



Legislation Text

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Marketing and Communications Consultant (NB)

Staff recommends establishing a contract to perform marketing and communications consulting services. The Marketing Department has been without a manager since October 2005, when a staff member resigned to take a higher paying position with Progress Energy Florida. The manager position has been advertised for months and, despite offering this position to two very qualified candidates, a qualified manager has not yet been hired. With a much stronger emphasis on energy conservation and the need to attain immediate results, it is imperative that someone with expertise in product and service marketing be available to assist staff members with planning, implementation and measurement.

While the manager position was vacant, GRU used the services of a consultant to assist with meeting its operational needs. Between February and April 2006, Ms. Debbie Mason, President of Strategists, Inc., provided professional consulting services for the Marketing and Communications Department. Strategists, Inc. worked under direct supervision of the Marketing and Communications Director to improve the overall effectiveness of the Utility's marketing efforts. Strategists, Inc. evaluated GRU's existing contracts for efficiency and effectiveness and made recommendations for improvements to the Marketing and Communications Director. These recommendations are now being implemented. In addition, the consultant provided staff members with mentoring, coaching and advice on the development of marketing plans for energy conservation, natural gas and telecommunications and many other aspects of the day-to-day operation of the department.

Based on the position vacancy and needs of the department, staff believes that the use of a consultant is more cost effective and provides greater flexibility for the Utility. The results achieved from the use of this firm have been outstanding and staff recommends approval of this contract with Strategists, Inc. Strategists, Inc.'s price is competitive with other firms providing similar services based on staff's market analysis.

The City Commission: 1) authorize the General Manager, or her designee, to negotiate and execute a contract with Strategists, Inc., a specified source, to perform marketing and communications consulting and related services for a two year-term in amounts not to exceed \$96,000 each year, subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form and legality, and 2) approve the issuance of purchase orders to Strategists, Inc. in amounts not to exceeding \$96,000 per year, subject to the final appropriation of funds for these services for the FY 2007 and FY 2008 budgets.

Funds have been requested in the FY 2007 budget and will be requested in the FY 2008 budget.

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