

**ROSS VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT**

For the meeting of February 9, 2022

To: Board of Directors

From: Jason Weber, Fire Chief

Subject: Select Labor Contract Negotiator and Authorize Fire Chief to enter into an agreement with the chosen Legal Firm

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Board selects one labor contract negotiator from the Legal Firms provided and that the Board authorizes the Fire Chief to enter into an agreement with such firm to conduct labor negotiations.

**DISCUSSION:**

The two represented labor groups within Ross Valley Fire Department (Ross Valley Fire Chief Officers Association and International Association of Firefighters Local 1775 – Ross Valley Firefighters Association) are nearing the end of multi-year contracts on June 30, 2022. Professional labor relations services assist the Department, your Board, and represented employees in reaching an agreement on the terms and conditions of a new MOU. Therefore, the selected Legal Firm will provide a professional labor relations expert.

Boucher Law, PC

As a uniquely qualified legal and HR consulting firm, Boucher Law, PC possesses both the practical and legal experience to assist public agencies across California in achieving legally defensible solutions yet everyday sensible. The firm proposes that Christopher K. Boucher serves as the Department’s Lead Negotiator, and he will take the primary role in representing the Department with its labor groups. The firm has a blended rate of \$240 per hour for our consultant staff and \$340 per hour for our attorney staff, plus travel and waiting time, all reimbursable expenses are billed to the Department, and advanced retainer fees are not required.

LCW – Liberty Cassidy Whitmore

Liebert Cassidy Whitmore provides responsive and highly competent legal advice, representation, litigation services, negotiations, and training to public entities throughout California. Their expert negotiators are well-versed in handling multiple bargaining tables and are experienced in utilizing different bargaining techniques to conclude negotiations successfully. The firm recommends partner Donna Williamson and associate Lisa

Charbonneau as their negotiators. The firm bills in increments of one-tenth of an hour; therefore, the pricing offered on a time-and-materials basis would be based on the standard hourly rates: Donna Williamson \$390 and Lisa Charbonneau \$310; travel time is charged at the negotiator's hourly rate.

County Counsel, County of Marin

The Marin County Counsel provides legal services for County business and other local government municipalities throughout Marin Country, these services include general legal services as well as labor and employment law. The counsel recommends Deputy County Counsel Stephen Raab as their negotiator. Stephen provides services to multiple Fire Districts in Marin and a principal negotiator for the Southern Marin Fire District. The County Counsel's Office has a fixed rate to charge public entities for legal services. Currently, that rate is \$248 per hour. Effective July 1, 2022, the rate will be \$255 per hour; billing is done in increments of 0.25 hours.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Staff estimates no more than 100 hours of legal services to complete contract negotiations. Costs for these services will range from \$25,000-\$39,000 depending on the firm selected. Funding for these services will be available within current budgeted funds for FY21-22, if necessary, staff will return to your Board for a budget adjustment as needed.

**Attachments:** Boucher Law, PC proposal and bios – Attachment #1  
LCW proposal and bios – Attachment #2  
County Counsel, Stephen Raab resume – Attachment #3