

CITY OF SPOKANE ETHICS COMMISSION

Ethics Commission's Decision Approving Request by the City Director of Public Works


On December 12, 2019, Scott Simmons, the City's Director of Public Works, notified the City of Spokane's Ethics Commission pursuant to SMC 1.04.030 O. 3 of his request for the Commission's approval of the City contracting with a former city employee for expert or consulting services. The former employee's new employer submitted a similar request on December 9, 2019. A copy of the letters are attached to this decision.


SMC 1.04.030 O. 3 provides that whenever a City officer or employee wishes to contract with a former City officer or employee for expert or consultant services within one year of the officer or employee leaving City service, advance notice shall be given to and approval received from the Ethics Commission.

The Ethics Commission met on December 18, 2019 to review the request. Pursuant to the facts set forth in the letters from Mr. Simmons and Mr. Brower, the testimony presented to the Commission and the provisions of SMC 1.04.030 O. 3, the Ethics Commission determines that:

1. Appropriate notice has been given to the Ethics Commission,
2. The evidence submitted in the letters from Mr. Simmons and Mr. Brower demonstrates benefit to the City by having the former City employee, Brandon Blankenagel, work on the project, which the City will be contracting for with his new employer,
3. There are no adverse effects to the City in granting approval, and
4. No violations of the Ethics Code would occur by approving the request.

The Ethics Commission approves by a unanimous vote of seven to zero the request by the City's Public Works Director for approval of the City contracting with a former city employee for expert or consulting services as set forth in the attached letters.


D.C. Cronin - Chairperson


Date

421 W. Riverside Avenue, Suite 902
Spokane, WA 99201
509.289.2300 kpff.com

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Office of the City Attorney



December 5, 2019

City of Spokane Ethics Commission
Attention: Mr. Dennis Cronin, Chair
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201

Dear Mr. Cronin,

KPFF Consulting Engineers is seeking review and approval for consulting services with a former City employee within one year of leaving city service, as defined in the City's Code of Ethics section 01.04A.030.

Brandon Blankenagel worked for the City of Spokane for over eleven years, spending the past seven years in Integrated Capital Management, defining public works projects for transportation facilities of all kinds. One project that Brandon participated on was the early definition of a project to design and eventually build a connection between the Fish Lake Trail and the Centennial Trail. Brandon helped procure a federal grant to fund a study to start this project.

Recently, the City processed a procurement for a consult contract to conduct the referenced study. While Brandon helped assemble the Request for Qualifications document, he did not participate in the review and selection of the consultant. Ultimately, KPFF Consulting Engineers was selected through that procurement.

Coincidentally, Brandon has accepted employment from KPFF Consulting Engineers. Brandon would be a valuable team member to work on the Fish Lake Trail to Centennial Trail Connection study, and we would like him to serve in that capacity. This would not change the City's contract with KPFF or its compensation.

We see the following benefits to the City of Spokane:

- Brandon is familiar with the project and the stakeholders and partners who will be asked to participate in the study outreach processes.
- Brandon's local knowledge will improve the consultation team's expertise.
- Familiarity with City processes and future needs will allow the KPFF team to more efficiently carry this contract through completion.

Thank you for taking the time to review this matter. I am happy to provide any additional information or meet with you or the committee at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark A. Brower'.

Mark A. Brower, P.E.

Spokane Office/Inland NW Operations Lead

ORIGINAL



PUBLIC WORKS
808 WEST SPOKANE FALLS BLVD.
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99201

City of Spokane Ethics Commission
Attention: Rebecca Riedinger
Office of the City Attorney
5th Floor Municipal Building
W. 808 Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201

Dear Mr. Cronin

The City's Public Works Division is seeking review and approval for consulting services with a former City employee within one year of leaving city service, as defined in the City's Code of Ethics section 01.04A.030.

Brandon Blankenagel worked for the City of Spokane for eleven years, with his most recent years in the Integrated Capital Management Department. He defined transportation projects to build, rehabilitate, and update streets, trails, and sidewalks throughout the City. He worked with engineering consultants to help define some of these projects, and often these consultant contracts were conducted using state or federal grant dollars.

One project that Brandon helped to define and fund was the Fish Lake Trail Connection to Centennial Trail. Brandon helped procure a federal grant in 2015 to study the best route for this eventual connection. On September 26, 2019, Integrated Capital Management issued a Request for Qualifications to procure a consultant firm to do this study. While Brandon supervised staff who conducted this procurement process, he did not participate in the review and/or selection of the consultant. KPFF Consulting Engineers was the chosen firm for the project on November 19, 2019 and we are in negotiations with them on the scope of work and cost.

Coincidentally, Brandon recently accepted employment with KPFF Consulting Engineers in November 2019. We feel Brandon has fundamental knowledge of the area and an understanding of the issues the study will be attempting to address and his participation would benefit the study and the outcomes the City would like to achieve. We would encourage KPFF's use of Brandon on this project.

We understand that KPFF is also submitting a letter in regard to this situation, and we would like to reflect our own endorsement of this review.

Thank you for taking the time to review this matter. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Scott Simmons
Director

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