

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-2
October 11, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item E-2 [12:34 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation of the Chief Procurement Officer to award the Legislative Consulting Services contract RFP 2022-014 to The Southern Group of Florida, Inc., the highest ranked responsive-responsible proposer, pursuant to Section 2-763 of the Procurement Code entitled “Contract Award”.

Mayor Lago: Can I talk about E-2 just for one second, E-2. Mr. Manager we discussed – we are supporting here the RFP for the Southern Group. I also wanted to have that discussion with you about the second-place finisher, which we discussed about.

City Manager Iglesias: Capital City’s Consulting.

Mayor Lago: Pardon?

City Manager Iglesias: Capital City’s Consulting.

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Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Pull it.

Mayor Lago: Yes, I want to pull it. Can we pull that item, E-2.

City Clerk Urquia: And I'm sorry Mr. Mayor, but I had a member of the public requesting to speak on agenda item E-6.

Mayor Lago: Okay. No problem.

City Attorney Ramos: Both should show as pulled, E-2 and E-6.

Mayor Lago: Yes. Perfect. So, item E-2. I just first off, I want to say thank you to our incredible team, Ron Book, Nelson, I don't know if he's here, I think he may have left, from Southern. I also want to mention what a wonderful job our State Legislators did, both Demi Cabrera, Bryan Avila, Duran, Bandalopus, I'm forgetting people now, Danny Perez. I want to also mention our state senators Garcia, forgetting our other state senator. Help me out Ron – Annamarie, who played a huge role, works in the Gables. I want to say thank you for their incredible hospitality, their leadership. I also want to thank Naomi and her team, along with my team in my office, who worked hard and my colleagues on the Commission who went four times to the State to bring in the biggest money we've ever gotten, ever in the city's history. But I spoke to the Manager, and I know that some of my colleagues spoke, in between first and second place there was a minimal amount. I want to have as much horsepower as I possibly can up in Tallahassee. I am beyond blessed, we are beyond blessed to have Ron and his team, who are here today, and obviously, to have Southern, but I think the more the merrier, and I think it was very tight and I think we get a good value, good value for the return, the ROI. So, I just wanted my colleagues to consider that, and I think it's something that we could potentially bring back to the Commission and have the Manager address. I don't know if anybody else has any other concerns or ideas or anything.

Commissioner Menendez: I think it's a great idea. As you know, I worked in Intergovernmental Affairs at City of Miami, and it's always helpful and useful to have top people and with Ron's firm, obviously, that group is top notch, but it's always important, especially with the dynamics in Tallahassee and our needs of our city to get funding and a lot of issues that come up. It's great to have, I believe strongly, more than just one team, because it's a dynamic, evolving situation in Tallahassee and Coral Gables deserves it.

Commissioner Anderson: I think our investment was well placed last time and I would concur with your comments.

Mayor Lago: By the way, I want to recognize somebody who just walked into the room, who doesn't get enough credit. I want to say thank you, you weren't in the room. We always give thanks to the legend, but you are the one that does a lot of the heavy lifting. You dragged us around when we were exhausted in Tallahassee, our team. You are always present, and I just want to say thank

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you, because we don't say thank you enough. We don't say thank you enough and you are dealing with the state legislators, you're running around to ensure that items are funded, you are notifying us immediately, you are dealing with Naomi. Naomi is calling me, say hey, we may not get this funded, we may get this funded, make this phone call, call this leader, call the state legislator, call the Senator, call the Governor. We were one of the few cities that got a meeting with the Governor, multiple meetings with the Governor. So, I just want to make sure I put that on the record, because its very easy to say, you got two and-a-half million dollars when we never even got close to that, and it took four visits to Tallahassee by this Commission and that money is for this community and for the residents and for the businesses. So, I just want to say thank you to you. Thank you so much.

[Applause]

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, if I may say that the difference between number one and number two is 371 points versus 368 points. If the Commission wishes, we could negotiate with both firms at the same time.

Mayor Lago: I don't want to negotiate. I want to make sure we keep Southern and Ron.

City Manager Iglesias: We still have to negotiate the fees and so forth, I can negotiate fees.

Mayor Lago: But I also want to make sure we bring.

City Manager Iglesias: Correct. With number one and number two, if that's the Commission's wish.

Mayor Lago: It is.

Commissioner Menendez: And I just want to – in that negotiation, I don't want to water down, we appreciate their work, so I want to make sure that they are compensated, and the other firms compensated at a level that's the going rate, the market rate. Obviously, we fight for our residents, and we do our best, but they deliver and what the other group is going to deliver for the city is well worth the investment, because as the Mayor clearly said, what was brought back this year from Tallahassee, the city has never seen before and those are funds and those are things that we can't from the dais, we can't from Coral Gables achieve, we need them, and we need that type of leadership and that type of professionalism. So, let's get the deal done, but I want to make sure that they are compensated because they are delivering.

City Manager Iglesias: And Commissioner to answer that, we want top work from both firms and that's what we are negotiating for.

Mayor Lago: I'm not talking about taking last year's fee and just splitting it between two firms, that's not what I'm talking about.

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City Manager Iglesias: That is not what I was considering Mayor. I was considering having two solid teams in Tallahassee, which is I know is your wish and the Commission's wish and making sure that there's enough there so that both teams can perform at a top level.

Mayor Lago: I just want to be very clear, and I'll put it on the record. I've talked to Ron, and talked to Nelson, I said listen, we want to bring back a lot more money next year, and I'm making my efforts visiting state leaders throughout the state to ensure that we build strong bonds and relationships, so that when we do make an ask we are engaged with legislators throughout the state, not just locally and I think that also listening to the queues, Nelson, Ron, are giving me a lot of advice on how to build the best relationship so that we can go out and say, listen, this project requires funding and requires consideration, help us out.

Vice Mayor Mena: Mr. Manager, I agree with everything that was just said, I won't reiterate it. I'm on board with that approach. I said to you privately in the prep and I wanted to say it publicly as well, which is that, and I've talked about this issue before, and I want to raise it again. It has nothing to do with this particular bid, but more broadly. I don't agree generally speaking with disqualifying applicants for these bids on the basis of experience based on the firm's experience when the underlying people have experience. I'd rather let the RFP process play out a competitive process and let the chips fall where they may. I said that previously with respect to an insurance RFP we had. If somebody goes out and starts a new firm, but they have 30 years of experience doing this, I don't care that the LLC has been around for two years. So, let's be mindful of that when we have, especially these types of services contracts. Its not an engineering firm or something like that. You are hiring the people. We are hiring Ron Book, we are hiring Nelson, we are hiring his team, who I respect tremendously and did a fantastic job. As a broad matter on an RFP, err on the side of allowing the competitive process to proceed so that we can then make a decision based on the results of that competitive process. Disqualifying people again, because of a new firm with people who clearly have experience, to me, is not the best approach generally speaking.

City Manager Iglesias: Vice Mayor, we'll have a relook at that and make sure that we tweak that, as you mentioned.

Mayor Lago: And I echo the sentiments of the Vice Mayor on that.

City Attorney Ramos: So, the resolution currently on the agenda for one.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: If its an amendment, we should make that very clear before we vote.

Mayor Lago: Does anybody make a motion?

Commissioner Menendez: I'll move it.

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Commissioner Anderson: I'll second.

City Clerk Urquia: And to just make sure, its move as amended.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: As amended, yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)