

AGENDA



Thursday, December 13, 2007

Government Relations
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Item No. 19

Subject: Approve negotiation and execution of a federal representation services contract with BARBARA MCCALL and ASSOCIATES, Washington, D.C., in an amount not to exceed \$75,000.

Amount and Source of Funding: Funding is available in the Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Operating Budgets of the Government Relations Office.

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated Fiscal Note. A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: John Hrnccir, Government Relations Officer, 974-2285

The purpose of this contract is to provide lobbying and other professional services in the City's interests for its Federal Legislative Program. The contractor will provide advice to the City and will be responsible for assisting the City's efforts before the Congress and for selected related activities requiring additional action such as communicating with federal agencies.

Examples of actions Barbara McCall has worked on in the last year include: Congress has passed a bill that would authorize approximately \$70 million for the Onion Creek Flood Control Project. It would also provide the City with a credit towards its match on that project for its purchase and relocation of homes located in Onion Creek flood plain that would reduce the City's match by over \$3 million.

Congress continues to work on FY 2008 appropriations bills and will soon begin sending them to the President. Austin projects in these bills include:

- \$250,000 for Community Health Centers,
- \$250,000 for Intelligent Transportation Systems,
- \$150,000 for East Austin Facade Improvements,
- \$350,000 for Police Technology,
- \$600,000 for the Onion Creek Flood Control Project,
- \$300,000 for Sanitary Sewer Overflow Prevention and
- Funding for a new National Guard facility, freeing up space at Mueller Airport for the film studio.

Austin and other Texas cities played a lead role in defeating efforts to permanently extend the Internet tax moratorium. The final legislation extends the moratorium for seven years and maintains the exemption for Texas line access fees.

We worked with the Police Department on a successful Department of Justice grant of \$4.9 million to improve public safety communications.

The House and the Senate have passed comprehensive energy legislation that would authorize a new Energy Efficiency Block Grant (EEBG) to provide direct, flexible assistance to Austin and other cities. In addition, the House bill includes a tax title that would expand the Clean Renewable Energy Bond Program and create tax incentives for Plug-In Hybrid Vehicles. Mayor Wynn has played a lead role advocating for these programs and we have supported his efforts.

The House has passed legislation that would substantially increase federal assistance for wastewater infrastructure. The House has also passed a farm bill that would increase federal support for watershed conservation and management programs.