



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 5

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TO: City Council

FROM: Alex Khojikian, City Manager

PREPARED BY: City Clerk's Office

MEETING DATE: February 18, 2025

SUBJECT:
Legal Advertising Services – Bid Rejection

RECOMMENDATION:
Reject all bids received for the City's Legal Advertising Services.

BACKGROUND:

The San Mateo City Charter, Section 9.07, specifies that the Council shall periodically call for bids from all newspapers adjudicated to be newspapers of general circulation within the City, or if none, within the County of San Mateo, for the publication of all Ordinances and other legal notices. The Charter also specifies that the contract “shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder” and that “the Council may designate the requirements for award of contract” to become the City’s official city newspaper. As the City’s agreement with the San Mateo Daily Journal expired on December 5, 2023, updated procurement was needed.

The City released a Request for Proposals for Legal Advertising Services on September 6, 2024, and entered into a short-term agreement with the San Mateo Daily Journal for services rendered for 2023-2024 on August 15, 2024. Two newspapers submitted proposals: The San Mateo Daily Journal and San Mateo County Times (parent company, Bay Area News Group).

On October 21, 2024, Council approved staff’s recommendation to reject all bids. The information submitted by each newspaper required further clarification. For instance, clarification was needed on: the assumed title of the newspaper under which the vendor would publish the notices; word count and pricing; and evidence of the San Mateo Superior Court’s Judgement and Order designating the newspaper applying as a Newspaper of General Circulation.

A Request for Bids for Legal Advertising Services was released on December 2, 2024, with revisions made to the original advertisement. Changes included: language clearly stating the criteria by which the City would determine the lowest bidder, specifying that lowest vendor would be selected based on cost per line; and the requirement that vendors specify the title of the newspaper in which legal advertisements are published, thus providing a clear distinction between the title of the newspaper, aliases, and/or the parent organization.

Three bids were received from: The San Mateo Daily Journal, San Mateo County Times (parent company, Bay Area News Group), and the San Francisco Examiner (parent company, The Clint Reilly Organization). While further reviewing submissions, it was determined that the bids did not adequately fulfill the criteria outlined in the request. Staff recommends rejecting all bids to allow staff to seek Council direction to designate the requirements for award of contract, per the Charter. A revised request for bids will require vendors to clearly state the name of the paper as it appears to the public, identify similar engagements in San Mateo County, identify circulation and availability of the physical newspaper within the City and the County.

Staff would also like to note that the San Mateo Daily Journal's circulation in San Mateo County was misstated due to a typographical error in the October 21, 2024 agenda report, Attachment 1. Please note that the correct circulation for the San Mateo Daily Journal is 25,000, not 250,000.

BUDGET IMPACT:

There is no budgetary impact for the rejection of bids.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This bid rejection is not a project subject to CEQA because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met. The Request for Bids was published on the City's Bids webpage beginning on September 6, 2024. Newspapers in circulation in San Mateo were also contacted by email to announce the request for bids.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Bid Results

STAFF CONTACT

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