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Agenda Item No: 12.

FROM: James D. Herberg, General Manager
Originator: Lan C. Wiborg, Director of Environmental Services

SUBJECT:

STRATEGIC PROCESS STUDY FOR MEIOFAUNA BASELINE ASSESSMENT

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Approve a Professional Consultant Services Agreement to Florida State University Sponsored Research Administration to provide a Meiofauna Baseline Strategic Process Study (Specification No. CS-2021-1266BD) for a total amount not to exceed \$277,946; and
- B. Approve a contingency of 27,795 (10%).

BACKGROUND

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) is required, under its current ocean discharge permit, to conduct a Baseline Strategic Process Study to investigate the potential impacts of increased reverse osmosis concentrate flows from the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) Final Expansion Project on the marine animals in the receiving water. This study will focus on meiofauna, which are very small sediment-dwelling animals less than one millimeter in size. They are known to be more sensitive to pollution than larger animals which are monitored as part of OC San's Ocean Monitoring Program. This project will require the contractor to collect samples within OC San's coastal monitoring area, and to then process/analyze the samples and provide a report on the findings. This work will characterize the existing meiofauna population around OC San's ocean discharge and evaluate the suitability of using these animals to study the potential environmental impacts of the GWRS Final Expansion Project.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Ensure the public's money is wisely spent
- Sustain 1, 5, 20-year planning horizons
- Comply with environmental permit requirements
- Maintain collaborative and cooperative relationships with regulators, stakeholders, and neighboring communities

PROBLEM

OC San does not have the specialized expertise to collect, extract, sort, identify, and analyze meiofauna samples.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Approve an Agreement with Florida State University Sponsored Research Administration to conduct the Meiofauna Baseline Strategic Process Study. Florida State University has research staff with 18 years of experience with meiofauna taxonomy, ecology, and biology, particularly in the context of biodiversity studies and the use of meiofauna and free-living nematodes (marine worms) as indicators of environmental change and human caused impacts.

TIMING CONCERNS

The first phase of this study involving sample collection must be completed before the GWRS Final Expansion Project is completed in early 2023. Otherwise, using meiofauna for a before-after control-impact study to assess any potential effects of the Final Expansion will not be possible.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

By not acting on this Baseline Strategic Process Study, OC San is at risk of violating its ocean discharge permit.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

N/A

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OC San released a Request for Proposals (RFP) on October 27, 2021, via PlanetBids. A non-mandatory pre-bid meeting was conducted on November 10, 2021 via Microsoft Teams. Proposals were due on December 2, 2021. OC San received three proposals valid for 180 calendar days from the RFP opening date.

A Staff Evaluation Committee consisting of three representatives from the Environmental Laboratory and Ocean Monitoring Division was formed to review and rank each of the proposals. On December 8, 2021, the evaluation team met to discuss the policies and procedures for the evaluation process. The proposals were then evaluated based on pre-defined minimum qualifications and cost in accordance with OC San's Purchasing Ordinance. A representative from the Purchasing and Contracts Administration Division chaired the team and participated in the evaluation process as a non-voting member.

Individual scoring was the chosen method of evaluation for this procurement. Members of the team performed an independent review of the proposals and later met as a group with the Buyer to discuss their preliminary scores and discuss any questions/concerns they had. Proposals were evaluated based on the following criteria:

CRITERION	WEIGHT
1. Qualifications & Experience of Firm	15%
2. Proposed Staffing & Project Organization	15%
3. Work Plan	50%
4. Cost	20%

The evaluation team first reviewed and scored the proposals based upon the criteria listed above, other than cost. All proposals were accompanied by a sealed cost proposal. Only the cost proposal for the highest ranked firm was opened.

Rank	Proposer	Criterion 1 (Max 15%)	Criterion 2 (Max 15%)	Criterion 3 (Max 50%)	Subtotal Score (Max 80%)
1	Florida State University Sponsored Research Administration	14%	14%	45%	73%
2	INES Integrated Environmental Solutions UG	10%	10%	37%	57%
3	Miller Marine Science & Consulting	9%	10%	28%	47%

References were contacted and verified for the top-ranking firm. Based on their review of the proposal, references, and cost proposal, the Evaluation Committee unanimously scored Florida State University Sponsored Research Administration as the most qualified.

CEQA

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This request complies with authority levels of OC San's Purchasing Ordinance. This item has been budgeted (Line item: Section 6, Page 48).

ATTACHMENT

The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OC San website (www.ocsan.gov) with the complete agenda package:

- Professional Consultant Services Agreement