



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

Memo

To: City and Borough of Sitka Assembly
From: Mark Gorman, Administrator
Re: Selection of Sitka Convention and Visitor Services Contractor
Date: August 18, 2015

In response to the issuance of the Statement of Interest to Provide Convention and Visitor Services in Sitka, CBS received four proposals. The applicants were: the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB), the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) the Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA), and Matthew Turner, a private contractor.

A review committee comprised of the Administrator, Jay Sweeney, and Don Kluting reviewed the statements of interest. The committee focused on management ability and governance capacity.

In the initial review, it was determined that SEDA requested funding above the Assembly allocated amount of \$300,000 which was also identified in the Statement of Interest issuance. The applicant was given the opportunity to reduce this sum to the appropriated amount. SEDA chose to maintain its original request and was informed that the Administrator did not have the authority to negotiate on this amount.

The review committee met with the three other applicants. Through this process, it was determined that the Chamber of Commerce proposal was the strongest in terms of governance and potential to deliver quality visitor and convention services to our community. Although at this time, the Chamber does not have an executive director, the board members who met with the review committee indicated that they had a strong candidate to fill this position. Of note, the model of Chambers of Commerce providing convention and visitor services is used in Homer, Seward, Kenai, Cordova, Girdwood, Talkeetna, Petersburg, Nome and Soldotna.

The SCVB proposal was well developed and presented. Through the interview process, the review committee identified concerns about both the management and governance capabilities of the SCVB.

Matthew Turner's proposal was innovative and well-articulated. Mr. Turner presented the review committee with a creative vision of how he would move Sitka convention and visitor services forward in Sitka. The fact that he is a sole proprietor without a board or governance structure was of concern to the review committee.

It is recommended that the Assembly approve a contract with the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce effective October 1, 2016. All effort will be placed on minimizing disruption and diminishment of convention and visitor services in our community during this period of transition. To this end, I recommend that the Assembly authorize the Administrator to take action to ensure that the CBS obligations, liabilities and assets that are associated with the transition of services from the SCVB to the Chamber are addressed.