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Council Finance Committee Zoom Meeting
May 4, 2023
Via Zoom

Council Attendees: Julie Pignataro, Emily Francis, Kelly Ohlson

Staff: Kelly DiMartino, Travis Storin, Rupa Venkatesh, John Duval, Ethan Doak, Meaghan Overton, Marcy Yoder, Brittany Depew, Chief Swoboda, Sgt. Annie Hill, Mike Calhoon, Victoria Shaw, Aaron Reed, Rebecca Pomeroy, Javier Echeverria Diaz, Terri Runyan, Gerry Paul, Blaine Dunn, Adam Halvorson, Jo Cech, Randy Bailey, Brian Hergott, Kerri Ishmael, Zack Mozer, Erik Martin, Carolyn Koontz

Others: Kevin Jones, Chamber
Sady Swanson, Coloradoan

Meeting called to order at 4:00 pm

Approval of minutes from the April 6, 2023, Council Finance Committee Meeting. Emily Francis moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Julie Pignataro seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously via roll call by; Julie Pignataro, Emily Francis.

Kelly Ohlson joined the meeting at 4:11 pm

A. Auditor RFP Process

Blaine Dunn, Accounting Director
Randy Bailey, Controller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to solicit consensus from the Committee regarding:

- The process for selecting an independent auditor for an up-to five-year period.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be issued this summer for audit services. The process is designed to ensure the selected firm meets the City's requirements and has the knowledge, experience, and reputation in auditing similar entities.

An annual external audit by an independent CPA firm is required by Statute, Charter, debt covenants, and virtually all grant agreements.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Staff seeks input on:

- Evaluation criteria for selection of the independent auditor
- Desired modification to historical processes for selection, if any
- Preference on number of firms to be interviewed by the committee.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Auditor Rotation

Multi-year contracts are limited to 5 years by City Code. The City does have a mandatory auditor rotation policy in City Code. The Code specifies no firm is eligible for more than two consecutive five-year terms. If the incumbent does respond to the RFP for a second five-year term, they must assign a new lead partner to conduct the audit. The City's current audit firm is in their first five-year term and will be allowed to respond should they meet the above requirements.

GFOA best practice guidance acknowledges that private sector and publicly traded SEC filing entities have rotation practices mandated by regulatory authorities or their own bylaws. In the public sector, GFOA cautions that sometimes it is difficult to get enough qualified responses if the incumbent is disallowed.

The below table shows a 30-year history of audit firms the City has engaged.

1993	Bondi	2005	Bondi	2017	RSM (McGladrey)
1994	Bondi	2006	Bondi	2018	BKD
1995	Bondi	2007	Bondi	2019	BKD
1996	Bondi	2008	McGladrey & Pullen	2020	BKD
1997	Bondi	2009	McGladrey & Pullen	2021	Forvis (BKD)
1998	Bondi	2010	McGladrey	2022	Forvis (BKD)
1999	Bondi	2011	McGladrey		
2000	Bondi	2012	McGladrey		
2001	Bondi	2013	McGladrey		
2002	Bondi	2014	McGladrey		
2003	Bondi	2015	McGladrey		
2004	Bondi	2016	RSM (McGladrey)		

Timeline and Process

Staff proposes to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) in July. The proposed evaluation criteria, all to be equally weighed at 25% and in no particular order, would be:

- Scope of proposal
- Assigned personnel qualifications.
- Cost and work hours
- Firm capability & reputation

A staff committee, including staff members from City, Library and PFA will evaluate written proposals and recommend the top firms for presentation to the Finance Committee.

Interviews would be conducted at a special Finance Committee meeting in August with the City Purchasing Director serving as Purchasing Agent and facilitator. The Committee's recommendation would be presented to

the full Council for adoption via Resolution, thereby authorizing the Purchasing Agent to enter into an agreement with the awarded firm for the 2023 fiscal year audit, renewable annually through the 2027 audit.

DISCUSSION / NEXT STEPS

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

Staff seeks input on:

- Evaluation criteria for selection of the independent auditor
- Desired modification to historical processes for selection, if any
- Preference on number of firms to be interviewed by the committee.

Julie Pignataro; have there been any issues with the current process?

Blaine Dunn; I don't think there have been any issues with the process that we have used in the past – I think it has worked well – After the last selection, we did get feedback from the committee that two finalists wasn't enough choice to bring so maybe we bring three if the committee wants to see a 3rd finalist in the pool. If the committee agrees, we recommend capping it at 3 finalists.

Travis Storin; we anticipate it to be a competitive process as the City is considered to be a prestigious client as these firms look to build out their portfolio in their government practice., The feedback we got the last time was that 2 options really didn't feel like a choice.

Julie Pignataro; how long are the interviews?

Blaine Dunn; the interviews are typically 45-50 minutes with a 5–10-minute buffer between interviews to allow time for the firms to swap places at the table. We also allow for a debrief at the end for the committee to make a decision.

Julie Pignataro; how many applicants do we traditionally receive?

Gerry Paul; the last cycle, we received seven proposals and interviewed two applicants. Our standard practice is to interview three. We don't typically interview more than three unless there is a compelling reason.

Julie Pignataro; I would be ok with three. I can understand not feeling like you really have a choice with two.

Blaine Dunn; our intention is to do the interviews back-to-back in one session and make the selection decision following the interviews in the same meeting.

Emily Francis; I agree with what has been said it sounds like a good plan.

B. Encampment Cleanup Pilot Program

Rupa Venkatesh, Assistant City Manager

Rebecca Pomeroy, Natural Areas Technician I

Sgt. Annie Hill, Police Services

Mike Calhoon, Parks Director

Mary Yoder, Neighborhood Services Manager

Brittany Depew, Homelessness Response & Solutions Lead Specialist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Fall 2022, staff identified a backlog of identified encampments throughout the City and determined that cleanups need to shift from twice a month to once per week. This was implemented towards the end of January 2023 with the realization that the 2023 funded offer would not be sustainable for the entire year. A pilot program was implemented to assess the effectiveness and need to continue after three months with an opportunity to share findings with the Council Finance Committee to request an appropriation if the program was achieving desired results.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What questions does the Committee have regarding the pilot program?
2. Does the Committee support additional funds in 2023 to continue with the weekly camp cleanup pilot program?
3. Does the Committee support staff bringing forward a request for additional funds for 2024 during the mid-cycle revision process in fall 2023?

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION (details of item – History, current policy, previous Council actions, alternatives or options, costs or benefits, considerations leading to staff conclusions, data and statistics, next steps, etc.)

Prior to 2019, the City did not have a separate encampment fund. In 2017 and 2018, cleanups were coming from regular operating budgets for Natural Areas, Parks, Neighborhood Services, and other departments where cleanups were occurring. In Fall 2018, a mid-cycle adjustment was requested for a dedicated fund to utilize in 2019. The joint offer was submitted by Neighborhood Services, Parks, Stormwater, and Natural Areas who provide staffing. Since 2019, a dedicated encampment fund has been utilized though funds expended have varied over the years likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since Fall 2022, a weekly tactical team of staff from Social Sustainability, Natural Areas, Police Services, Neighborhood Services, Parks Rangers, Transport, City Attorney's Office and partners such as Poudre Fire Authority and Outreach Fort Collins meet to coordinate encampment cleanup prioritization and identify hot spots.

The growing number of encampments became an emergent issue with the turnaround time of when a camp is identified to cleanup of up to 3 months. A pilot program was implemented to move towards weekly cleanups with a goal to reduce turnaround time to 30 days.

As of April 6, 2023, the turnaround time for cleanups is an average of 12 days. 257 camps have been cleaned with 169 cubic yards of waste, 363 Sharps, 77 shopping carts and 15 cubic yards of metal collected and diverted from Natural Areas, Parks, and other locations in the City. If the current pilot program continues, it is on track to divert 19% more trash, 41% more shopping carts and 24% more metal than 2022.

In order to continue the current pilot program of weekly cleanups, an additional \$175,000 is requested for 2023. Additional funds will also be utilized for a debris boom pilot project to help mitigate issues occurring at Warren Lake/Larimer Ditch #2 as well as provide assistance to the Conifer Street area as it relates to inoperable RVs.

During the mid-cycle revision process in Fall 2023, staff will bring forward a request for additional funds for 2024.

DISCUSSION / NEXT STEPS

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

- 1) What questions does the Committee have regarding the pilot program?
- 2) Does the Committee support additional funds in 2023 to continue with the weekly camp cleanup pilot program?
- 3) Does the Committee support staff bringing forward a request for additional funds for 2024 during the mid-cycle revision process in fall 2023?



SAFE 66.2 -- Encampment Cleaning and Prevention - \$110,610 budgeted for 2023

Through April 6, expended funds estimated at \$50,000

Averaging \$5,500 per weekly cleanup

The annual cost to do cleanups on a weekly basis is **\$286,000** - \$110,610 (current budgeted offer) = \$175,390 additional funding request from CFC

Request for additional funds is \$175k in order to:

- Continue to do weekly cleanups
- RV towing (approximately \$2-3k each)
- Debris boom pilot project at Warren Lake/Larimer Ditch #2 (\$10,000)

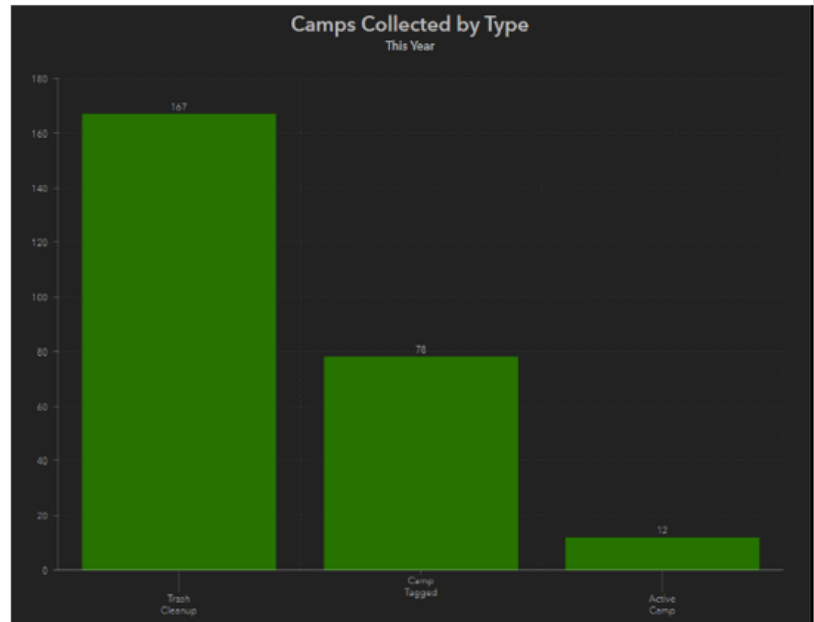
\$50k-70k for abandoned construction site in Old Town North – could be recouped so not included in the additional funds needed

Julie Pignataro; how is the city defining 'camp'?
See slide #8 below.

Each "Camp" can be one of three types:

- Trash Cleanup (167)
 - Site with no valuable items or occupants
- Camp Tagged (78)
 - Site with personal items present - receives a 24hr tag or risk disposal
- Active Camp (12)
 - Not yet ready for cleanup, usually updated to trash cleanup or camp tagged

Each "camp" can vary tremendously in how much debris needs to be cleaned up



Rebecca Pomeroy; a site that needs to be cleaned up is referred to as a camp –can be a variety of designations - camps tagged / trash clean up – no valuables present – folks have left.

Thank you for the Warren Lake boom – thank you for making that happen.

Julie Pignataro; are our shelters full in the summer?

Rupa Venkatesh; yes, we do not do overflow in the summer, but we have talked about extreme heat situations – I will refer to Meaghan for more context.

Meaghan Overton; traditionally the city's overflow response has been limited to cold weather months only. Recently we have been working on an emergency heat response – during the summer months, the concern is mostly for daytime hours when the temperature is highest. Places like the Murphy Center will open as a cooling center but no overnight shelter option in the summer – work is going on now to pilot what a coordinated and slightly more robust and data informed heat response might look like (more extreme temps due to climate change)


Julie Pignataro; are people camping because they don't want to be in a shelter or because they can't?

Sgt. Annie Hill; we ask that question every time we come in contact with someone – why they are not utilizing a shelter – 99% of the time, folks say they do not want to be in a shelter - due to theft. I get an email with how many beds available - there were 3 beds open last night.

Julie Pignataro; when we have overflow shelters – do they offer choice of where folks can sleep?

Meaghan Overton; I don't know if there is a direct yes or no answer to that question— because people's needs vary so much – when we talk about traditional overnight, we are talking about The Fort Collins Rescue Mission which serves single men. This can get complicated rather quickly with couples, families, etc. Additional shelter capacity creates options for some folks but not across the board – a complicated answer.

Julie Pignataro; on the Successes slide (see slide #11 below) The sub-bullet that says 'a person experiencing homelessness (PEH) was able to get housed in just 20 days. How do they get housed?

City of Fort Collins

Successes | 11

- Weekly tactical team for coordination across departments to quickly identify & resolve issues
- Able to prioritize work and be strategic
- Because of the collaboration, we can provide a streamlined and people-centered approach
 - A person experiencing homelessness (PEH) was able to get housed in just 20 days!
- Homelessness Outreach and Proactive Engagement (HOPE) Team
- Safety issues are now being addressed more quickly
- Employees feel more supported, part of a team, safer
- Better stewardship of our environment – trash, SHARPS, etc. removed from Natural Areas and Parks
- Mitigation efforts in hot spots via vegetation management
 - Soft Gold Park and Lee Martinez Park
- Improved environmental impacts and coordination as it relates to the ability to clean ditches right before flush
 - Debris boom pilot at Warren Lake/Larimer Ditch #2

Sgt. Annie Hill; this was an individual who had been frequently staying in the Troutman tunnel and had been contacted by Police, Transfort among others. We were able to get Outreach Fort Collins on site and they were able to initiate the housing questionnaire, and because of his level of vulnerability he was housed very quickly which is not typical. He got permanent supportive housing.

We need to at least get people in a place where they can complete the housing questionnaire if they do want long term housing. Then they at least have some type of goal they are working towards. If they are not on any housing list, how do we make homelessness brief?

The goal is to get outreach on site as often as we can to at least figure out how to get them on track. This individual is a really great success story – he sings our praises.

Meaghan Overton; if I could add a bit of context, one of the pieces of the weekly meeting that has been mentioned a few times, is the inclusion of the regional continuum of care and the coordinated entry system.

A group of city staff and partners meeting to talk through hot spots and folks that we are interacting with regularly, so the continuum of care does a lot of work in the background to connect people with housing resources in particular and case management— so connecting police / code enforcement with the continuum of care is part of what is really helping everyone have the same information.

If they are on a housing list, the continuum of care might be aware but maybe Police is not aware that they are on a list at all. Communication has been a big benefit of the weekly coordination meetings.

Rupa Venkatesh; with Police being on those calls, they hear the continuum of care and who is on these housing lists – when they are out in the community, they can connect those pieces. The continuum of care is not necessarily out in the field, but Police Services is – so it is really connecting the dots.

Julie Pignataro; I am a yes to your questions – I am also a further yes – if you could find a need for another \$25 - 50K to help get these people housed or find some other options. That would be amazing, and this would be the time to do it. We know we are working on these long-term solutions. We know that camp clean ups are a short-term solution. Will this presentation be given to the full Council or if it will be part of a larger package, but we need to rehumanize this data. As impressive as the data is about the clean ups, it is actually very depressing. Talk more about what is happening on the other end like what we are trying to do for people.

Emily Francis; if we tag an active camp, do we clean up after they leave?

Sgt. Annie Hille; the tag is giving them a warning that they can't be camping there as there is usually a good amount of rubbish. We don't enforce this at night – We don't start clean-up until at least 24 hours after the camp has been tagged. We at least do two tags prior to clean up.

Rupa Venkatesh; so the \$5,500 average weekly clean up cost is the cost of the contractor.

Emily Francis; I understand the budget is going to trash cleanup, but I struggle with tagging active camps and asking people to move when we don't have shelter space for folks to utilize or other housing options to offer. They move to another camp, and we have to do it all over again.

Rebecca Pomeroy; one thing we have noticed is that if we don't take immediate action on these clean ups, they will build upon each other we don't want people in the tunnel of a ditch system for a variety of reasons including safety (if the water would turn on) and people aren't able to move out of the way or the physical debris that is in the canal which is intensified with the number of people. Som the sooner we can identify a problem and get them resources whether that is through outreach or Police.

Emily Francis; so, is it every active camp?

Sgt. Annie Hill; we offer resources to every single camp we go to – we want to help get people connected to resources. We identify areas where if we don't address them, they get larger and there can be more crime in the camps. It becomes an unsafe environment if we don't address them early on as Rebecca mentioned. The area they cover is usually Old Town and North Fort Collins and the transit lines. They have been really accommodating in coming on site.

Emily Francis; I understand that there are big safety concerns and concerns around natural areas where we see a lot of folks camping. The reality is that these are sweeps as we are continually asking people who are experiencing homelessness to move. I struggle with, we don't have enough space in our community to house people or enough overflow shelter space. Asking them to move is another disruptor for their lives. How much does it cost to run our overflow shelter?

Meaghan Overton; let me see if we can get that number.

Emily Francis; we do need to make progress with the options that we can offer people.

Kelly Ohlson; on slide #12 (see below) the \$50-70K for an abandoned construction site. That seems like a high number. Why did we let it get that bad before cleaning it up?



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Rupa Venkatesh; first, we could not contact the property owner over several months. When we didn't have any luck, essentially the options were – Do we keep trying to contact the owner OR do we do something to help mitigate the problem?

Marcy Yoder; it was also to secure the site, it is not that expensive to just do clean up. It needed to be fenced and boarded so that folks can't continue to get into those partially constructed buildings. It ranges from they dug the hole for the basement and stopped to the house is partially up but doesn't have windows or doors to close and secure it.

Rupa Venkatesh; the framing had actually deteriorated so it had become this open space.

Kelly Ohlson; I am yes on the questions. I really like the team effort. It was a long time coming, but I like where you are at. I have little to no empathy for folks creating messes in natural and sensitive areas. When you don't act, it is only getting worse over time -I know we need to work on systemic solutions for the problem. We are cleaning the camps, but the number of camps continues to increase year over year. Nothing is actually being done to mitigate the problem, but I appreciate what is being done.

Sgt. Annie Hill; we have more users on the field map app and more people out working together to address this. –The numbers look big right now as since January we have a coordinated team and effort. The goal is to have a significant decrease.

Kelly Ohlson; I also have empathy for residents who don't want to go there anymore. The perception is that we are not doing enough. I have talked with residents who will not go to parts of the Poudre River Trail. Is the funding coming from the General Fund?

Rupa Venkatesh; yes, the funding is coming from the General Fund.

Meaghan Overton; I was able to get an estimate for seasonal overflow 2020 – 2021 which would include November through April - \$280K for that season.

Emily Francis; the longer we push it down the road – we continue to see increased numbers spent on clean ups but what are we doing to actually address the problem?

Rupa Venkatesh; we are looking at what are the other innovative programs that are already out there that can help PEH and we are also collaborating with our regional partners to help house individuals. You hit the two pieces of puzzle – we aren't just doing clean ups but also working on what we can do to help people so they don't have to camp.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm