

MEMORANDUM

TO: MCHCD Board of Directors
FROM: Hiring and Office Committee, Susan Savage and Paul Garza
RE: Regional Government Services Authority Proposal
DATE: November 9, 20203

Background

The Board of Directors has strongly expressed the need to acquire administrative staff to support the policy decisions and provide basic operations for MCHDC. Most recently, the Board approved a description of duties for an Executive Director and an announcement of the position to the general public to recruit and select that position has been circulated and has appeared on the District website. The Hiring and Office Committee (hereafter HOC) was assigned the task of reviewing current options and recommending the most appropriate way forward to acquire the administrative services needed to successfully operate the District.

Analysis

The Hiring and Office Committee has met several times to consider both prospective candidates and to further review the options that MCHCD possesses to acquire needed administrative services. After several discussions, it is the considered view of the HOC that the recruitment of an Executive Director will not fully satisfy the current needs of the District.

Additionally, the District does not have in place the required systems to make a direct hire of an individual. This includes legally mandated Worker's Compensation Insurance and, both established fringe benefits programs and Employment and Personnel Policies. Without these in place, making a hire would likely expose the District to potential liability aside from being an extremely questionable practice for a government agency. The option of hiring an independent contractor was also considered but set aside because recent changes in California law stipulate that independent contractors cannot be scheduled or have their work directed. Clearly, the District needs to direct the activities of its staff.

Given the above, HOC contacted Regional Government Services Authority who were specifically established to provide services to municipal government and special districts and, are both highly regarded and used by local government entities throughout the State. In our region, they are currently providing services to the County of Mendocino, the City of Fort Bragg, the City of Ukiah, the Sonoma-Mendocino Economic Development District and West Business Development Center.

About Regional Government Services Authority

Regional Government Services Authority (hereafter RGS) was formed in 2001, by a city and a regional planning and services agency to help local governments meet three challenges: decreasing revenues, increasing demands (and costs) for services, and loss of experienced staff. Local government leaders knew that these challenges were likely to continue, so agencies would have to work together – uniting not only their voices but their resources to advocate and

become more efficient. The idea behind the creation of RGS was to form an agency which would help local governments share expertise and improve efficiencies. A need was emerging for some way to help agencies get the expertise and experience needed, without each agency having to hire full-time staff when the need might be less than full-time. Agencies could, in effect, share expertise through a third-party.

Today, RGS is governed by several member agencies, all with the common goal expressed in the JPA's mission statement: To provide quality, innovative, cost-effective services exclusively to public agencies.

RGS developed a highly flexible platform of administrative support, benefit plans and programs that could serve the diverse needs of cities, special districts, counties and other joint powers authorities. Flexibility was vital because the needs of partner agencies varied and because RGS services were 100 percent fee-based. Thus, RGS costs needed to be able to ramp up or down quickly, as demand changed.

For purposes of better understanding the capacity of RGS, the list of services (many of which MCHCD does not currently require) it provides are:

- Classification and Compensation
- Communications and Engagement
- Disability and Leave Management
- Economic Development Projects and Programs
- Emergency Management Planning and Cost Recovery
- Finance, Accounting and Payroll Consultation and Services
- Comprehensive Agency Staff Support
- Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
- Human Resource Management Consultation and Services
- Implementation and Workflow Integration of Information Technology
- Land Use Planning Projects and Programs
- NEOGOV Support Services
- Risk Pools and Other Shared Resource Programs
- Project Management Consultation and Services
- Recruitment and Selection Services – All Agency Staff Levels
- Training and Development Courses and Consultation
- Transition Management Consultation and Services

Proposal from RGS

The proposal received will enable the District to quickly possess the administrative capacity to begin fulfilling its mission and assure that the District functions transparently and, in accordance with California Government Code and the Brown Act. Additionally, RGS will provide a start-up team that will assess our current needs to provide recommendations. This assessment will enable the District to identify and move toward quickly acquiring the infrastructure both in personnel, policy development and record-keeping that is essential for government agency.

RGS will provide the District with the following services:

- Through assigned RGS staff, serve as the Agency Administrator, supporting effective governance policy and priority setting by scheduling, developing and posting agendas for Board and committee meetings, arranging relevant presentations at meetings; coordination of committee and Board activity; creation of meeting minutes; coordinating all staff activities related to facilitating the policy decisions and priorities of the District's Board of Directors.
- Coordinate District administrative and outreach activities with other contracted service providers, District member agencies, and contractor/partnering organizations including Adventist Health, California Special District's Association, and others.
- Ensure timely, responsive, and compliant meeting notices and production of Board actions and minutes.
- Ensure District records are maintained and comply with Public Records Act requests.
- Assist the preparation and implementation District budgets including short- and long-term financial strategies.
- Coordinate and facilitate annual audit of the District's financials.
- Identify and pursue grant funding opportunities, providing comprehensive administrative services from grant application through management, reimbursement funding protocols and required grant reporting.
- Prepare a Capital Improvement Program and funding strategies for project.
- Pursue funding opportunities as appropriate.
- Develop, negotiate, and monitor District contracts for technical and other services as needed.
- In coordination with District technical consultants and partners, implement and manage projects to further District's core functions.
- Serve as a key spokesperson for the District and represent the District at public and professional functions.
- Ensure effective implementation of District's Communication and Engagement Plan, including coordination of public information, workshops, and education programs, providing appropriate website and social media messaging, and coordinating media relations.
- Provide legislative analysis to the Board; conduct legislative advocacy activities as needed; and represent the District in industry forums, policy development workshops, etc.
- Ensure compliance with all state, local, and federal laws.

The RGS proposal provides the District with the 'executive director' and/or general manager function the Board has indicated is needed. Beyond, it also provides the District with staffing for a communications function that does not currently exist but is a critical need, and support to assure full compliance with California Government Code and the Brown Act.

Identified in the proposal are Glenn Lazof, Services Consultant and Project Manager, Kathy Wylie, Senior Adviser and Primary Agency Administrator (day-to-day administration and management) and MJ Brown, Strategic Services Consultant for Transparent Government.

It is important to note that “Advisers’ provided by RGS are all highly experienced in local government with working knowledge of federal, state and local law. These ‘Advisers’ have all served significant time in executive staff positions in government entities such as counties, cities and special districts.

Lastly, RGS will not only provide individuals with the needed expertise to successfully operate the District, but will provide them at rates typically well below other consulting options because they are a Joint Powers Authority, not a corporation. RGS further provides services on a highly flexible basis enabling their clients to scale up or scale down, depending on needs. RGS, as well, offer services in a ‘wrap around’ mode either providing administrative services directly or supporting existing staff.

By approving this proposal, the District retains the option to hire individuals directly or to continue with the services provided by RGS, or any combination thereof that the District Board of Directors determines appropriate. A specific example in MCHCD’s current context, the District would retain the services of the California Special District Association as the District’s Chief Financial Officer. RGS works in a flexible and collaborative manner with many other government agencies and professional/non-profit associations.

Recommendation

1. Approve the RGS proposal for administrative services for 12 months at a cost of \$13,200 per month or \$158,400 and \$10,000 for a one-time needs assessment. Total services agreement is \$168, 400.
2. Retain the current agreement with California Special District Association for the services of Rick Wood as the MCHCD Chief Financial Officer.