

council item 37 another no-bid contract - vote No

Past Chair <pastchair2.nlct@yahoo.com>

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Chair, Vice-Chair, Mayor Pro-Tem, Councilmember -

This would be the fourth one-year contract awarded without bid to the same small Dove Springs-based nonprofit, nominally for work related to "community health" in the North Lamar/Rundberg area, for a total of \$520,000.

- The Statesman documented many of the conflicted interests in the original no-bid award. Austin Public Health staff have said that the reason they awarded further contracts to the same vendor is because "they're already working there". The murky beginnings of this relationship alone would demand an open, transparent bidding and contracting process before going forward.

- Year after year, the vendor begins carrying out work well before the contract is executed. Last budget year, for example, the vendor began work in January, but the contract was not signed until April. Occasionally, in an established vendor relationship, the dates might be a little off without concern, but this should not be a consistent practice. The other result of delayed contract execution is that the goals, measures, activities, and reporting requirements of a publicly-funded community health program are held secret from the community they claim to benefit. That's not healthy!

- The contract deliverables have generally been outputs, not outcomes or impacts. That is, a training aims that some number of people attend the class, not that they learn anything or apply it in any way or achieve an impact in their own life or in our community. For a contracting or granting program designed to increase _organizational_ capacity, this is typical in early years, with later years having higher expectations for results. If this series of contract awards is intended to build capacity of the recipient, that should be made clear. Even if that is a goal, there still should be a competitive award process to identify the best capacity-building opportunity(s).

- The vendor was well-paid two years ago to produce a "community health improvement plan" for the North Lamar/Rundberg area. According to Public Health's social contracts manager, what the vendor delivered is "not actionable". It's never been vetted by any board or commission, or outside agency, and isn't even easily available to the public, such as on the city's website. It doesn't include any analysis of existing assets or capacity in the area, goals, measure, or needed resources. Nonetheless, the backup for this week's item uses this document as the basis for spending on a seniors program which doesn't even appear to have gone through the Commission on Seniors.

There are plenty of health and human service needs in this part of the city. There are capacity gaps for culturally competent delivery of health and human services throughout the city. The \$120,000 proposed for this contract is available in the FY18 city budget.

I urge you to vote No on this item authorizing another no-bid contract. Let Public Health do their good work to produce a strong, transparent request for multi-year proposals, with support from council's Health and Human Services Committee. Then approve a contract likely to result in positive community health outcomes for the North Lamar/Rundberg area and for Austin's service delivery capacity.

Thank you for your consideration.

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As Austin's most international district, the North Lamar/Georgian Acres neighborhood plan contact team believes that every resident is a valued member of our community, deserves to be treated fairly and with respect, and that when some of our residents live in fear of contact with public officials it makes all of us less safe, and has a negative impact on our community.