



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	CONSENT
MEETING DATE	OCTOBER 26, 2026

ITEM:	Approval of Municipal Finance Legal Services Engagement Letter with Kutak Rock		
Presenting Item: Aaron Chirpich, City Manager			
DEPARTMENT: Administration		BY/DATE: Aaron Chirpich / October 22, 2026	
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>			
_ Community that Grows with Purpose and Equity		X Engaged, Effective and Forward-Thinking	
_ High Quality Public Spaces		X Resilient and Prosperous Economy	
_ Safe, Accessible and Built for Everyone		_ Inclusive and Connected Community	

BACKGROUND

Since February 2025, Kutak Rock has provided municipal finance legal services to the City of Columbia Heights and its Economic Development Authority (EDA), including tax increment financing (TIF), bond counsel, and consultation for general EDA matters. The City's assigned attorney is Sofia Lykke, who previously represented the City through Kennedy & Graven. When Ms. Lykke transitioned to Kutak Rock, the City followed her to maintain continuity of legal representation and service on existing projects.

The attached 2026 engagement letter establishes discounted hourly rates for these services. The arrangement is like a contract retainer but provides greater flexibility, with the scope and cost of services varying based on the City's projects and needs each year. Expenditures to Kutak Rock totaled \$11,892 in 2025 and \$15,384 to date in 2026. Staff anticipate that 2026 expenditures will likely remain below the City Manager's \$25,000 spending authority.

Professional services contracts under \$175,000 are not required to be competitively bid. However, for transparency and consistency with the City's recent Council approval of other legal services contracts, staff are bringing this engagement letter to the City Council for review and approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend approving the 2026 municipal finance legal services engagement letter with Kutak Rock. Continuing this arrangement will provide consistency in legal representation and support continuity on several large-scale projects anticipated to move forward in 2027. The attached engagement letter outlines the specific discount rates for services.

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):

MOTION: Move to approve the municipal finance engagement letter with Kutak Rock, as presented, for legal services to the City of Columbia Heights and its Economic Development Authority and direct the City Manager to sign the same.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- Kutak Rock Engagement Letter