



**THE PORT  
OF LOS ANGELES**  
Executive Director's  
Report to the

Board of Harbor Commissioners

**DATE: APRIL 28, 2015**

**FROM: MEDIA RELATIONS**

**SUBJECT: RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ - APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS  
WITH AS-NEEDED PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND EDITING  
SERVICES**

**SUMMARY:**

The City of Los Angeles Harbor Department (Harbor Department) is proposing to enter into three agreements with writing professionals to provide as-needed services in support of the Harbor Department's shipping industry outreach, business development, and public outreach programs. Selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, contracted writing professionals provide the following as-needed writing and editing services, generally at times when the project queue internally is full and outside help is needed to keep up with work flow: video script writing and production assistance; write news releases and articles for the Harbor Department's web properties and general media distribution; write background papers on a variety of Port of Los Angeles (Port)-related topics; draft scripts, talking points, and speeches to be used by Harbor Department staff for industry panels and presentations; produce content and copy for multi-media platforms; and produce other promotional materials as needed.

Staff is recommending the Board of Harbor Commissioners (Board) approve a pool of funds for three consultant agreements for a term of one year with two, one-year renewal options per agreement. The total sum of the three proposed agreements shall not exceed \$120,000 per year or \$360,000 for three years. The proposed agreements represent a reduction of \$80,000 per year, or 40 percent, compared to agreements over the past three years. The reduction is a result of staff taking on more writing duties while increasing efficiencies, including repurposing materials across multi-media platforms. The Harbor Department is financially responsible for payment of expenses under the proposed agreements.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board of Harbor Commissioners:

1. 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;

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2. Approve the three agreements for one year with two, one-year renewal options per agreement for a sum not-to-exceed \$120,000 per year, or a total of \$360,000 for three years;
3. Authorize the Executive Director to execute and the Board Secretary to attest to the agreements; and
4. 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 development of 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 2014, the Division responded to more than 700 media inquiries that included a range of work to provide timely and accurate information, serve as spokespersons (as appropriate), and arrange interviews for senior staff or subject area experts. Concurrently, the media team produced 64 news announcements, and generated daily content for more than 38,000 Facebook and Twitter followers.

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 and multi-media backgrounds bring a significant level of expertise to particular topics such as the environment, security and international commerce.

An example where a contractor may be called upon to support staff includes assisting in the writing and production of LAtitude, the Harbor Department's video e-newsletter that connects our customers, prospective customers and the industry with the business trends and advantages connected to shipping through the Port of Los Angeles. 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 the editing/writing of

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news releases, white papers and background materials for a variety of multi-media distributions. These projects occur sporadically throughout the year, and often require evening and weekend work to accommodate deadlines.

In May 2013, the Board approved an amendment to existing as-needed writing professional services agreements, establishing a pool of funds for the three firms. The consultant pool of funds allows for more flexibility to use budgeted funds with any of the three approved consulting firms based on the firm's availability and expertise. The proposed budget for writing professionals in the upcoming 2015/16 Fiscal Year Budget is \$120,000. As noted in the Summary, this is a 40 percent reduction compared to the \$200,000 budgeted in each of the previous three years. This reduction is possible because staff is taking on additional writing responsibilities and efficiencies have been found to use materials across multi-media platforms. Because of the potential for a 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 January 5, 2015 and posted on the Port of Los Angeles website and Los Angeles Business Assistance Virtual Network (LABAVN). The Harbor Department received 13 proposals by the January 26, 2015 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 (40%)
- Portfolio Samples (40%)
- Fees (20%)

The three members of the selection committee reviewed and rated each proposal. Those ratings were combined and the selection committee concluded that the three top-ranked proposers - Natalie Shore Peterson, DDK Communications, and Robert Manciero/Full Vision Productions LLC - would provide a diverse range of professional writing and editing expertise on an as-needed basis (Transmittal 1). Natalie Shore Peterson has vast experience and expertise writing about the maritime industry; DDK Communications provides expertise with respect to speech writing marketing the LA Waterfront; and Robert Manciero/Full Vision Productions LLC offers the most experience and expertise in video script writing and editing.

After a complete review, it is recommended that the Board award agreements to the following three proposers:

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- DDK Communications – Financial and speech writing, LA Waterfront marketing materials and Editing (Transmittal 2)
- Natalie Shore Peterson – International maritime industry and Environmental writing and editing (Transmittal 3)
- Robert Manciero/Full Vision Productions LLC – Video scripting, video production and video editing (Transmittal 4)

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:**

The proposed action is approval of three agreements for as-needed writing professional services. As an administrative activity, the Director of Environmental Management has determined that the proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Article II Section 2 (f) of the Los Angeles City CEQA Guidelines.

**ECONOMIC BENEFITS:**

Approval of the proposed Agreements will support three one-year equivalent direct jobs for the five-county region.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The Harbor Department will enter into a one year agreement with two one-year renewal option agreements with DDK Communications, Natalie Shore Peterson and Robert Manciero/Full Vision Productions LLC for as-needed writing professionals. The aggregate amount of these agreements shall not exceed \$120,000 per year up to three years or \$360,000.

Total funding for FY 2015/16 is \$120,000. This amount is comprised of \$119,800 that has been budgeted in Account 54290 (Outside Professional Services), Cost Center 250 (Media Relations Division), Program 000 (Base Budget) and a transfer from Cost Center 220 (Community Relations Division) to the Media Relations Division in the amount of \$200. Funding for future fiscal years will be requested as part of the annual budget 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 agreement, the agreement 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 agreement.

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**CITY ATTORNEY:**


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

**TRANSMITTALS:**

1. **Summary of Respondents and Scores**
2. **Agreement with DDK Communications**
3. **Agreement with Natalie Shore Peterson**
4. **Agreement with Robert Manciero/Full Vision Productions LLC**


FIS Approval MB (initials)  
 CA Approval MB (initials)

  
 PHILLIP SANFIELD  
 Director of Media Relations

  
 ARLEY M. BAKER  
 Senior Director of Communications

  
 DOANE LIU  
 Deputy Executive Director  
 & Chief of Staff

**APPROVED:**

  
 FOR EUGENE D. SEROKA  
 Executive Director  
 PS/mh/jb  
 Author: PSanfield  
 Board Meeting: May 7, 2015