

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
June 22nd, 2010
Chairman Steve Lee
Vice-Chairman Charles Julien

Members: Haston Lewis, Danny Millet, Charles Julien, Jaclyn Hotard, Darnel Usry, Ronnie Smith, Cheryl Millet, Dale Wolfe, Steve Lee

PRESENT: Haston Lewis, Darnel C. Usry, Cheryl Millet, Charles Julien, Steve Lee, Jaclyn Hotard, Ronnie Smith

ABSENT: Dale Wolfe and Danny Millet

BID OPENING REPORT/AWARDS:

Pat McTopy/Award – Water Storage Tank Repair & Rehab – Ruddock Station #3

Pat McTopy, Chief Financial Officer, stated, *"This water tank was pulled because we had received funding from a grant. We opened bids recently. The low bid came in considerably below the construction estimate. It is on page two of your agenda book. There is a letter from the engineer recommending that we award the contract to the low bidder in the amount of \$112,545.00. The low bidder is Professional Application Services Inc."*

MOTION: Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to award the bid for water storage tank repair & rehab – Ruddock Station #3 to Professional Application Services in the amount of \$112,545.00. The motion passed with Councilmen Wolfe and Danny Millet absent.

Pat McTopy – Authorization to go out for bids for the Airnasium on the West Bank

Pat McTopy stated, *"This project is a long time coming. Plans and specifications are complete at this time and we are ready to get authorization to bid."*

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to go out for bids for the Airnasium on the West Bank. The motion passed with Councilmen Wolfe and Danny Millet absent.

Pat McTopy – Authorization to go out for bids for the Balsam Street drainage project

Pat McTopy stated, *"This item is the same as the prior one. The plans and specifications are complete. The funds are budgeted in the drainage portion of the capital bond issue. We would like to begin advertising that work."*

MOTION: Councilwoman Hotard moved and Councilman Smith seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to go out for bids for the Balsam Street drainage project. The motion passed with Councilmen Wolfe and Danny Millet absent.

Pat McTopy – Authorization to renew workman’s compensation insurance policy with LWCC from 2010-2011

Pat McTopy stated, *“This workman’s compensation insurance has been carried by the LWCC since 1996. We receive dividend checks each and every year from the company. The company provides an adequate and good risk management program to help our employees and train our employees and we are asking that we renew it again this year.”*

Councilwoman Millet asked, *“Do we get a nice check this year too Mr. McTopy?”*

Pat McTopy stated, *“Well let’s see \$26,778.00 for 2009.”*

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilwoman Usry seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to renew workman’s compensation insurance policy with LWCC from 2010-2011. The motion passed with 6 yeas, 2 absent (Wolfe & Danny Millet) and 1 abstaining (Lee).

Marie Brown-Mercadel – Authorization to execute a contract with SSA Consultants for the facilitation of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) and strategic planning

Marie Brown-Mercadel, CAO, stated, *“This contract is to help facilitate the efforts of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) that has been developed by administration. This committee is going to help with the transition. As you know we did not have a transition period due to the nature of the election. We also recognize the fact that we need a long term process for strategic planning development for the parish. The work of the PAC will aid in this design. We are going to be using this information to prepare our strategic plan. So we are requesting approval of this short term contract of \$30,000.00 over a twelve month period to facilitate this work.”*

Councilman Smith stated, *“Just for the record, I want to go on record saying that I am going to abstain from voting for this item. I have gone through the contract and looked at it and I think it is something that is going to be beneficial to Mrs. Robottom. The problem I have with the situation is on the regular agenda tonight we have a veto of grass cutting and janitorial contracts. A procedure and process that the council moved forward with and that Mrs. Robottom and her staff are not in favor of. They said that they are not in favor of it because of the procedure. Well that same procedure I feel should have come in here. This contract should have went out to the public and should have been put out for bid to the public where anyone could have gotten this contract. Again, I want to reiterate that I do understand that this contract is needed. I don’t have a problem with the contract. It is not the \$30,000.00 cost. I have a problem with the procedure that it didn’t go out and someone in possibly our parish could have gotten this contract or had an opportunity to bid on this contract. So at this time I am going to have to abstain from voting for it. Thank you.”*

Councilman Lewis stated, *“I wanted to let you all know I had a talk with Dale this morning. I don’t know if you all know but Dale is sick in the hospital. I spoke with him concerning this contract and all and he said that he is willing to work with Mrs. Robottom to try and see if*

we can work things out."

Councilwoman Usry asked, "Mrs. Mercadel, would you give a little bit more of an explanation about the contract and it may not be the full \$30,000.00."

Mrs. Mercadel stated, "SSA Consultants is a strategic planning company that has done work across the United States and in Canada. This contract is for up to \$30,000.00. It does not mean that we will utilize the entire \$30,000.00. I think on June 8th, we gave the council a full packet of information containing their statement of work. We coasted out the deliverables and was very specific in terms of their tasks and their responsibilities were. So this is a not to exceed amount. We thought it was very important to have a not to exceed amount in the contract so that it would not be open ended. It does not mean that we will use it but as we are a new administration what we have to do is analyze what our issues are. I think as we do our work everyday we find out that there are more areas that we need to address. Unfortunately we don't have the capacity on staff to do this work unless it was done by a select few people and then primarily that would be the majority of the work that we are performing. So because the contract is \$30,000.00 does not mean that we will use the entire amount. It is an up to and not to exceed amount. I felt like we needed that so that we could assess the parish operations, do staff training, look at our strategic plan, design our deliverables and be very clear that we wanted to try to encompass all of the work of the parish operations."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just have a couple of comments and I don't feel well so just bare with me. Like what Ronnie said and I want to give administration all of the tools that they need to function properly. It just sends a message that we are saying that with some of the contracts we want public input and we want to try and get the best price and we want to have transparency and this openness but in other contracts we don't. So I just want to make sure that we are sending the same message to the public that if we feel like with a grass cutting contract we want to see what other locals want to participate and we want to open it up to the public and we want to have this transparency and get the best price that we are doing that across the board and not really being selective as to what contracts we are saying that we want to have this transparency and this public input from. I do want to give the administration the tools that they need. I just think that we need to make sure that we are sending the same message about all of our contracts. What do we really want?"

Mrs. Mercadel stated, "Thank you. I do appreciate your comments and I want to assure you that we are working to look at our contracting processing to make sure that what we do is transparent. That is one of the reasons that we provided up front information and education as to what we wanted to do. Had we had more time to transition, as an administration, if we had that customary sixty day period, we would have had that opportunity to take a look at the parish operations but because we did not do that we essentially had an election on May 1st and Natalie took office on May 11th we did not have the time to do that. I can assure you we are looking at all the contracting processes. We are in the process right now of getting a comprehensive look at every contract that we have in the parish and we will look to refine our processes. We will be looking to work with the council to make sure

that we do have a transparent process that is fair for our citizens."

Councilwoman Hotard asked, *"Can you tell me, have we paid this company any money already?"*

Mrs. Mercadel stated, *"As we discussed when we gave the information to the council on June 8th, in advance of this contract being considered for approval tonight we executed a \$5,000.00 purchase order so that we could get started with the initial work. That was the initial meeting that we had with all the advisory councils and the meeting that we had with the chairs and to date I want to say that we have probably used approximately \$1,000.00 of that purchase order."*

Councilman Julien stated, *"I understand what Councilman Smith and Councilwoman Hotard are saying about the contract. I was provided with information in June and I think we have so many projects going on in St. John Parish that it is hard for administration to micro-manage everything. So if we say we want to give them all the tools then we have to say it in more than just words. We have to use actions. So I will be supporting and I am hoping that other council members will consider supporting as well."*

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilwoman Millet seconded the motion to grant administration authorization to execute a contract with SSA Consultants for the facilitation of the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) and strategic planning. The motion passed with 6 yeas, 2 absent (Wolfe & Danny Millet) and 1 abstaining (Smith).

Marie Brown-Mercadel – Authorization to release solicitation for RFP's for the grass cutting and janitorial contracts

Mrs. Mercadel stated, *"Administration request to have this item removed from the agenda."*

Councilman Lee stated, *"So be it."*

Marie Brown-Mercadel – Recommendation for Code Enforcement

Marie Brown-Mercadel stated, *"We are recommending that Mr. Carl Hilt be recommended by the Director of Public Works for the position of Code Enforcement Officer. We have been informed by the Sheriff's Office that they are going to provide a vehicle for us to use. We understand that the council members have some priority areas that they would like for us to address. We will be taking those issues under advisement and working with the code enforcement department to implement a schedule to address those issues."*

MOTION: Councilman Julien moved and Councilwoman Millet seconded the motion for discussion.

Councilman Smith stated, *"I have some concerns with, this was prior to your administration Mrs. Robottom, the way the process went of selecting this person. This is nothing against Mr. Hilt. I don't know Mr. Hilt from any of the other applicants. I just have some reservations about how it was done. I think we need to look into possibly revising the way it was done. So at this time what I would like to do if possible if I could get a second. I would like to table*

this item until I can get with administration about possibly revisiting this."

MOTION: Councilman Smith moved and Councilwoman Hotard seconded the motion to table the recommendation for Code Enforcement Officer. The motion passed with 5 yeas, 2 neas (Usry & Cheryl Millet) and 2 absent (Wolfe & Danny Millet).

Any and all other financial concerns

There were no other financial concerns at this time.

Adjournment

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Lewis seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with Councilmen Wolfe and Danny Millet absent.