



Newspaper Services Contracts

CITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

Purpose

- Compliance with the Competitive Bidding Requirements
- Identification of Cost Saving Measures

Background

- December, 2023: Administrative Services, began looking into options for lowering the cost of the City's newspaper services for publishing legal notices while also staying compliant with bidding and procurement laws.
- April 17, 2024: Staff briefed the City Council Policy and Valuation Committee and recommended bidding out newspaper services with the objective of selecting a primary and secondary newspaper for publishing legal notices.
- May 8, 2024: Staff briefed the City Council on newspaper services. The consensus was to bid out newspaper services with the objective of selecting a primary and secondary newspaper for publishing legal notices.
- June-July 2024: The City advertised a request for bids for Newspaper Services. The city received one bid from the Cleburne Times Review.
- August 21, 2024: Presented recommendations to the City Council Policy and Valuation Committee.

Local Government Code Requirements

- Texas Local Government Code requires that notices be published in a newspaper. These notices include, but are not limited to:
 - Advertisements for competitively sealed bids
 - Election notices
 - Items related to development
 - Items related to water utilities
 - Items related to zoning regulations
 - Meeting notices
 - Public hearings related to budget

In 2023, HB 622 would have authorized alternative media to satisfy the public notice requirements, including social media, free newspapers, school newspapers, a homeowners' association newsletter or magazine, utility bills, direct mailings and any other form of media authorized by the comptroller. The bill made it through the House Committee but failed to move on to vote by the house.

Local Government Code Requirements – continued

- Texas Local Government Code also has stipulations related to the type of newspaper in which these notices may be published:
 - Devote not less than 25% of total column lineage to general interest items;
 - Be published at least once each week;
 - Be entered as second-class postal matter in the county where published;
 - Have been published regularly and continuously for at least 12 months before the governmental entity or representative published notice; and
 - A weekly newspaper that has been published regularly and continuously

The City currently uses the Fort Worth Star-Telegram to advertise all legal notices.

Historical Cost for City Notices

Fiscal Year	Transaction Count	Amount	Avg. Cost Per Transaction
2019-2020	82	\$99,633.95	\$1,215
2020-2021	62	\$82,944.11	\$1,338
2021-2022	100	\$73,465.04	\$735
2022-2023	82	\$43,190.10	\$527
2023-2024 (spend to date)	49	\$21,818.79	\$445

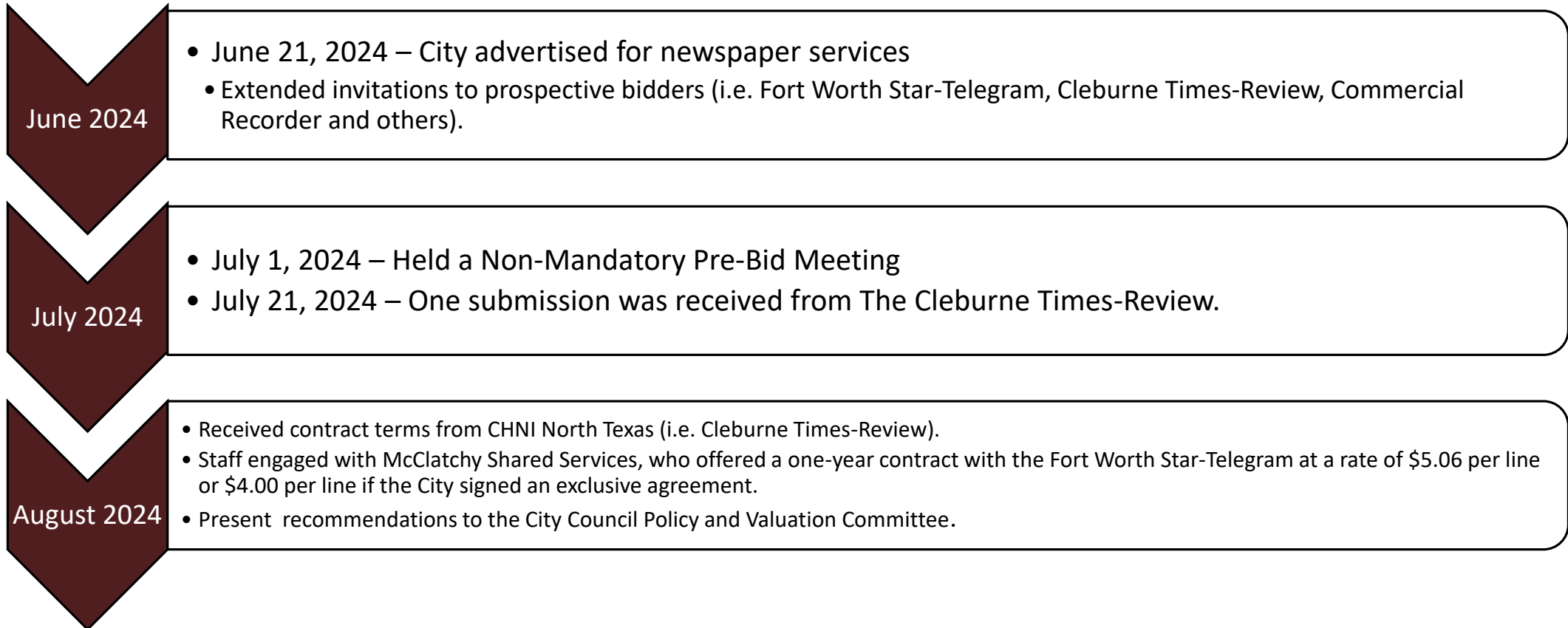
Notes:

- A contract with The Fort Worth Star Telegram (McClatchy Shared Services) was negotiated in 2021 and the rate being charged was reduced from market rate to \$6.06 per line + \$10.00 online publication fee.
- The May 2020 election, originally scheduled for fiscal year 2020-2021, was delayed to November 2021, aligning with the 2021-2022 fiscal year. This shift necessitated the re-issuance of legal notices and may have contributed to a higher-than-average number of transactions.

*Transaction count refers to the number of individual accounts that incur charges for each invoice

*This data was pulled from the Munis system and includes issued checks and P-Card transactions beginning in 2022

Newspaper Bid Time Line



Note: The City did extend the bid deadline by one week to allow extra time for bidders to respond.

Proposed Rates

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Type	Rate
Per Line Rate	\$5.06
Online Fee	\$10
Estimated Cost for Typical City Ad	\$460

Cleburne Times-Review

Type	Rate
Per column inch (Weekday)	\$20
Per column inch (Sunday or Saturday)	\$20
Misc. Advertising Cost (Online)	\$17
Estimated Cost for Typical City Ad	\$388

Note:

- McClatchy Shared Services also offered a lower rate at \$4.00 per line if we signed a one year exclusive. A typical ad cost would then be slightly lower than the Cleburne Times-Review at \$378.

Recommended Approach

- The estimated annual cost for this service is below \$50,000, and the rate offered by McClatchy Services would result in similar or slightly lower costs. Therefore, staff recommends rejecting the bid and executing a one-year contract with McClatchy Shared Services.
- Staff will re-evaluate the service contract at the end of the term and consider re-bidding this service for a longer-term agreement.
- This recommendation was presented to the City Council Policy and Valuation Committee on August 21, 2024.
 - The consensus from the committee was to proceed with this recommendation.

Recommendation

- Reject the one submission from The Cleburne Times-Review (CHNI North Texas)
- Execute a contract with McClatchy Services for one-year at the rate of \$4.00 per line.