



## Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, July 2, 2013  
**Prepared By/Phone Number:** Deece Eckstein, 854-9754  
**Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head:** Deece Eckstein, 854-9754  
**Commissioners Court Sponsor:** Judge Biscoe

### **AGENDA LANGUAGE:**

RECEIVE BRIEFING AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION REGARDING OPTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY SERVICES.

### **SUMMARY AND IGR COORDINATOR RECOMMENDATION:**

IGR recommends that the Court renew its contract with Knaupe GR for legislative advocacy services for two years with an option for one (1) two-year renewal, at the same rate as the current contract.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Travis County Intergovernmental Relations Office currently contracts with the following vendor for professional legislative advocacy services:

**KNAUPE GR  
910 Congress Avenue, Suite 1100  
Austin, TX 78701**

The contract, created in 2008, is for Six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$6,500) per month, or Seventy-Eight Thousand Dollars (\$78,000) per year. It contained an option for annual renewal for up to three years. In September 2009, the Commissioners Court renewed the contract for one year. In March 2010, the Commissioners Court transferred the contract from the original contractor, Santos Alliances, to Knaupe GR. In September 2010, the Court renewed the contract for another year. In September 2011, the Court renewed the contract and also extended it for an additional year at the current rate. In September 2012, the Court again renewed the contract for one year at the current rate.

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

Gregg Knaupe has done an excellent job in his role. Over the last five years, he has:

- educated himself about Travis County's legislative issues;
- worked to build relationships with key County staff, relevant legislators and their staffs, and other stakeholders; and
- advocated effectively for the County on those issues.

In each of the three sessions he's worked with us, he has become more valuable. He is well-respected in legislative offices, and he works well with the IGR team and key County staffers.

While the Court always has the option to re-bid or even abolish the legislative advocacy contract, I believe the contract with Knaupe GR should be extended for four reasons:

- 1) Gregg now has unique and valuable knowledge of how county government, and specifically Travis County, operate and are affected by state law and policy. He understands both the policy nuances and political intricacies of issues like tax policy, land use, and transparency;
- 2) Both the House and the Senate tend to defer to particular legislators on important subject matters. Gregg has built effective relationships on county issues with key leaders in the budgeting, criminal justice, and natural resources areas;
- 3) Gregg has worked very well with the IGR team and built relationships with key County leaders, including members of the Court and the executive managers. This helps our team remain nimble and responsive during fast-moving developments when the Legislature is in session;
- 4) When the original legislative advocacy contract was awarded in 2008, the Court judged that the Santos Alliance/Knaupe GR proposal was the most cost-effective. In spite of his enhanced value to the County, Gregg is willing to extend his relationship with the County without asking for an increase in the fees he is paid.

Entering into a contract for another two years would allow us to retain his services through the 2015 legislative session, at which time the Court could exercise an option to extend the contract for another two years. This will provide continuity and, if the Court makes a change, allows a 15-month lead time between the selection of the consultant and the beginning of a regular session.

**FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:** Not applicable.

**REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:** None.

**NAMES, PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES OF PERSONS WHO MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY OR BE INVOLVED WITH THIS REQUEST:**

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