



**DATE: MAY 19, 2020**

**FROM: MEDIA RELATIONS**

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ - APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS FOR AS NEEDED PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND EDITING SERVICES WITH DOROTHEA DIEMER-KOVACEVICH DBA DDK COMMUNICATIONS, FULL VISION PRODUCTIONS LLC, NATALIE L. SHORE PETERSON AND RESERVOIR LLC**

**SUMMARY:**

Staff requests approval of proposed Agreements with Dorothea Diemer-Kovacevich dba DDK Communications (DDK), Natalie L. Shore Peterson (Shore Peterson), Reservoir, LLC (Reservoir) and Full Vision Productions, LLC (Full Vision) to provide the City of Los Angeles Harbor Department (Harbor Department) as-needed professional writing and editing services. This action will authorize four Agreements, each for a three-year term, with a combined total not-to-exceed amount of \$294,000, or \$98,000 annually.

The \$98,000 annual not-to-exceed amount under the proposed Agreements would represent a \$42,000, or 30.0 percent reduction relative to the as-needed professional writing and editing services agreements currently in-place. The Harbor Department is financially responsible for the payment of services under the proposed Agreements.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board of Harbor Commissioners:

1. Find that the Director of Environmental Management has determined that the proposed action is administratively exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Article II Section 2(f) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines;
2. Find that in accordance with Los Angeles City Charter Section 1022, it is more feasible for outside contractors to perform this work than City employees;
3. Approve the four agreements for terms of three years and a cumulative not-to-exceed amount of \$98,000 per year, and a total of \$294,000 for three years;

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4. Authorize the Executive Director to execute and the Board Secretary to attest to the agreements; and
5. Adopt Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background - The Harbor Department Media Relations Division (Division) interfaces with a wide range of local, national and international media including newspapers, radio and television, trade publications, web publications and blogs. The Division generates and oversees content on the Port website, and develops content for the LA Waterfront website and publications. The Division serves as a conduit of information about the operations of the Harbor Department, the status of Port-related projects, the marketing of the Port to the shipping industry and business community at large, and LA Waterfront-related communications.

The Division handles the day-to-day writing and editing workload, including special writing projects for other divisions. In 2019, the Division responded to more than 1,328 media inquiries that included a range of work to provide timely and accurate information, serve as spokespersons (as appropriate), and proactively arrange interviews for senior staff. Besides producing more than 100 news releases and videos, Media Relations provides content and daily updates for the Port's website. Additionally, the team generates content daily for more than 130,000 of its social media followers. During the COVID-19 crisis, the media team has been on the forefront, producing regular internal and external videos, hosting remote press conferences, producing social media and web content, and arranging interviews daily with the Port Executive Director and other Port staff. Additionally, the Port's media director acts as the Public Information Officer on behalf of Los Angeles Port Police and requires being on call nights and weekends.

The proposed agreements provide the resources to augment existing Harbor Department staff with on-call professional writers/editors who, as-needed, have the expertise to assist in creating high-quality business development, public outreach, news, reports, scripts and collateral materials. The as-needed writers would provide assistance during unpredictable or overflow work periods. The consultants' mix of business writing, environmental writing, speech coaching, and multi-media backgrounds bring a significant level of expertise to particular topics such as the environment, security and international commerce.

Depending on staff workload and project deadlines, contractors may also be called upon to assist in: producing collateral materials, such as brochures for marketing or public outreach; drafting scripts, talking points and speeches to be used by Harbor Department staff for industry events, panels and presentations; and editing/writing news releases, white papers and background materials for a variety of multi-media distributions. These

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projects occur sporadically throughout the year, and often require evening and weekend work to accommodate short deadlines.

The consultant pool of funds allows for more flexibility to use budgeted funds with any of the four approved consulting firms based on each firm's availability and expertise. The proposed budgets for writing professionals in the upcoming 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 Fiscal Year Budgets are \$98,000 each. As noted in the Summary, this is a 30 percent reduction compared to the \$140,000 budgeted in the previous year, including an executive agreement of \$20,000 to add a keynote speech writer and coach for State of the Port. The reduction is in recognition of budget concerns that have arisen in recent months. Because of the three-year term and the aggregate amount of the proposed agreements, Board approval is required.

Selection Process - The Professional Writer and Editor RFP was released on February 21, 2020 and posted on the Port of Los Angeles website and Los Angeles Business Assistance Virtual Network (LABAVN). The Harbor Department received seven proposals by the March 18, 2020 deadline.

The proposals were evaluated by a selection committee that included the following three individuals: Director of Media Relations (Harbor Department); Principal Public Relations Representative (Harbor Department) and Director of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum (Department of Recreation and Parks).

The proposals were scored based on the following criteria and weighting factors:

- Professional Experience and Qualifications (30%)
- Portfolio Samples (30%)
- Fees (20%)
- Clarity and Comprehensiveness of the Proposal (20%)

The three members of the selection committee reviewed and rated each proposal. Those ratings were combined and the selection committee concluded that the four top-ranked proposers - Natalie L. Shore Peterson, Dorothea Diemer-Kovacevich dba DDK Communications, Reservoir, LLC, and Full Vision Productions, LLC - would provide a diverse range of professional writing and editing expertise on an as-needed basis (Transmittal 1). Natalie L. Shore Peterson has vast experience and expertise writing about environmental issues; Dorothea Diemer-Kovacevich dba DDK Communications provides expertise with respect to maritime issues and the LA Waterfront; Reservoir, LLC has expertise in keynote speech writing and had the best qualifications for speech coaching; and Full Vision Productions, LLC offers the most experience and expertise in video script writing and editing.

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It is recommended that the Board award agreements to the following four proposers:

- Dorothea Diemer-Kovacevich dba DDK Communications – (Transmittal 2)
- Natalie L. Shore Peterson – (Transmittal 3)
- Reservoir, LLC – (Transmittal 4)
- Full Vision Productions, LLC – (Transmittal 5)

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:**

The proposed action is approval of four three-year agreements with writing professionals (Natalie Shore Peterson, Dorothea Diemer-Kovacevich dba DDK Communications, Reservoir LLC and Full Vision Productions LLC) to provide as-needed services in support of the Harbor Department’s strategic external communications programs, which is an administrative activity. Therefore, the Director of Environmental Management has determined that the proposed action is administratively exempt from the requirements of CEQA in accordance with Article II Section 2(f) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Approval of the proposed Agreements authorizes a total amount not-to-exceed \$294,000 for as-needed professional writing and editing services over a three-year period. It is anticipated that funds under the proposed Agreements will be expended as follows:

FY 2020/21	\$ 98,000
FY 2021/22	\$ 98,000
FY 2022/23	\$ 98,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 294,000</b>

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/21 funds in the amount of \$98,000 have been requested for inclusion in the FY 2020/21 budget within Account 54290 (Misc. Professional Services), Center 0250, Program 000. Funding for future fiscal years will be requested as part of the annual budget adoption process upon Board approval.

The Harbor Department’s financial obligations after the current fiscal year are contingent upon the Board’s appropriation of funds. If any subsequent fiscal year funds are not appropriated by the Board for the work required by the agreements, the agreements shall be terminated. However, such termination shall not relieve the parties of liability for any obligations previously incurred. A funding out clause is included in the agreements.

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CITY ATTORNEY:

The office of the City Attorney has prepared and approved the agreements as to form and legality.

TRANSMITTALS:

- 1. Summary of Respondents and Scores
- 2. Agreement with Dorothea Diemer-Kovacevich dba DDK Communications
- 3. Agreement with Natalie L. Shore Peterson
- 4. Agreement with Reservoir, LLC
- 5. Agreement with Full Vision Productions, LLC

FIS Approval MB  
 CA Approval S

PHILLIP SANFIELD  
 Director of Media Relations

ARLEY M. BAKER  
 Senior Director of Communications

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 Deputy Executive Director

APPROVED:

EUGENE D. SEROKA  
 Executive Director