



Legislation Text

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Contract for Marketing Services (B)

As an enterprise of the City, GRU promotes products and services in order to inform customers, improve services, and position the utility as an effective competitor. This in turn allows us to continue to provide a superior return to the City's General Fund.

In the past, we have managed our marketing and communication efforts on an issue by issue or event by event basis using a variety of companies to deliver information to customers. This has sometimes resulted in a duplication of effort and inconsistent messages. While we have performed some initial customer research, we need to know more about our customers' wants and needs and how we can differentiate ourselves from competitors. This in turn will allow us to make the best use of our marketing dollars.

Competition is here in telecommunications and natural gas and will continue to increase in the electric industry. We believe it is imperative that we continue to make an investment in a marketing strategy to position the utility for current and future competition. We want to better inform our customers and community about our new products and services, changes in our organization and the industry, and special programs. Some of these programs include safety issues and emergency response such as how to safely use a generator, water and energy conservation such as Energy Star, GRUCom and GRUNet, natural gas services, "green energy" programs and products-and others.

To accomplish this, we developed an RFP for a full-service marketing agency. This RFP was issued by Utilities Purchasing to 11 firms, and 9 firms responded with proposals. The proposals were evaluated in accordance with the criteria established by the RFP. As indicated on the attached tabulation of the evaluation, Cramer-Krasselt of Orlando was evaluated as the top firm. We are recommending that this agency serve as the lead in helping us strategically position the utility for a more competitive future and to market our products and services.

The agency has committed to using local vendors. We expect approximately 80 percent of budgeted resources to be spent locally.

The types of services required include research, media strategy and placement, copywriting, ad design, and evaluation. By hiring a full-service communications and marketing firm, we will be able to: 1)Develop a brand image-This will help us raise the bar of entry for competition. We may not be able to prevent competition, but by having a strong marketing identity, we can make it more difficult for competitors to come into our market; 2) Streamline the marketing process, which in turn will help us make more efficient use of our resources; 3) Communicate about important topics; and 4)Provide a consistent look and feel.

Given its familiarity with branding and marketing strategies as well as its experience working with other government agencies, utilities, and the private sector, we believe this agency will help us make the best use of our communication and marketing efforts.

The City Commission authorize the General Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute a one-year contract with Cramer-Krasselt for marketing services not to exceed budgeted amounts, subject to approval of the City Attorney as to form and legality.

Funds for these services are available in the Utilities FY 2000 O&M budget and will not exceed \$480,000. Funds for the balance of the contract will be requested in the Utilities FY 2001 budget.

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