

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: GRANT WRITING CONSULTANT FEES FOR HISTORIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT (CHAPTER 31 UPDATE)

BACKGROUND:

In April of this year, the City Council approved a scope of work for a consultant to update Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code*, which contains regulations pertaining to historic district standards. It was estimated that the total project cost of \$60,000 would be covered by a City appropriation, by in-kind services, and through funding from an Iowa Historic Resource Development Program (HRDP) grant. The Council allocated \$20,000 for the project (assuming an additional \$10,000 of in-kind services as local match) with the expectation that the City would apply for an HRDP Grant of \$30,000.

The deadline for submitting the HRDP grant application is May 16, 2011. It was expected when we last discussed this issue with the Council that staff would write and submit the grant. However, due to an unexpected illness, the assigned staff member has not been available. Therefore, it is necessary to seek outside help to write and prepare the grant in order to meet the submittal deadline.

Gloria Betcher (former Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission) has helped write grants in the past while acting in the capacity of HPC chair, and also teaches grant writing skills. Moreover, much of the information that would be included in the grant application is information she has readily available. She is well qualified to write the grant and have it prepared in time to meet our deadline. She estimates that it would take her not more than 14 hours to write the grant. The cost of her service would be \$147.00 per hour, up to an amount not to exceed \$2,058. Staff is therefore requesting Council's approval of that amount, which would be paid from the City Council's Contingency Account.

This amount would pay for Ms. Betcher to write the grant. The only task that staff would then be responsible for is to provide Ms. Betcher with the budgetary figures pertaining to hourly rates of staff that might be involved in the project. Such staff time can count toward the City's match, both as cash and in-kind.

Without the grant, the project would have to be significantly scaled back, and would not meet many of the objectives set forth in the approved scope of work. In that situation, staff would need to revise the scope of work and bring it back to Council for reconsideration and approval.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can authorize funding for preparation of the HRDP grant, at a cost not to exceed \$2058, being paid out of the 2010-11 City Council's Contingency Account.
2. The City Council can deny funding for preparation of the HRDP grant and direct staff to prepare for Council's review and approval a revised scope of work for the update of Chapter 31 that stays within the budgeted \$20,000.
3. The City Council can choose not to proceed with the project to revise Chapter 31 of the *Municipal Code* at this time.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

To see this project through in a manner that achieves the objectives of the Council as determined in the approved scope of work, full funding for this project will be necessary. Receiving this grant will ensure adequate funding for this purpose, and the cost to prepare the grant will be leveraged several times over. The only risk is that there is no guarantee that the grant, once prepared and submitted, will be approved. However, the City's track record of grant approval for these types of projects has been excellent, especially with Ms. Betcher's expertise in evaluating the fit of the grants to the projects, and in writing the grants.

Therefore, it is the City Manager's recommendation that the Council act in accordance with Alternative #1, thereby authorizing funding for preparation of the HRDP grant at a cost not to exceed \$2058, being paid out of the City Council's 2010-11 Contingency Fund.