

## **Step 1**

### **Discussion / Direction / Decision**

of the engagement letter and fee proposal submitted by Blank Rome Government Relations, LLC to perform Congressional lobbying and agency coordination on behalf of the City and Borough of Sitka.

## **Step 2**

### **Possible Motion**

**I MOVE** to accept the terms of the engagement letter submitted by Blank Rome Government Relations, LLC to perform Congressional lobbying and agency coordination on behalf of the City and Borough of Sitka and authorize Mayor Paxton to execute the document.



# City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Gary Paxton and Assembly Members  
**From:** Hugh Bevan, Interim Municipal Administrator *HB*  
**Date:** November 4, 2019  
**Subject:** Lobbying Plan

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### Background

The City has been without a coordinated lobbying effort since our previous Community Affairs Director resigned at the end of June 2019.

The salary for the position was included in the FY20 budget, but the position has not been filled.

In October 2019 Shee Atika Corporation organized a Washington D.C. lobbying trip that included members of their lobbying firm Blank Rome Government Relations, LLC.

Blank Rome GR is a full-service, bipartisan, government affairs firm comprised of lobbying professionals with first hand knowledge of the legislative and administrative affairs of the Federal government.

At our request Blank Rome has submitted a letter of engagement and a fee proposal to perform Congressional lobbying and agency coordination on behalf of Sitka.

### Analysis

Sitka faces several large, expensive projects in the 2 to 10-year time frame that badly need Federal funding assistance.

Specifically:

- Infrastructure development on Japonski Island to serve the new SEARHC medical campus and Coast Guard expansion.
- The major overhaul of the Green Lake hydro generation systems.

### **Fiscal Note**

The staff position of Community Affairs Director is budgeted at approximately \$117,000 for FY 20. (salary + benefits)

The Blank Rome proposal estimates their fee at \$12,000 per month, so in concept we have 10 months of their services covered by the Community Affairs Director salary budget.

### **Recommendation**

If the Assembly agrees that retaining a high-level lobbying firm can assist us, I recommend a 10- month engagement. Either party can suspend the agreement with 30 days notice.

We will ask for regular updates from Blank Rome so we should have a good idea of their effectiveness by next spring.

Staff will include the transfer of funds from the salary account to professional services in a future budget adjustment ordinance.