



## Legislation Text

File #: 20-503, Version: 1

Approve a 3 year contract with Paragon Government Relations for federal advocacy services from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2023 in an amount not to exceed \$522,947; and Delegate authority to the County Administrator to sign the contract

Published Notice Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing Required? Yes ☐ No ☒

### **DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Approve a contract with Paragon Government Relations for federal advocacy services from October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2023 in an amount not to exceed \$522,947 which includes reasonable travel and incidental expenses in an amount not to exceed \$6,000 per year; and
2. Delegate authority to the County Administrator to sign the contract.

### **SUMMARY:**

The County retained the services of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer and Field, LLP (AGSHF) until the contract expired on October 1, 2009. AGSHF was succeeded by Waterman & Associates through a Request for Qualifications process and has served commendably as the County's federal advocacy team since October 7, 2009. The current contract with Paragon Government Relations (formerly Waterman & Associates name changed on January 1, 2018) is set to expire on September 30, 2020. Staff recommends maintaining continuity with Paragon Government Relations as the federal advocacy team based on their exemplary performance, high level of expertise, and their proven access to congressional staffers and elected officials.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The County has retained the services of a federal advocate since 2003. The initial contract with AGSHF was for \$13,125 per month or \$157,500 annually. Waterman and Associates (now Paragon Government Relations) assumed the contract in October 2009 at a rate of \$120,000 annually. Currently their contract is approximately \$159,613 annually. In addition, their contract includes reasonable travel and incidental expenses reimbursable per the current I.R.S. rates in an amount not to exceed \$6,000 annually for a total of \$18,000 for the three years.

The proposed contract is for a three-year term from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023. The proposed cost starts at \$164,401 for the first year and increases by three percent per year to \$169,333 for year two, and \$174,413 for year three. In addition, the proposed contract includes reasonable travel and incidental expenses reimbursable per the current I.R.S. rates in an amount not to exceed \$6,000 annually for a total of \$18,000 for the three years. The total of the three-year contract shall not exceed \$522,947.

The contract with Paragon Government Relations for \$522,947 covers the period from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023 with funding for the contract reflected in the FY2020/21 preliminary recommended budget. The costs associated with preparing the agenda item are nominal and are absorbed in the County

Administrator's FY2019/20 Adopted Budget.

**DISCUSSION:**

If approved, under the proposed contract, Paragon Government Relations will continue to serve as the Washington D.C. advocacy team for the County, and maintain liaison between the County and Congress, Executive Branch, and other officials in the federal government. They will represent and promote the County's interests and federal priorities with members of the Solano County Congressional Delegation, other pertinent Members of Congress, appropriate congressional committees, staff, federal agencies, and other bodies as appropriate. They will prepare briefing materials in advance of meetings and will conduct briefings on County's Legislative Priorities and issues to Congress. Paragon Government Relations will continue to work with the County on bill language and amendments for County sponsored legislation approved by the Board.

Paragon Government Relations will maintain regular communication with the County's Legislative, Intergovernmental, and Public Affairs Officer, the Assistant County Administrator and the Senior Management Analyst / Public Communications Officer and provide the County with a quarterly report of activities undertaken on behalf of the County and provide reports of specific legislation and programs as requested.

In addition, Paragon Government Relations, as part of the scope of work, will report to the County's Legislative Coordinator on legislative and regulatory items of interest and relevance to the Solano County Water Agency (SCWA). Paragon Government Relations staff will be available to respond to inquiries from representatives of SCWA - provided all such inquiries and subsequent communications are done in coordination with the County's Legislative Coordinator - and participate in appropriate coalitions and working groups as directed by County, or on behalf of the County, and coordinate lobbying efforts with other entities as requested.

For a comprehensive list of Paragon Government Relations significant legislative support and accomplishments on behalf of Solano County and the Solano County Board of Supervisors, please see Attachment B.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The Board could choose not to approve the contract with Paragon Government Relations and have the County Administrator's Office and departmental staff work directly with the County's Legislative Delegation on issues of federal interest. This is not recommended as the County desires to have representation in Washington D.C. and advocacy services have been shown to be impactful for Solano County.

The Board may choose to direct staff to conduct a Request for Proposal to solicit a different or larger firm for a lower cost. This is not recommended because Paragon Government Relations have a proven track record with Solano County and as a smaller firm, have provided superb service with the required expertise on topics of importance to Solano County. Furthermore, larger firms tend to overshadow small contracts like one being proposed and Solano County's priorities may get overlooked.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

County Counsel and Risk Management have reviewed and approved the contract as to form.

**CAO RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION**