuals receive and consume information has changed, the City sees the opportunity to assess and evolve its overall communications approach with key constituents within the City.

Additionally, the opportunity to fill the recently vacated Chief Communications Officer position allows for some restructuring, and the opportunity to align internal and external communication goals and programs; specifically, the goals outlined by the Mayor and City Council.

### Project Overview and Deliverables:

Overall project goals include:

1. Assess utility and adoption of current communication methods and channels.
2. Understand key audience needs and preferences relative to City communications.
3. Gain perspective on internal roles and responsibilities relative to executing a coordinated communications plan.
4. Deliver a strategic 3-year communications plan and specific job description(s) for oversight of communications plan execution.

### Project Approach:

- Phase 1: Discovery. This phase includes a review of all existing research and information as well as conducting interviews/qualitative research with key audience segments (10-12 weeks).

#### Objectives:

1. Understand current perceptions of communications programs, priorities and effectiveness.
2. Discover and explore opportunities for change and improvement.

#### Actions:

1. Review existing research and department information.
  2. Audit existing communication channels and usage and utility assessment.
  3. Conduct internal stakeholder interviews.
  4. Audit and/or benchmark best practices with outside 'models'.
- Phase 2: Findings + Strategic Recommendations. This phase undertakes the thorough analysis of all information gathered in Phase 1 Discovery and assimilation into a high level findings and recommendation document. The deliverable is a strategic overview of opportunities for improvement and lays the foundation for the strategic communication plan (6-8 weeks).

#### Actions:

1. Analysis and roll-up of findings into a comprehensive document.
  2. Executive summary presentation including key strategic program recommendations.
  3. Recommendations on communication oversight roles and responsibilities.
- Phase 3: Strategic Communications Plan. This phase will include the development of the 3-year Strategic Communications Plan including specific audience priorities, insights and program recommendations (4-6 weeks).

Actions:

1. 3-Year plan document—goals, objectives, strategies.
2. Communications team function, role and responsibility document (if not completed during Phase II).

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE**

**BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE**

**ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS:**

Approval of Strategic Communications Plan.

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