



Legislative Program

PRESENTED TO THE CITY COUNCIL ON
DECEMBER 12, 2022

Overview

- The 88th Session of the Texas Legislature begins January 10, 2023.
- State legislators began filing legislation in November 2022.
- During the previous legislative session more than 2,000 bills were introduced that would have affected Texas cities in some substantial way.
- City Council developed a legislative program with their position and priorities on local government-related legislation that occurred in the 87th Session.
- This was performed through a contract with Focused Advocacy in December 2020.

Focused Advocacy

- Focused Advocacy is a public affairs firm based in Austin, Texas, specializing in legislative advocacy, municipal government lobbying, and utilities and energy regulation.
- City Council approved a 12-month agreement with Focused Advocacy for legislative consulting services on December 14, 2020, with two one-year renewal options. Staff recommends council authorize the final renewal option under the contract.
- Focused Advocacy meets with staff bi-weekly to provide updates on legislative happenings and general guidance to the city.
- This item is before you tonight on the consent agenda for consideration.

Why is this important?

- Cities and elected officials are occasionally asked to have opinions on a variety of bills that affect local government.
- There are times when elected officials or staff, as subject matter experts, are asked to testify or speak to State legislators.
- The purpose of this is to understand the city council's position as a whole, not as individual members, on key issues that will be discussed during the upcoming session.
- As bills are filed council can request discussion by placing items on the agenda to adopt a resolution for or against specific proposed legislation.

Proposed Legislative Program:

- Support legislation that makes beneficial amendments to H.B. 2439 (86th Reg. Session), the building materials bill.
- Support local community-based decision-making. Oppose amendments that would erode municipal authority in any way, impose an unfunded mandate, or otherwise be detrimental to the city's ability to provide services and manage local affairs.
- Oppose legislation that would erode the authority to be adequately compensated for the use of the public's rights-of-way and/or erode municipal authority over the management and control of rights-of-way, including by state or federal rules or federal legislation.
- Support legislation that would allow to use either an official newspaper or a website to publish legal notices similar to the system used by the State of Texas for their agencies.

Proposed Legislative Program:

- Support legislation that promotes the City's ability to:
 - a. utilize economic development tools including, tourism programs,
 - b. attract business, recruit or retain employers, or compete for new business that grows the local and state economy,
 - c. manage the development of land, including the City's authority over any special purpose districts formed inside the City or the ETJ,
 - d. finance infrastructure (including the ability to issue debt),
 - e. manage franchise agreements, or
 - f. participate in utility rate cases
- Support the North Central Texas Council of Governments Regional Transportation efforts.

Proposed Legislative Program:

- Oppose legislation that would limit or prohibit the authority of city officials to use municipal funds to communicate with legislators; or limit or prohibit the authority of the Texas Municipal League (TML) to use any revenue, however derived, to communicate with legislators.
- Support legislation that would require police departments to adopt policies and procedures to require peace officers to document and address cases of domestic violence with evidence of impending breathing (strangulation).
- Support legislation that would impose a penalty enhancement in family violence cases where there is a child witness.
- These subjects are consistent with TML's recommendation.

Council Direction

- Consider approval of contract with Focused Advocacy. This item is on the December 12th consent agenda.
- Provide guidance to the proposed legislative program.
 - This item will be brought to council for approval on January 9, 2023.